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Tamás Tóth

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD IN THE MARGINS

From the Critique of Ideology Towards Emancipatory Pedagogical Praxis

Rozprawa doktorska

napisana pod kierunkiem

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I dedicate this dissertation to our little son.

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THE RABBIT IS DEAD

1 INTRODUCTION

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Shel Silverstein's picture book, *The Missing Piece* (1976), tells the story of a circle that is missing a wedge-shaped piece of itself. It is not satisfied with this lack and sets off in search of this missing piece while singing a song. With the piece missing, it is not able to roll fast, so it bakes in the sun, gets wet in the rain, stops to talk to a worm or to smell a flower, falls into a hole, travels through oceans, goes up and down mountains, enjoying its adventures while searching for the missing piece. It discovers missing pieces during the journey, but one declares that it is not a missing piece, the other is too small to fit, one is too big, one is too sharp, one gets lost. Finally, the circle finds a missing piece that perfectly fits, it starts rolling as a Whole, and since it was complete it rolled faster and faster than ever. 'So fast, that it could not stop to talk to a worm or smell a flower, too fast for a butterfly to land.' It couldn't even sing its song that it sang happily while it was searching for the missing piece. Finally, it stops, sets down the piece gently and rolls away, singing its song, while continuing its endless journey of searching

for its missing piece. Silverstein's story explains beautifully what lonely and incomplete creatures we are, ultimately striving for fullness. And when we think that we have successfully filled in the lack, we suddenly realize that we actually lost something: we lost the lack itself that made our journey meaningful.

Isn't it also a way to interpret our predicament in postmodern global capitalism? Isn't the way we cling to commodities, slogans, big narratives, populist temptations, authority figures, politicians, the glorious coercive state and its repressive policies similar to how the lacking circle attempted to arrive at an experience of fullness? But contrary to the lacking circle in Silverstein's story, who sets down its missing piece gently at the end of the story, it seems to me that we are more and more attached to fantasies of fullness. We roll faster and faster, regardless of its consequences, maybe because we all know that what we avoid this way is not only the beauty of smelling a flower, talking to each other, and wandering throughout landscapes, but also the traumatic catastrophes of our times: that the poverty and suffering of millions cannot be compared to the incredible wealth of a few; that we are able to shoot a car into outer space, but unable to stop war and imperial crimes around the globe; that we

increasingly exploit the ecosystem regardless of the fact that it is collapsing in front of our own eyes. In sum, we 'roll' with the illusory filling in of our lack in order to conceal the unbearable truth that '*truly, we live in dark times.*'

I have been working, sometimes living, researching and travelling for almost ten years with some of the most vulnerable, excluded, exploited, oppressed people living in extreme poverty beyond the margins of the society in Europe. What always strikes me, beyond the horror of poverty, is how this horror is sustained by making it acceptable, tolerable, bearable or manageable. Even today, when techno-capitalism provides all the resources for confronting the traumatic images of contemporary disasters, we somehow carry on, as if tomorrow will bring a solution. My personal experience with the traumatic realities of poverty and with the complex fantasies through which people cope with this unbearable truth, regardless of whether they see it or not, made me interested in tricks, illusions, masks – namely, in the concept of ideology.

At the same time, my work with the outcasts of society was always connected to schools and education, and from the very beginning I have been interested in the potential of education for revealing those tricks and illusions that hold us captive. I realized very soon how important teachers are for such an enterprise, for the critique of ideology, but I also had to confront the fact that even I and other teachers are ultimately and infinitely exposed to illusions and fantasies. I also recognized, throughout the years, that education studies had taken the trajectory of infinite specialization, technologization and learnification, often constrained by ideological discourses. I came to the conclusion that there is an inherent struggle within the field of education between what I call the technological regime of abbreviations (ACL, DDA, EFL, HE, ICT, ILP, ILS, OFSTED, etc.) and a political, philosophical theorization, to which I am committed, but which is not in a dominant position at all.

I applied to the European Doctorate in Teacher Education (EDiTE) program, supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program, precisely in order to gain influence and power – as in a Gramscian 'war of position' – for fostering an explicit conversation between educational research (and practice) and political philosophy. The main theme of the program, 'Transformative Teacher Learning for Better Student Learning within an Emerging European Context,' provided an ideal framework for my thrust, especially regarding the two pillars of 'transformative teacher learning' and 'emerging European context'. I was able to emplace my interest in ideology criticism, teacher education and poverty in Europe in the tension between these two subthemes.

Thus, the central motivation of this research is to contribute to the understanding of the possibilities of transformative education and of transformative teacher learning in the context

of extreme urban poverty. I focus on two neighborhoods of relegation in two semiperipheral countries – Hungary and Poland (briefly covering Romania as well) – both characterized by the post-socialist catastrophe of global capitalism and the significant emergence of far-right imaginaries, which I understand as complementary dimensions of an emerging European context. Contrary to the dominant research trend in education, which situates the analytical context of the educational apparatus and of teachers' pedagogical praxis either within national education systems or within international policy frameworks, I contextualize the 'schools of the ghetto' by focusing on the transnational dynamics characteristic to the geopolitical position of the semiperiphery and on the broad institutional micro-environments of urban poverty (the police, the Church, the welfare center, the NGO, etc.) of which the school is a significant constituent. In order to illuminate the complex modalities of such glocal milieus of education, I continuously develop and use the analytical tool of ideology criticism embedded in and channeled through ethnographic research. On the one hand, the critique of ideology as an analytical tool allows for digging deep and unmasking educational and interinstitutional practices conducive to the mystification of domination and unveiling how pedagogical practices are constrained by ideological illusions. On the other hand, I understand transformative education as the pedagogical organization and conduct of ideology criticism, the fostering of which has a significant potential in the context of urban poverty. Thus, besides trying to grasp the ideological fantasies and mystifications characteristic to teachers' pedagogical praxis in the semiperipheral contexts of urban poverty, I also attempt to locate emancipatory possibilities for teachers' transformative learning by facilitating their engagement with the social and micro-institutional environment of the school.

Such research has its own limitations, failures and dilemmas. As the first ethnographic research I've ever worked on, it has its inevitable weaknesses, from a lack of continuous self-reflection to the representation and interpretation of the material. I'm fully aware of such weak points, but I also think that, in a certain sense, this whole project can be understood as an experiment of hitting on new possibilities in educational theory, which, since experimental, inevitably leaves stumbles and slips behind on its way. There, hence, an irreducible risk in this dissertation as it thrives to bring new conceptual tools and generally a new language to education and educational research. This is also one reason why it will be demanding for the reader to decide whether it is a theoretical or an empirical research. If I may give an answer in advance, I would say that this dissertation belongs to the genre of political philosophy which it tries to contaminate with practice. Here the question immediately follows: What are the implications of such research, what sort of palpable evidence does it bring to thinking about

questions regarding education and teacher education? Here, I would warn the reader to relinquish such expectations regarding this work and approach it as that which provides some (analytical or conceptual) tools for arriving at conclusions, implications, etc. Especially considering the often-depressing grounds the dissertation falls on. Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek was once asked about the implications of his work, to which he replied: 'I have a hat, but I do not have a rabbit' (2007, p. 16). I consider my work even less satisfying and even more distracted, because contrary to Žižek, I think that I can do the trick. I have a hat, and I can pull out the rabbit from it to the greatest surprise of the audience. The problem is, however, that the rabbit is dead. The consequences are clear.

* * *

In *Part I: The Discreet Harm of Ideology,* I describe the theoretical development of the concept of ideology in Marxist, post-Marxist and postmodern political philosophies. I ground the theoretical framework of my research in the post-Marxist theory of hegemony as elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) and I argue for a return to Marx's understanding of ideology within the post-Marxist theory of hegemony. By rejecting both the interchangeability between the concepts of 'discourse' and 'ideology' and the postmodern narratives of 'the death of ideology' I elaborate and propose *a discursive account of ideology*, which I understand as the mystification of domination through hegemonic articulatory practices, where the hegemonic struggle over meaning fixates and cements perpetually asymmetrical relations of power. To elaborate the discursive account of ideology, I inscribe Foucault's (1997) account of domination in the theory of hegemony. Finally, I argue for supplementing the interpretive, discursive account of ideology with Žižek's Lacanian-Marxist account of ideology (1989), which promises a return to Marx's central concepts of ideology (opium, fetish, manifest reality) *within* the post-Marxist framework.

In *Part II: The Spectre of Poverty,* I engage with contemporary critiques of the political economy and with Lacanian ontology in order to further challenge Laclau's political theory and to advocate a theoretical and strategical return to class politics and to the analysis of class relations in global capitalism. I do so to illuminate the epistemological and ontological reasons for choosing places of urban poverty as the 'privileged' sites of research. I argue that such sites are not only of utmost relevance for ideology criticism, but they are also educationally meaningful. Drawing on Loïc Wacquant's concept of 'advanced marginality' (2008) and Foucault's concept of the 'dispositif' (1980b), I propose an analytical and methodological framework for studying the discursive totality of the landscapes of urban poverty, that are overdetermined by the ideologico-hegemonic articulations that emerge from the particular

arrangement of the micro-institutional context. Then, by charting a *via media* between the Althusserian (1971) and the Foucauldian critique of the school (Deacon, 2004), I reject Wacquant's assumption that in the dispositifs of advanced marginality the frontline apparatus is the 'police', and I argue that it is the School (i.e. institutionalized education) which holds the privileged position among the other apparatuses. Finally, I outline the ethnographic methodology of the research for the ideologico-critical analyses of the dispositifs of advanced marginality with particular focus on the School, in order to investigate how places of urban poverty are educationally meaningful for teacher education. I frame my ethnographic stance as pedagogical (Mészáros, 2017) and therapeutic (Fink, 2007).

In *Part III: The Emerging European Complex,* I outline the geopolitical aspect of the research field, drawing on Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory (1974), and situate Hungary and Poland within the post-socialist semiperipheral patterns of capitalist production. In order to contribute to the world-systems analysis with an ideologico-critical register, I elaborate the concept of the 'European complex', which is a class-analytical account drawing on the registers of Lacanian ontology and which I understand as the ideological portrayal of the European commedia dell'arte of conflicts, that provides the political coordinates (the frameworks and roles) for a semiperipheral theater. I argue that the basic modalities of the European complex with regards to post-socialist semiperipheral countries are (1) the disavowal of class politics and the negligence of the critique of political economy, (2) the ideologico-discursive constitution of the hegemonic frontiers on the streets (rather than in legal frameworks) and within micro-institutional contexts, and (3) the emergence of 'advanced imaginality' (i.e. the extension and displacement of the far-right imaginaries). Then, I introduce the ethnographic research that I conducted in Poland, and I discuss the dispositif of a Gypsy settlement. I argue that the primordial distinctive modality of the semiperipheral hybrid ghetto is its strong omnipresent and omnipotent interinstitutional character (from the omnipresent police-and-penal apparatus to the strong presence of public institutions), where the ideological constellation of the discursive landscapes of poverty is constituted. Then, I locate the dominant ideological nodal points in the discursive field and dispositif of the settlement (begging, air pollution), which are superimposed by legal and human rights discourses, mediated through the punishment of the poor (Wacquant, 2009b), 'NGOization' (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013), and 'circusification'. I then situate the two schools – where I organized working group meetings with the teachers of Gypsy children from the settlement – within the discursive landscape of the dispositif. I discuss the reasons for failing to organize household visits with the teachers in the settlement. I argue that the possibility for enhancing transformative teacher learning via

teachers' active and reflective engagement with the social environment was constrained both by how the educational apparatus is positioned in its respective dispositif and by the post-socialist struggles over the modalities of operation of the educational apparatus, which I characterize by introducing the ideologico-critical concepts of 'neverland syndrome,' the parallax between the glorification and infantilization, appreciation and degradation of the teachers work (e.g. Labaree, 1992); 'the atrophy of the pedagogical,' the learnification and instrumentalization of education at the expense of the primordial pedagogical question of the telos in education (e.g. Biesta, 2015); and 'cynical pedagogy,' the pedagogical practice structured against and despite what the subject knows. By illuminating my research experiences in Poland and Romania, I try to show how I reshaped the method of my research in Hungary. I argue that, while in Poland, I was focusing on the settlement as an educationally meaningful place for teacher education, approaching its respective dispositif as merely an informative modality. In Hungary, I started to consider the dispositif of advanced marginality itself as educationally meaningful for teachers' transformative learning. Then, I locate the dominant ideological nodal points of the dispositif (drug market, environmental degradation and the ethnitization of poverty), characterized by the 'dissolution and detotalization of meaning', channeled through middle class imaginaries, psychopatologization of social problems, and the institutional merger between the apparatuses and the local political regime. Then I discuss the working group meetings in the ghetto school, which were completely open for the institutional actors, in order to confront the teachers with the school's respective dispositif. I argue that there were at least two promising aspects of this confrontation that are subversive *in potentia*: 'the gaze of the dispositif,' i.e., teachers realizing how the school is 'secretly' embedded in a broader micro-institutional context that shapes the daily aspect of their pedagogical practices; and 'the pedagogy of hopelessness', that is coming to terms with the impotence of education in fulfilling the spectacular desires that the contemporary education gospel depicts on it (upward mobility, quality and equity, the fullness of the society) and giving up false, fetishistic hopes that are so characteristic to pedagogical philosophies, especially in critical pedagogy (e.g. Freire, 1994).

In the concluding part, *The Repressed of Pedagogy,* I briefly outline the foundations of a critical critique of Freirean critical pedagogy (and the pedagogy of hope). Based on the empirical experience of the research, I argue for conceptualizing a pedagogical account based on the recent philosophical directions of Badiou (2010) and Žižek (2017d), considering it as an already emerging field of research, which is called 'the pedagogy of the impossible' by McMillan (2015) referring to the pedagogical value of the lacking subject, and to which I refer as '*the pedagogy of the Real*'.

PART I

THE DISCREET HARM OF IDEOLOGY

The question of ideology has gained a central significance recently – long after its 'death' (around the 1970s) and with the emergence of post-Marxist theory – not only in the field of political philosophy but in social sciences as well. The apparent defeat of the Left prompted theoreticians to start looking for new 'munitions', and ideology criticism seems to be of utmost importance to talk anew about politics and the political. The basic questions of ideology criticism remained the same: What is 'false' in ideology? How does ideology function? Does it 'mask' or 'hide' certain truths? Is it possible to resist ideology? And what is the potentiality of the critique of ideology, if it is possible? But while the basic questions remained the same, the way they are addressed has transformed radically. The new theoretical directions of the concept of ideology are not only relevant with regards to politics and to the political. I assert, that the contemporary questions, developments and debates regarding the 'critique of ideology' are of utmost importance for education and the educational as well. If one understands education as a specific way of making meaning, constructing identities, and transforming 'what is', then the new language of ideology criticism can be helpful to talk about 'what is' and also about 'what is not yet' in a different manner, but still educationally. As I will go through the different stages of development of the concept of ideology, I will not point directly to how these stages can be translated to education and to the educational, the possibility of such translations lurks beyond the following pages – i.e., it is possible to read the first part from an educational stance. The reason why I will not do this work of translation is that my intention is to anchor my work in a specific theoretical thread of ideology criticism, and try to develop and translate particular accounts of ideology criticism to education and to the educational. What can be interesting while reading the different concepts of ideology in the following part is to ask the basic questions of ideology with regards to the specific concept or theoretical thread from an educational perspective: Can we differentiate between false and true knowledge? How is fantasy and reality connected, if they are connected? What is an educational reality at all? And how do we know that our best intentions as teachers are not the worst illusions for the children? These might be important questions to ask, as going through the first part, but there is a more important task, that is trying to come to terms with the language of 'ideology criticism' (and of the dissertation as well). What strikes me about the 'critique of ideology' as such, is that it has a different language, as compared to that of the social sciences. Of course, it borrows the linguistic devices of political theory, sociology, psychoanalysis, etc. – but at its core, at the kernel of its own language (which Jacques Lacan calls 'lalangue') its 'speech' is structured differently. Thus, the following part is not only an introduction to the conceptual developments of ideology and the critique of ideology, but also to the 'lalangue of ideology criticism'.

2 IDEOLOGY IN MARX BEFORE MARXISM

'Sing While You $ell'
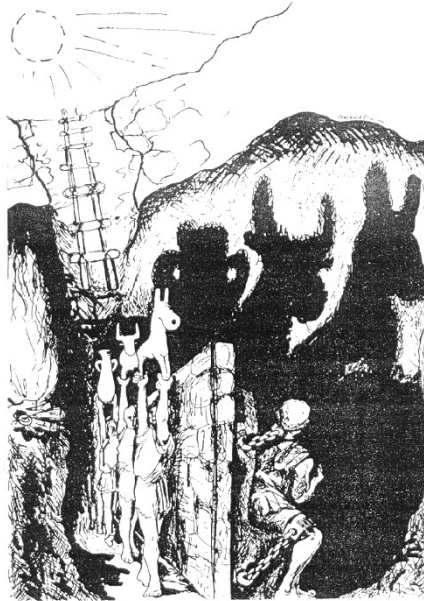
'Plato's Allegory of the Cave', Markus Maurer, 1996

One of the first and most influential allegories in political philosophy that aimed to unveil the limits of perception and the boundaries of reality – if there ever was one – is admittedly Plato's allegory of the cave (Plato, 380BC/2000, 514B-517E). In Book VII of *The Republic,* Socrates depicts the metaphor of an underground den to Glaucon in the context of education:

> Picture human beings living in some sort of underground cave dwelling, with an entrance which is long, as wide as the cave, and open to the light. Here they live, from earliest childhood, with their legs and necks in chains, so that they have to stay where they are, looking only ahead of them, prevented by the chains from turning their heads. They have light from a distant fire, which is burning behind them and above them. Between the fire and the prisoners, at a higher level than them, is a path along which you must picture a low wall that has been built, like the screen which hides people when they are giving a puppet show, and above which make puppets appear (514B).

What appears as real for the prisoners in the cave are the shadows of the objects and the echo of the sounds made by the puppeteers. Escaping this delusion is described as a painful enlightenment, for the untied prisoner would be first dazzled by the light of fire and then, having once escaped from the cave, by the sunlight. Moreover, the prisoner would want to turn back to the reality s/he could *see*, to which s/he was accustomed, up until when the eyes finally adjust to the shadows outside; then to the reflections in the water; and finally, to the Sun (the form of the Good) itself, which s/he would realize as the source of all shadows and reflections (the imperfect copies of Forms). With the 'ascent of the soul to the realm of understanding' (517B),

which in the Platonic system is the understanding of Forms (representing the most accurate reality), this prisoner would return to darkness for no price. Or rather not for a price. Since the prisoner would feel sorry for her fellow-prisoners, s/he would be caught in the dilemma – whether or not to return and free the others in the cave. Returning to the dark from the light is described by Socrates as the second impairment of sight, but returning to the realm of darkness is also – at least for Socrates – an indispensable condition to education. As for him education is not

> [putting] knowledge into souls where none was before. Like putting sight into eyes which were blind. (…) [T]his capacity in every soul, this instrument by means of which each person learns, is like an eye which can only be turned away from the darkness and towards the light by turning the whole body. (…) Education, then, I said, would be the art of directing this instrument, of finding the easiest and most effective way of turning it round. Not the art of putting the power of sight into it, but the art which assumes it possesses this power – albeit incorrectly aligned, and looking in the wrong direction – and contrives to make it look in the right direction (518C-D).

Plato's allegory of the cave raises several of the most crucial dilemmas of critical education, which are nevertheless constitutive contradictions inscribed in the logic of every kind of social criticism. Is there a hidden reality that needs to be unveiled or are we as subjects inescapably trapped in socially constituted illusions? Is it possible to return to the cave and liberate the prisoners, and is it a common role for teachers? Moreover, beyond the ontological and epistemological dilemmas, is there a universal, moral imperative shedding a guiding light on the rugged road of illuminating the realm of shadows? For Plato, only a position from 'outside' is capable of objectively and scientifically answering these questions, which position is necessarily that of the philosopher who is able to break the chains of illusions, to escape the realm of darkness, and henceforth to lead the community from a 'distance.' In contrast to the elite critique of the Platonic model, the Socratic critique highlights engagement with the local community, the importance of finding the answers *via* dialogue as a condition of people's self-reflection and awakening. It is at the intersection of these contradictory elements – the Platonic model of critique (the idea of external critique) and the Socratic model of critique (the idea of internal critique) – where Lotar Rasiński (2013) locates Karl Marx's account of social criticism. Rasiński argues that contradictory elements are not only present in the relation between Marx's concept of emancipation and ideology, but also that the presence of this contradiction 'is a necessary condition of every kind of criticism' (Rasiński, 2013, p. 95). Necessary, since any kind of criticism inevitably grounds itself in a normative standpoint, keeping a regulative distance toward deviations from the supposed 'normal' situation. At the same time, however,

any normative project of criticism has to face the burden of answering the unavoidable question: How is one able to construct universality while embedded in the particularities and contextualities of any situation. Or, in other words: How can one 'live in the world of mistaken convictions and at the same time be aware that they are mistaken?' (Rasiński, 2013, p. 108)

There is no single answer regarding the dilemma of the constitutive contradiction in the relation between Marx's concept of emancipation and ideology, since Marx himself and his interpreters had also developed several different accounts of those concepts. On the one hand, the Marxist, neo-Marxist, post-Marxist and postmodernist accounts of ideology and emancipation largely contributed to the expansion and exceedance of Marx's concepts. On the other hand, the accumulation of the interpretations created a confusion about the theoretical efforts of Marx and concealed the complexity and diversity of his thinking regarding ideology and the critique of ideology. Instead of answering what would Marx's 'original' concept of ideology be, Viktor Kiss (2011) attempts to outline what kind of functions the different accounts of ideology played in Marx's *oeuvre*, which by no means can be considered unified or integrated. It is precisely within the uneven character of Marx's *oeuvre*, in-between the coexistence and collusion of the manifold concepts he developed where his different accounts of ideology, of the critique of ideology, and of emancipation can be located. In the following section I will draw on Kiss's theoretical works to identify these different accounts, since he provides one of the most comprehensive readings of Marx on ideology.

2.1 Form of Consciousness

Marx's early writings between 1841 and 1845 are not frequently considered as relevant for studying his accounts of ideology, not only because he first used the term 'ideology' in 1846, but also because these early works have been considered as largely influenced by the 'two strands of intellectual development in the 18th century which were the immediate antecedents of the concept of ideology: French materialism and the German philosophy of consciousness' (Larrain, 1983, p. 7). It is as if this period would have been an insignificant prelude to Marx's farewell to Hegelian idealism, and irrelevant in light of his later axiom that 'it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness' (Marx, 1859/1904, p. 11). Indeed, the young Marx's attempts in the realm of ideology were dominated by the questioning and critique of consciousness and philosophical abstractions – as Tom Rockmore pointed out 'not in opposition to but rather within Hegelianism' (Rockmore, 2002, p. 163) – in an era in which Marx, in his dissertation, *On the Differences between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus*

and Epicurus, made the comparison to the time of Aristotle 'when a philosophical system seems untenable, but it is not yet possible to found a new "on another element"' (McCoy, 1954).

> In a Preliminary Note to his Dissertation, he [Marx] justified his refusal to compromise with existing conditions by invoking the example of Themistocles who, 'when Athens was threatened with devastation, convinced the Athenians to take to the sea in order to found a new Athens on another element.' This is not an anticipation of Marx's turn to political economy. (…) Marx was trying to articulate the critique of a present 'beneath contempt' which holds open a political future (Howard, 2017, p. 2).

Kiss (2011) argues that Marx's first elaborated account of ideology was formulated around the question of what would be possible to say about this political future (Zeitgeist) held open, if one would look at current social tensions. In 1842 Marx became interested in the extreme pauperization in Rheintal, where the Landtag classified the act of collecting twigs (for heating) as theft. In order to understand how such extreme measures were possible, Marx started to approach consciousness as a structure or form, which is made coherent and limited by interests. The form of one's consciousness defines and restricts its possible connections to new elements in accordance to one's interests. According to Marx, antagonistic divisions in the society are constructed along the similarities of these forms – while the poor people's form of consciousness carries the declining heritage of feudalism and thus they think that collecting twigs is not theft, the rich people's form of consciousness clings to the centrality of private ownership.

> Fallen wood provides an example of this. Such wood has as little organic connection with the growing tree as the cast-off skin has with the snake. Nature itself presents as it were a model of the antithesis between poverty and wealth in the shape of the dry, snapped twigs (…) in contrast to the trees and stems which are firmly rooted. (…) It is a physical representation of poverty and wealth. Human poverty senses this kinship and deduces its right to property from this feeling of kinship (Marx, 1842a, p. 9).

In contrast to this, private ownership closes and shapes consciousness into the form of a callus (Hühneraugen).

> The petty, wooden, mean and selfish soul of interest sees only one point, the point in which it is wounded, like a coarse person who regards a passer-by as the most infamous, vilest creature under the sun because this unfortunate creature has trodden on his corns [Hühneraugen]. He makes his corns the basis for his views and judgment. (…) Private interest makes the one sphere in which a person comes into conflict with this interest into this person's whole sphere of life (Marx, 1842a, p. 10).

These two antagonistic forms of consciousness, based on the division of interests, led Marx to the unavoidable dilemma, which would be very important in conceptualizing his subsequent accounts of ideology, namely: If forms of consciousness are structured around

interests, then *how is it possible, that people accept ideas which are in conflict with their interests?*[1] Is it possible to disarm people with ideas, and if yes, what would be possible to say about these ideas? Kiss (2011) shows that Marx, drawing on Bauer's critique of religion and Feuerbach's *Provisional Theses for the Reform of Philosophy*[2], arrives at the dialectic assumption that there must be certain elements in people's consciousness that arise from the truths of their everyday life (i.e., being determines consciousness) which delimit and capture their consciousness so that they accept the unacceptable (i.e., consciousness determines social existence). For Marx, after 1843, the most dominant 'ideological' element in this relation is religion, which he encapsulated in the famous and notorious metaphor of opium. The young Marx's critique of religion is his first well-elaborated critique of ideology.

2.2 Opium of the People

There is an absolutely crucial aspect of the 'ideological' metaphor of opium that is very often misinterpreted. Religion as an ideology, as 'the opium of the people,' does not misguide and delude people as a regular drug would do. Opium in the 19th century was rather regarded as a source of joy and a remedy. 'In Europe, at the beginning of the century, opium was largely an unquestioned good. (…) [P]eople would have understood "opium of the people" as something we could translate into the twentieth century idiom as "penicillin" of the people' (McKinnon, 2005, p. 16). For Marx, then, religion functions as an ideology not in the sense that it blurs one's eyes, but that it incarnates people's real demands in an *illusory form*, thus it becomes able to disarm the masses.

> Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. (…) The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo. (…) Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear that chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower (Marx, 1843, p. 1).

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[1] We should notice that already in this early account of the problem of ideology it is possible to locate the first traces of the assumptions, that Marx later developed about class division, conflicting class interests and the ruling ideology of the ruling class.

[2] 'The being with which philosophy begins cannot be separated from consciousness nor can consciousness be separated from being. As the reality of the sensation is the quality and, in turn, the sensation is the reality of the quality, so also is being the reality of the con-sciousness' (Feuerbach, 1842/1983, p. 162).

Marx here not only outlines his 'opiatic' account of ideology, but he also starts to elaborate the *critique* of ideology and the possibility of emancipation. While ideology incarnates and offers an illusory form of a sought and demanded reality 'in which the unbearable is still tolerable, the unhappy world offers happiness, hopelessness widens into opportunity, and the unreasonable and unfair become reasonable and fair,' (Kiss, 2011, p. 104, translation mine) the critique of ideology offers not only the demystification of the illusion, but it promises also *the real form of the illusion – the living flower*. Connecting *critique* – which for Marx 'was a natural element of his concept, a theoretical grounding of which was simply superfluous' (Rasiński, 2013, p. 96) – to the concept of ideology means that there is a possibility of emancipation. In *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right,* Marx also identifies the subject of emancipation – 'a class with *radical chains*,' the proletariat (Marx, 1843, p. 10).

It is also important to notice that in the opiatic account of ideology we find the act of throwing off the chains, which refers to a movement in Marx's conceptualization of consciousness towards a materialist understanding of the existing conditions and relations of the people. Marx replaces Feuerbach's *conditio humana* with 'the society, more precisely with economic conditions. (…) [P]eople act freely according to their own consciousness, (…) but this consciousness has to react to certain realities, contexts, and so on: primarily to the world of the economy' (Kiss, 2011, p. 110, translation mine). After 1844, this early materialism has had its implications regarding Marx's ideas about the consciousness of the proletariat as well. In *The Holy Family or the Critique of Critical Critique,* Marx argues that 'private property, too, drives itself in its economic movement towards its own dissolution, only (…) inasmuch as it produces the proletariat *as* proletariat, that misery conscious of its spiritual and physical misery' (Marx & Engels, 1845b, p. 53). The proletariat *as* proletariat, the misery conscious of misery is the radical chain in Marx's comparison between the illusory and real flowers. What is at stake here concerning the critique of ideology is not only the condition for abolishing the illusion, but the necessary condition for a radical transformation towards communism – i.e., the necessary condition 'to give up a condition that requires illusions.'

2.3 Alienation and Distortion

Kiss (2011) argues that in the search for the necessary condition of the reform of consciousness, Marx turns to the concept of alienation. According to his dialectic approach, people in capitalism are not simply alienated from their labour, their products and other people – people themselves and thus their consciousness become distorted as well. The consequence of this distortion is the substitution of the world with its own abstraction, so that people, just

like their products, become commodities 'like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market' (Marx & Engels, 1848/1970, p. 39). Marx argues that alienation and distortion put both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat into a specific epistemological position:

> The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-alienation. But the former class finds in this self-alienation its confirmation and its good, *its own power*: it has in it a *semblance* of human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in its self-alienation; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence. (…) Within this antithesis the private owner is therefore the *conservative* side, the proletarian, the *destructive* side. From the former arises the action of preserving the antithesis, from the latter, that of annihilating it (Marx & Engels, 1845b, p. 51).

This early trace of an alternative, critical epistemology resembles Marx's concept of the *form* of consciousness. However, here something different is at stake. While the former concept referred to the internal structure of the consciousness, where the structuring principle was interest as such, this new concept refers to a common *standpoint*, an epistemological position in the social, which is characteristic to a given historical era, that is 'the mode of one's unmediated recognition of the community that is more or less common to everyone in a given mode of material existence' (Ertürk, 1999, p. 30). Korkut Ertürk calls this concept the *mode* of consciousness, which assumes that the prerequisite for a new Zeitgeist – which for Marx was not an open political future any more, but ultimately communism – is a new mode of consciousness, which no longer preserves the prevailing order. It arises from the total alienation of the proletariat, from the 'destructive' side towards the new mode of *revolutionary* consciousness.

In *The German Ideology* and later in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* Marx develops a materialist and often deterministic account of the conditions of a new mode of consciousness, which becomes an appropriately elaborated, but largely confusing (if not self-contradictory), critical program for emancipation.

2.4 Camera Obscura

Marx's main interest is thus in the direction of the relation between ideas and being, consciousness and existence according to the materialist account of history[3], which dominates his concepts from *The German Ideology* onwards.

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[3] In Marx's materialist account of history, the political future of communism is based on the assumption that capitalism – as a necessary level of productive forces – is *destined to fail,* and communism is the necessary end point in the development of human history.

> Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. – real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process (Marx & Engels, 1845a/1974, p. 47).

With the metaphor of the camera obscura, Marx points to the dialectic relation between existence and consciousness, where ideology refers to the undue prominence of ideas over historical life-processes. 'In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven.' (ibid.) Marx is interested here in the limits of consciousness in contrast to historical life-processes, the possibility of an autonomous thought and the role of reality in the construction of illusions (Kiss, 2011). The concept of camera obscura, however, reaches here a deadlock.

On the one hand, the assumption is that the proletariat can fight a successful class struggle only if it acquires the proper, revolutionary mode of consciousness, which would be the outcome of an objective, scientific, 'materialist' analysis of the prevailing. 'Where speculation ends – in real life – there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place' (Marx & Engels, 1845a/1974, p. 48). On the other hand, however, if 'ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships,' (ibid., p. 64) then historical materialism would find itself also upside-down as in camera obscura, as a mere ideology. 'Of course, the working class ideology is the "true one", but it was run by class interest in the same way as bourgeoisie ideology was' (Rasiński, 2018, p. 137).

However paradoxical Marx's account of the camera obscura is, he raises important and highly influential questions in *The German Ideology*: i.e., what is the role of the 'theoretical communists' in the ideological struggle and what is the role of the bourgeoisie ideologists; how to describe the relation between theory and practice; how to present particular interests as universal to form broad alliances and to construct hegemony[4]. Later, in *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,* Marx attempts to break the deadlock between existence and consciousness with the famous metaphor of base and superstructure:

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[4] 'Every new class, therefore, achieves its hegemony only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously, whereas the opposition of the non-ruling class against the new ruling class later develops all the more sharply and profoundly' (Marx & Engels, 1845a/1974, p. 66).

In 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. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. (…) The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure (Marx, 1859/1904, p. 11).

With the deterministic concept of consciousness, however, Marx doesn't break the deadlock, since if existence (i.e., the economic foundation) determines consciousness *in the last instance*, then it is almost superfluous to deal with radical political ideas, since the maturation of revolutionary class consciousness is determined by the inevitable and necessary development and collapse of the capitalist relations of production. Many of Marx's interpreters still stress the central role of the logic of 'iron necessity' which leads to the deterministic concept of consciousness, but as Kiss (2011) argues, this was not the dominant strand in Marx's epistemological accounts at all. On the contrary, 'Marx is interested in the ideology of labour movements and of various communist groups on behalf of which they are about to change the world' (Kiss, 2011, p. 136, translation mine). Marx has the intention to conceptualize the expectations and demands of the antagonistic classes in terms of political ideologies, which intention is completely in contradiction with the deterministic axiom.

The resolution of the problematic relation between reality and appearance is absolutely central to Marx's endeavors after 1846 as well, and the deterministic account of the base-superstructure model is only one attempt among several other conceptualizations in his works, largely influenced by his disappointment after the revolutions of 1848. While one of his main interests was to show how the proletariat could gain class consciousness (i.e., recognize and understand the antagonistic relation between the forces and relations of production and develop *its own*[5] radical politics and revolutionary action through *theory*), Marx became once again interested in how the development of class consciousness and of a new society without classes

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[5] 'Marx was the first major theorist to propose that the workers must make their own revolution. The workers will be fashioned in its fire. They will come to understand their true needs and interests, yet also their real powers and their mutual reliance. If they were to remain in the sheep-like state of workers under capitalism, communism would be a disaster. Knowledge, self-knowledge, and motivation must all change. It can change, thinks Marx, through active revolutionary struggle. Only by making the revolution will people be ready to receive it' (Wolff, 2002, pp. 46–47).

is *prevented* and how the proletariat is 'integrated' and disarmed in and by capitalism and its ideology. For instance, in his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852/1972), theatrical metaphors are widely used to describe the 'Potemkin village' of democracy and the politics of representation, where the political stage renders the struggle harmless, preventing a revolution. But Marx elaborated one of his most ground-breaking accounts of ideology in the *Capital* (1867/1992) with the concept of *commodity fetishism*.

2.5 Commodity Fetishism

Marx turns to the idea of fetishism already in 1842 in one of his articles in the *Rheinische Zeitung*:

> It is well known that a certain kind of psychology explains big things by means of small causes and (…) it is considered the sign of a clever mind to see through the world and perceive that behind the passing clouds of ideas and facts there are quite small, envious, intriguing manikins, who pull the strings setting everything in motion (1842b/1975, p. 171).

Thus, while the opiatic account of ideology was based on the projection of big narratives (e.g., God) behind and above the insignificant and unbearable existence of people, in the fetishistic account *small insignificant things appear as the divine essence of everything*. The fetish provides then the illusion of the possibility to become 'omnipotent' by possessing the divine object. This illusion thus prevents revolution by offering prosperity *within* the system. Marx gives the example of money as a fetishistic object:

> That which is for me through the medium of *money* – that for which I can pay (i.e., which money can buy) – that am I, the possessor of the money. The extent of the power of money is the extent of my power. Money's properties are my properties and essential powers – the properties and powers of its possessor. Thus, what I *am* and *am capable* of is by no means determined by my individuality. I am ugly, but I can buy for myself the most *beautiful* of women. Therefore, I am not *ugly*, for the effect of *ugliness* – its deterrent power is nullified by money. I, in my character as an individual, am *lame*, but money furnishes me with twenty-four feet. Therefore, I am not lame. I am bad, dishonest, unscrupulous, stupid; but money is honored, and therefore so is its possessor. Money is the supreme good, therefore its possessor is good. Money, besides, saves me the trouble of being dishonest: I am therefore presumed honest. I am *stupid*, but money is the *real mind* of all things and how then should its possessor be stupid? (Marx, 1844/1988, pp. 137–138)

In the *Capital* (1867/1992), however, Marx identifies the divine, fetishistic object with commodity. He argues, in the chapter 'The Fetishism of Commodity and its Secret', that commodity is a fetishistic object in the sense that in its exchange-value it mysteriously conceals social relations by presenting itself as the ultimate form of social relations.

> The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists (…) in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things. Hence it also reflects the social relation of the producers to the sum total of labour as a social relation between objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this substitution, the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time supra-sensible or social (Marx, 1867/1992, pp. 164–165).

The result is that the commodity functions as if in it the social relation between persons were reflected as 'the fantastic form of a relation between things' (ibid., p. 165). Marx argues that fetishism is deeply rooted in the 'social character of the labour' which produces commodities (thus unavoidable in capitalism) and where the alienated work of individuals comes into relation only through the exchange of the commodities. So, in capitalism social relations of production inevitably take the form of things, because the only way social relations can be expressed is through things, which thus acquire social properties. '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' (ibid., p. 166, italics added). The sublime dialectic here is that in capitalism, the social relations of people are displaced 'into material relations between people and social relations between things' (Harvey, 2010, p. 47), where the alienated, or to use György Lukács's term, reified relations of production are masked by the product itself, acquiring its 'fantastic form' as a commodity with particular social attributes. Thus, the fetishistic account of ideology is not simply a reference to an illusion or to the problem of false consciousness, rather, 'in fact, what you see is your money, you see how much, and you make tangible decisions. (…) This is the significance of the phrase "appear as what they are": it really is this way (…) and we can observe it so, even as it masks social relations' (Harvey, 2010, p. 41). Marx thinks though, that we 'do this without being aware of it' (1867/1992, p. 167). What is intriguing in the concept of commodity fetishism is a possible account of ideology which refers to the mystification of reality in which one element of the reality masks the other elements, thus constructing what Jacques Bidet would call '*manifest reality, a reality that appears*' (2007, p. 222).

2.6 Manifest Reality

Drawing on Marx's *Capital,* Kiss (2011) distinguishes three different techniques of ideological operation which construct a 'reality that appears' in contrary to, but at the same time embedded in, the antagonistic reality of capitalism.

Abstraction. The logic of abstraction consists of representing some elements of the reality as natural and/or eternal, this is the logic of, for instance, when the ideas of the ruling classes become the ruling ideas as expressing an abstract, eternal system of values, or when capitalism appears universal and ahistorical in liberal bourgeois narratives. Therefore, Marx's 'fundamental aim was to lay bare the laws of motion which govern (…) the capitalist mode of production. He was not seeking *universal* laws of economic organization. Indeed, one of the essential theses of *Capital* is that no such laws exist' (Mandel, 1992, p. 12). Kiss (2011) argues that the logic of abstraction also constitutes the universal and eternal attributes of the human being – in capitalist societies the 'homo capitalisticus.'

Reduction. The logic of reduction is based on the logic of the fetishistic object. It appears as a window to the antagonistic reality, but it functions as a mirror that reflects the dominant ideas of an epoch (individuality, autonomy, freedom, success) and which reflected reality masks a complex reality beyond itself. 'We can only live in this world as modern individuals, and it is only possible, if we are ingeniously participating in the commodity-market. (…) The final (reversed) conclusion is that we can become successful modern individuals only by becoming commodities' (Kiss, 2011, p. 211, translation mine).

Inversion. The logic of inversion is about the replacement of an essence with its appearance in such a way that this inverted representation takes the form of a manifest reality. Ideology, in this sense, is 'less a matter of reality becoming inverted in the mind, than of the mind reflecting a real inversion. In fact, it is no longer primarily a question of *consciousness* at all, but is anchored in the day-to-day economic operations of the capitalist system' (Eagleton, 1991, p. 84). It is somewhat similar to the construction of truth from lies that Razumihin summarized in *Crime and Punishment* – and was later quoted by György Lukács (1918/1987) – as 'lying is a delightful thing, for it leads to truth.' Marx defines several types of inversion. Here I quote one of the most comprehensible, which clearly depicts in an almost oversimplified way how an inversion manifests as reality, *as reality that appears*:

> [I]t is not the worker who employs the conditions of his work, but rather the *reverse*, the conditions of work employ the worker. (…) [W]ith the coming of machinery (…) this inversion first acquires a technical and palpable *reality*. Owing to its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labour confronts the worker during the labour process in the shape of capital, dead labour, which dominates and soaks up living labour-power (Marx, 1867/1992, p. 548, italics added).

The sublime contradiction in manifest reality is that it effectively conceals the inversion that it represents. In the example above, the machinery appears to the workers as an instrument of labour that is controlled by them and which makes factory work easier for them at the same

time. But under the skin of manifest reality 'the lightening of the labour becomes an instrument of torture, since the machine does not free the worker from the work, but rather deprives the work itself of all content' (ibid.). Hence, however inhumane, exploitative, unbearable, 'however unreal society was becoming, Marx saw it was also becoming increasingly real, all too real, with the proletarianization and immiseration of the masses, with "the real subsumption of labor" that mortified the mind and body of the worker…' (Best & Kellner, 1997, p. 56).

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While the scope of this dissertation is limited to giving a more detailed reading on the different accounts of ideology as elaborated by Marx, even this short discussion illuminates Marx's multifaceted relation to the question of ideology. His theoretical work was crisscrossed with extremely exciting theoretical crises and exactly these theoretical contradictions, that are so characteristic to Marx's accounts of ideology, became highly influential in the works of neo-Marxist, post-Marxist and postmodern thinkers.

3   IDEOLOGY IN MARXISM AFTER MARX

'Me, Myself And $'

RED.

WHITE.
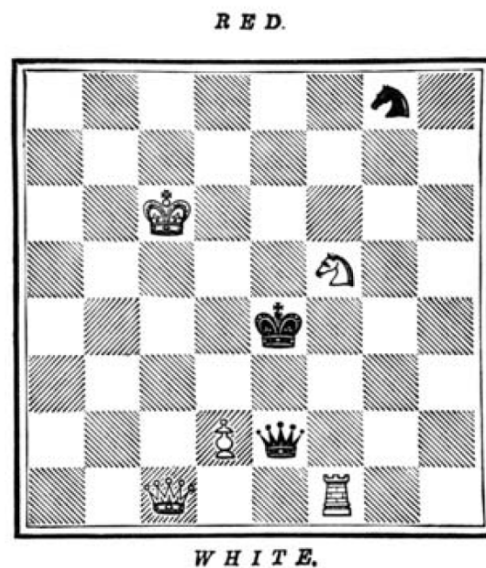
'Alice Through the Looking Glass', John Tenniel, 1872

Due to Marx's different accounts of ideology, the afterlife of the study of ideology in traditional Marxist theory after Marx has developed in different directions. Jorge Larrain (1991), studying the Marxist accounts of ideology defines two strands: the *negative* or critical concepts and the *positive* or neutral concepts of ideology. The negative concepts refer to the post-Marxian notion of 'false consciousness' (which was not invented by Marx). In the negative concepts the focus is on how consciousness is distorted and how an epistemological judgement between adequate and inadequate ideas can be conceptualized. The positive concepts of ideology on the other hand refer to systems of ideas, worldviews, specific to different social groups − e.g., *class consciousness*. These positive concepts are very similar to the way the notion of ideology nowadays appears, when speaking of 'bourgeois ideology and proletarian ideology, liberal ideology, nationalist ideology without necessarily wanting to establish or prejudge their adequacy or truth' (Larrain, 1991, p. 9). Of course, critical judgement in the positive conception of ideology is possible, but always through another ideology. This is precisely how Vladimir Lenin, Antonio Gramsci and György Lukács used the term and criticized bourgeois ideology from the point of view of socialist ideology. The positive or neutral conceptions of ideology are not referring directly to a distortion; they try to represent interests through consciousness where the struggle is fought in-between ideolog*ies*. As Ron Eyerman summarizes the separation of the different concepts:

the development in Marxist theory (…) led to a separation and a distinction in the meaning and the application of the concepts of false consciousness and ideology. (…) In the development of these concepts through the work of Antonio Gramsci and György Lukács to the early Frankfurt School, a distinction between the meaning and the application of false consciousness and ideology was maintained. False consciousness came to mean a distorted and limited form of experience in society that could be applied to all social groups and classes, ideology was applied to those explanations offered by intellectuals to legitimate such experience (1981, p. 44).

There is, however, another possible classification of the traditional Marxist accounts of ideology. Kiss (2011) argues that it is possible to differentiate four strands of the concepts if we identify their anchor-points in Marx's concepts. He identifies (a) the *epistemological* approach, which is based on the dichotomy of 'false consciousness' and objective truth, which dichotomy can be established and explained by positive science, e.g., Marxism; (b) the *base-superstructure model*, which assumes that the politico-legal and ideological structure of every historical era is determined by its economic foundation (i.e., social existence determines consciousness), and functions as a superstructure which masks and reproduces the antagonisms inscribed in the relations of production; (c) the *representational* or *critical* approach tries to identify the worldviews, the structured systems of ideas which are produced to manipulate people (e.g., ideas of the ruling class) in order to integrate them into the oppressive structures; and (d) the *descriptive* approach, which is based on the sociological standpoint, that consciousness is determined by class position, that people in the same social group share basic views and forms of consciousness.

There is, however, one thing in common with all of the different strands of the traditional Marxist studies of ideology: none of them was able to unlock the most pressing contradictions that were already present in Marx's multifaceted accounts of ideology and which became the central motives of the critiques of Marxism after the October Revolution in 1917, and especially after the rise of fascism in Europe. One of the most legitimate criticisms of western anti-Marxists was that while it is true that Marx paid special attention to the question of ideology, he and his successors were unreflective towards the foundations of their own theoretico-practical standpoint, which could have counted even for themselves as an ideology – that after all (as the criticism follows) was conducive to Soviet totalitarianism (cf. Furet, 1999). Thus, the positivist assumptions of truth, the deterministic account of consciousness, the economic logic of necessity and the ultimate class characteristic of agency became fragile and questionable by

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the middle of the 20th century.[6] Terry Eagleton summarized the most problematic points of the Marxist accounts of ideology:

> If all thought is socially determined, then so too must be Marxism, in which case what becomes of its claims to scientific objectivity? Yet if these claims are simply dropped, how are we to adjudicate between the truth of Marxism and the truth of the belief systems it opposes? Would not the opposite of the ruling ideology then be simply an alternative ideology, and on what rational grounds would we choose between them? (…) What if, in the most striking irony of all, Marxism itself has ended up as a prime example of the very forms of metaphysical or transcendental thought it set out to discredit, trusting to a scientific rationalism which floated disinterestedly above history? (1991, p. 91)

There were nonetheless two highly influential thinkers – of course among other outstanding thinkers, like Adorno, Lenin, Lukács, Mannheim, etc. – who 'in their different ways (…) recognised and sought to transcend the limitations of [Marxist] theory' (Barrett, 1991, p. 159), and of the concept of ideology – Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser[7].

3.1 Antonio Gramsci and Hegemony

Concerned with the defeats of working-class movements in Germany and Italy after World War I, and experiencing the unprecedented rise of fascism, Antonio Gramsci became interested in a similar political problem that was central to Marx's pursuits: How do people become an integrative part of a social structure through ideology? To put it more precisely: How do people become subjected to the state, the governing rule through *consent* instead of coercion?

Gramsci locates the structuring principle of society in the political logic of *hegemony*, which is 'the *organization of consent* – the processes through which subordinated forms of consciousness are constructed without recourse to violence or coercion' (Barrett, 1991, p. 54). By elaborating the concept of hegemony, Gramsci draws on the model of base and superstructure, but shifts the theoretical focus to the latter, emphasizing the constitutive and 'cementing' power of ideology, contrary to the deterministic account of the economic foundation. He depicts society as not rigid, but as constituted through the permanent struggle for consent (viz., Gramsci's notions of 'war of position' and 'war of manoeuvre'). Thus, for him, struggle is *ideological in the first instance*, which constructs and transforms 'common

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[6] While the early anti-Marxist critiques point to the central dilemmas and contradictions in Marxist theory, I find it also important to highlight their reductionist standpoint – namely, that they are discrediting an extremely complex and self-contradictory *oeuvre* by reducing it to a few of its semi-dominant concepts.

[7] This choice is completely intentional, based on the assumption, that these two philosophers will open the door to the political theory that is going to be central to this dissertation.

sense.' Common sense for Gramsci is the popular knowledge specific to a *historical bloc* with the function to maintain the hegemonic order.

For Gramsci, however, common sense is not an expression of false or distorted consciousness, but rather consists of contradictions between ideologies (that are characteristic to a ruling bloc) and people's lived, practical experience and empirical knowledge of their reality. 'Certain "folk" conceptions, Gramsci holds, do indeed spontaneously reflect important aspects of social life; "popular consciousness" is not to be dismissed as purely negative, but its more progressive and more reactionary features must instead be carefully distinguished' (Eagleton, 1991, p. 119). In terms of Larrain's distinction between positive and negative concepts of ideology, Gramsci is critical with the negative concepts of ideology:

> The pejorative sense of the term has become widespread, and this in turn has modified and perverted the theoretic analysis of the concept of ideology. The course of this error can be easily reconstructed: (1) ideology is defined as distinct from structure, and then there is the assertion that it is not ideologies that change structures but vice versa; (2) a certain political solution is declared to be "ideological," in other words, it does not have the wherewithal to modify the structure, though it is believed that the structure can be changed, the effort to change it is dismissed as useless, stupid, etc.; (3) next comes the assertion that every ideology is "pure" appearance, useless, stupid, etc. (Gramsci, 1930/1975, pp. 170–171)

Contrary to the pejorative sense of ideology, Gramsci elaborates a positive, descriptive account, which refers to different ideolog*ies* of a historical bloc which form the terrain of struggle. Ideologies in his understanding don't simply encompass world views or systems of ideas, but also refer to 'lived, habitual social practice – which must then presumably encompass the unconscious, inarticulate dimensions of social experience as well as the workings of formal institutions' (Eagleton, 1991, p. 115). As Gramsci puts it, ideologies 'are necessary to a given structure (…) [and] have a validity that is "psychological", they "organize" the human masses, they establish the ground on which humans move, become conscious of their position, struggle, etc.' (Gramsci, 1930/1975, p. 171) Gramsci not only identifies the dynamic, always incomplete character of society, but also locates social struggle within this dynamism – within permanent struggle. Revolutionary, emancipatory struggle takes place in-between competing ideologies, thus the task of 'organic intellectuals' is to identify and represent the contradictions between common sense and people's lived experiences, where the 'relation between common sense and the upper level of philosophy is assured by "politics"' (Gramsci, 1932/2000, p. 332). Through emancipatory struggle the oppressed class recognizes contradictions and thus becomes able to form complex alliances between forces by representing 'its own structural needs as a unifying, "universal" consciousness or "collective will"' (Martin, 1998, p. 79). Winning a hegemonic

struggle means the establishment of 'moral, political and intellectual leadership in social life by diffusing one's own "world view" throughout the fabric of society as a whole, thus equating one's own interests with the interests of society at large' (Eagleton, 1991, p. 115). In this sense Marxism for Gramsci was not a science of economic laws, but instead – and mostly – a 'philosophy of praxis.' Trying to find his way between Benedetto Croce's anti-metaphysical historicism and Marx's (supposed) positivist rationalism, Gramsci illuminated the central role of the superstructure in struggle, but not independently from the economic base. With a slight oversimplification, one could say that for Gramsci struggles are ideological in the first instance, but are conditioned by the relations of production *in the last instance*:

> [E]conomy is to society what anatomy is to biological sciences. (…) By highlighting the anatomy and the function of the skeleton nobody was trying to claim that man (still less woman) can live without the skin. Going on with the same metaphor one can say that it is not the skeleton (strictly speaking) which makes one fall in love with a woman, but that one nevertheless realizes how much the skeleton contributes to the grace of her movements etc. (…) But I do not believe there are many who would maintain that once a structure has altered, all the elements of the corresponding superstructure must necessarily collapse (Gramsci, 1932/2000, p. 197).

And this is precisely the structure of the dialectic that constitutes Gramsci's philosophy of praxis, namely, that even if structures in a given historical bloc condition the terrain of struggles, these struggles are still ideological and political, and consequently are able to condition the structures.

> The philosophy of praxis itself is a superstructure, it is the terrain on which determinate social groups become conscious. (…) [O]ther ideologies are non-organic creations because they are contradictory. (…) The philosophy of praxis, on the other hand, does not tend towards the peaceful resolution of the contradictions existing within history. It is itself the theory of those contradictions. (…) [I]t is the expression of (…) subaltern classes who want to educate themselves (…) who have an interest in knowing all truths, even unpleasant ones, and in avoiding deceptions (impossible) by the ruling class and even more by themselves. The criticism of ideologies, in the philosophy of praxis, attacks the complex of superstructures and affirms their rapid transience in that they tend to hide reality - namely struggle and contradiction (Gramsci, 1932/2000, p. 197).

This passage in the *10th Prison Notebook* is of utmost importance as it summarizes Gramsci's concept of ideology perfectly: (a) ideologies are competing entities of superstructures (that are necessarily connected to structures); (b) non-organic ideologies are contradictory instruments of 'government of dominant groups in order to gain the consent of and exercise hegemony over subaltern classes' (ibidem.); (c) the philosophy of praxis is based on the *theory* of contradictions and the *practice* of alliance-formation of subaltern classes and

organic intellectuals; (d) the critique of ideology (as a part of the philosophy of praxis) reveals the unpleasant reality – *struggle and contradiction*. Gramsci undoubtedly tried to strain the limits of classical Marxist theory to show that capitalist relations of production are not exclusive determinants of a society, drawing attention to the larger political, cultural, ideological (superstructural) aspects of social life. But while he rejected both the deterministic account of the base-superstructure model and the pejorative or critical account of ideology, he still retained a traditional standpoint insofar as he (1) assumed a necessary connection between ideologies and classes, and (2) still based his concepts on the suspected dichotomy between the structure and superstructure. Gramsci's account of ideology nonetheless brought brand new possibilities and directions to the study of ideology, for instance by illuminating the interconnectedness of ideology with social practices and formal institutions, and he also shed light on the *material aspect of ideology* – 'ideas are themselves material forces' (Gramsci, 1932/2000, p. 215). These new conceptual directions were very influential, and it is not surprising at all that these previously-mentioned aspects became central to Louis Althusser's attempts in studying ideology as well.

3.2 Louis Althusser, State Apparatuses and Interpellation

Louis Althusser published his most influential work on ideology in the midst of the anti-structuralist and anti-hierarchical mood of the 1968 protests. The contradictory character of Althusser's *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1971/2014) lies precisely in the implicit attempt to show that 'Structures *do* walk on the streets,'[8] but with the proviso that 'structures' must be put under serious theoretical investigation. Althusser's aim was both to stay within the framework of traditional Marxism, and to stretch its limits by putting the question of the *individual* into focus. In *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,* Althusser developed two fundamentally different accounts of ideology, both as an attempt to answer Marx's and Gramsci's central question: How are people integrated into the social structures through ideology?

For Althusser, the point of departure in studying ideology is the model of the base and superstructure, where – as in the traditional Marxist account – the base refers to the means and relations of production as a foundation for the legal-political and ideological superstructures. As was already discussed previously, the ultimate question of the base-superstructure model has always been the direction of determination. For Althusser it is the base which determines

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[8] 'Structures do not walk on the streets!' is a famous anti-structuralist graffiti from the walls of Paris in 1968.

the superstructure *in the last instance*, but just as Gramsci did, he also turns his attention to the role of the ideological superstructure *in the first instance*. Because while the superstructures are determined by the (capitalist) relations of production, the *reproduction* of the relations of production is '*ensured by the superstructure*, by the legal-political superstructure and the ideological superstructure, (…) *by the exercise of state power in the state apparatuses*, the Repressive State Apparatus on the one hand and the Ideological State Apparatuses on the other' (Althusser, 1971/2014, p. 140). This resembles Gramsci's distinction between state and civil society. While the reproduction of the relations of production is ensured both by the Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses (e.g., police, army etc.), Althusser assumes that 'the knotting together of superstructure and base, which is not general and vague but extremely precise, is accomplished above all by the Ideological State Apparatuses' (ibid., p. 203) – the Church, the School, the Family and so on. It is of utmost importance that for Althusser the most dominant Ideological State Apparatus in reproducing the relations of production is the School.[9]

> In this concert, nevertheless, one Ideological State Apparatus well and truly plays the dominant role, although no one, or almost no one, lends an ear to its music: it is so hard to hear! This is the *school*. (…) No other Ideological State Apparatus (…) has a *captive* audience *of all the children of the capitalist social formation* at its beck and call (and - this is the least it can do - at no cost to them) for as *many years* as the schools do… (ibid., pp. 145-146)

Thus, Althusser makes the first step toward challenging the dominant, reductionist account of ideology in Marxism, which regarded ideology as false representation or distorted reflection of real social relations (Hirst, 1976), and shifts the focus of his study of ideology to the materialized, reproductive, and 'real' social relations and practices of individuals as mediated by State Apparatuses. However, at the same time Althusser doesn't challenge economism, as for him the Ideological State Apparatuses are unified by the dominant ideology, which is the ideology of the ruling class. 'In fact, the state and its apparatuses only have meaning from the point of view of the class struggle, as an apparatus of class struggle ensuring class oppression and guaranteeing the conditions of exploitation and its reproduction' (Althusser, 1971/2014, p. 271).

But with a distinctive shift, in the second part of *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,* Althusser brings the question of ideology with its structural character 'down' to the level of individuals and focuses on the problem – for the very first time within the Marxist accounts of ideology – of how individuals are constituted as *subjects* through ideology.

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[9] The ideological and institutional character of schooling and education will be further elaborated in the next part.

Contrary to Gramsci's positive, descriptive account of ideolog*ies*, Althusser's attempt is to conceptualize a negative, critical account of 'ideology in general,' an account which in principle states that 'ideology has no history.' Here Althusser is explicitly referring to the critique of idealism in *The German Ideology*, where Marx and Engels stated that metaphysics (ideas descending from heaven to earth) has no history. As for Althusser, the ahistorical, or 'omni-historical', character of ideology means that its 'structure and functioning are, *in one and the same form, immutable*, present throughout what is called *history*, in the sense in which the *Manifesto* defines history as the history of class struggle, that is, *the history of class societies*' (Althusser, 1971/2014, p. 175). Just as Freud asserted that the unconscious in its structure and functions (the construction of dreams for instance) is *eternal* (universal), for Althusser ideology is eternal in the same way, and he even goes as far as to declare that 'the eternity of the *unconscious* is based, in the last instance, on the eternity of *ideology* in general' (ibid., p. 176).

What is at stake for Althusser is to show how a general concept of ideology is structured and how it functions on the level of the individual. Because while Althusser still holds that the source or the 'base' of ideology is the capitalist relations of production (i.e., reality), his basic attempt is to conceptualize how ideology 'makes people, that is, concrete individuals, "march" [*fait marcher*]' (ibid., p. 181), that is how ideology constitutes subjects on the level of the *unconscious*. Althusser intentionally turns to *Lacanian psychoanalysis* to take and implement psychoanalytic concepts in developing his account of ideology. Drawing on (and misreading, as I will argue later) the *imaginary*, as one of Lacan's three orders, Althusser argues that ideology is a secondary, 'lived' relation, which 'represents individuals' imaginary relation to their real conditions of existence.' (ibidem.) The real conditions of existence are the relations of production, while the imaginary relation to the real is a secondary one (based on the relations of production, authored by the ruling class). Therefore, what is represented in ideology is 'not the system of real relations governing individuals' existence, but those individuals' imaginary relation to the real relations in which they live' (ibid., 183). Already in *For Marx,* Althusser assumes that this relation is lived and unconscious at the same time:

> This relation, that only appears as '*conscious*' on condition that it is *unconscious* (…) it is not a simple relation but a relation between relations, a second degree relation. In ideology men do indeed express, not the relation between them their conditions of existence, but *the way* they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence: this presupposes both a real relation and an '*imaginary*', '*lived*' relation (Althusser, 1969/1985, pp. 233–234).

In ideology, the representation of the imaginary relation *has a material existence*, in the sense that for Althusser the ideological representation is inscribed into institutions and

institutional practices – praying, voting and so on. Althusser understands the material character of the ideological representation in a dialectic way, and quotes Pascal[10] to illustrate that as much as the imaginary relation constitutes the material practice, the material practice constitutes the ideological representation as well. In these practices the subject is immersed in ideology and, moreover, Althusser assumes that '[t]here is no practice whatsoever except by and under an ideology' and that '[t]here is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects' (Althusser, 1971/2014, p. 187). This vicious circle leads Althusser to assert the ultimate oxymoron that 'concrete' individuals are '*always already* subjects' who are constituted through ideology, which '*hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects* through the functioning of the category of the subject' (ibid., p. 190). Althusser's central thesis, that ideology interpellates individuals as subjects means that the inherent functional structure of ideological representation is constituted of *hailing* at the subject (*Hey, you there!*) and of (*mis*)*recognizing* it (*Here I am!*) by the subject. Althusser describes this ideological process as recognizing ourselves in the mirror. He draws on Lacan's concept of the *mirror stage* (and misreads it), arguing that it is the Absolute Subject (*the big Other* in Lacanian terms) whom the subject recognizes in interpellation.

> We observe that the structure of all ideology, interpellating individuals as subjects in the name of a Unique and Absolute Subject, is *speculary*, in other words, a mirror-structure, and *doubly* speculary; and that this speculary duplication is constitutive of ideology and ensures its functioning. This means that all ideology is *centred*, that the Absolute Subject occupies the unique place of the Centre and interpellates around it the infinity of individuals as subjects in a double speculary relation such that it subjects the subjects to the Subject, while giving them in the Subject in which each subject can contemplate its own (present and future) image the *guarantee* that this really is about them and really is about Him, and that (…) '[He] will *recognize* His own in it'… (Althusser, 1971/2014, pp. 196–197)

This is at the heart of the ideological representation which, as Althusser argues, ensures that the subjects 'go' all by themselves, without a 'cop' standing behind them. In the mirror of ideological representation, subjects reproduce the relations of production by recognizing themselves in an imaginary relation to the real relation, thus *miscognizing* the relations of production as such.

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If ideology is such an integral part of the society, and there is no practice except by ideology, then how is Althusser capable of *recognizing* miscognition? How is, after all, the

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[10] 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, *and you will believe*.'

critique of ideology possible? For Gramsci it was obvious, since the positive, descriptive account of ideology allows for the critique of ideolog*ies* through a specific ideology. But in Althusser's case, there needs to be an 'outside' of ideology from where a viable critique is possible. For Althusser there is no outside *in* ideology (there is no escape within ideology), but 'at the same time, *[…] it is nothing but outside* (for science and reality)' (Althusser, 1971/2014, p. 192). Thus, for Althusser science, that is Marxist science[11] (that is historical materialism), and scientific knowledge is not ideological, it constitutes the sphere from which both reality and ideology are accessible. This distinction however between true and false representation, real and imaginary, recognized and miscognized, became highly problematic during the 1970s. As Paul Hirst (1976) argues, there are three crucial contradictions inherent in Althusser's account of ideology. First, Althusser makes a distinction between 'concrete' individuals, who are not yet subjects, and subjects who are always already subjects, and it is more, than confusing what kind of individual could precede being a subject. And if the individual is always already subjected to ideology (to use Althusser's oxymoron intentionally), then how is the subject capable of emancipation? As Michel Barrett put it, '[i]t is, in fact, on the issue of political agency that Althusser's grand systemic model has been most widely challenged' (1991, p. 89). Second, Althusser refuses to answer his own central question: 'Why is the representation given to individuals of their (individual) relation to the social relations which govern their conditions of existence and their collective and individual life necessarily an imaginary relation?' (Althusser, 1971/2014, p. 258). Without answering this question, Althusser's distinction between science (non-imaginary realm) and ideology is also untenable. As Terry Eagleton argues, Althusser refuses to recognize that not only Marxist science and scientific knowledge, but also 'the very categories within which we think are historical products' (1991, p. 140), thus – in Althusser's framework – *ideological per se*. Third, Althusser's account of ideology restores the traditional Marxist account of ideology, insofar as with the ideological process of miscognition (*méconnaissance*) Althusser retains the classic formula of false consciousness. The consequence of rejecting the concept of representation, where an original object is reflected or represented either as an illusion or an allusion, would be the collapse of

> the classic Marxist problem of ideology. Althusser's advances had already rendered this concept
> problematic. This problem requires that there be a correspondence (the latter determines the former) and a
> non-correspondence (the former misrepresents the latter) between ideology and the reality it represents. If

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[11] '[T]rue knowledge is that of Marxist-Leninist science, it is revolutionary and emancipatory' (Althusser, 1971/2014, p. 180).

there is any determining action of the means of representation in constituting what is 'represented' by them then these forms of correspondence/non-correspondence are shattered. Even if it is argued that the means have conditions of existence (…) it does not follow that the action of those means is thereby determined (Hirst, 1976, p. 410).

However, for Althusser it was not an option to break with the concept of determination in the last instance, with economism and class essentialisms. But even with the flaws of Althusser's account of ideology, it is still 'one of the major breakthroughs in the subject in modem Marxist thought' (Eagleton, 1991, p. 148). And even if Althusser in many cases misread Marx and Lacan as well, these 'misreadings have proven to be indispensable for the necessary modifications of Marxist theory today' (Strathausen, 1994, p. 71). Althusser's account of ideology on the one hand encompasses almost all the weaknesses which led to the supposed 'collapse of the Marxist model' (cf. Barrett, 1991) by the end of the 1970s, on the other hand, nonetheless, it 'opened the gate to a more linguistic or "discursive" conception of ideology. It put on the agenda the whole neglected issue of (…) how we come to speak "spontaneously", within the limits of the categories of thought which exist outside us and which can more accurately be said to think us' (Hall, 1986, p. 29). As Hirst argues, Althusser pointed towards the need for a discursive account of ideology by his own failure in trying to escape from the realm of false and distorted representations.

> If what we have hitherto called representations are the product of a practice of signification, then there can be no necessary unity to the 'ideological'. Signification abolishes the bounding of this realm by social relations which 'motivate' their (distorted) expression in it; its action is not inscribed in limits set by what it signifies, the signified does not exist prior to its signification. This conception generates a new set of questions, different from the classic sociologistic problems of the theory of ideology (which class do these forms 'represent'?, etc.) (Hirst, 1976, p. 411)

The emergence of this new set of questions not only arose from the 'collapse' of the Marxist model, but, as we will see, it also contributed to the elimination of the concept of ideology, as it became superfluous with the emergence of the all-inclusive concept of *discourse* on the fresh tissue of *the symbolic field of language*. For instance, for Foucault the concept of ideology was incommensurable with his pursuits and became superfluous for three reasons. First of all, he argues that ideology 'always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth', but in discourse theory the question is not of a distinction between true and false, real and imaginary, 'but in seeing historically how the effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false' (Foucault, 1980a, p. 118). In the realm of ideology, one of the main ordering principles is, as Foucault argues, 'the

nostalgia for a quasi-transparent form of knowledge, free from all error and illusion' (ibid., p. 117). Second, he draws attention to how the subject is pre-determined with the authoritarian imposition of such positivist notions like 'class consciousness' and the 'real interest of the proletariat', which presupposes 'a human subject on the lines of the model provided by classical philosophy, endowed with a consciousness which power is then thought to seize on' (ibid., p. 58). Third, he refers to reductionism and determinism as another virtual opposition, and that ideology is always 'relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant, etc.' (ibid., p. 118).

3.3 Jacques Lacan and Psychoanalysis

Louis Althusser inexorably tried to strain the limits of traditional Marxist theory. He drew attention to the importance of subjectivity, symbolic structures and *language* in the study of ideology as 'lived' relations. One of the most explicit traces of this intentional shift towards language and discourse can be found in a footnote of *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, where Althusser almost speaks against his own theoretical distinction between science and ideology:

> "Linguists" and those who call poor suffering linguistics to the rescue to different ends run up against problems due to the fact that they ignore the play of ideological effects *in all discourses – even scientific discourses* (Althusser, 1971, p. 189, italics added).

Althusser's interest in language and discourse originates in the increasingly important role of the criticism of the de Saussurean theory of the sign during the 1960s, which semantic trend is comprehensively called 'the linguistic turn' in philosophy. The linguistic turn, as a point of departure for discourse theory, had its roots in the transcendental turn of modern philosophy in the 19th century, which put pre-existing factual immediacy under critical interrogation and drew attention to the conditions of possibility and the structuration of the field of signification on which human perception and action depends. In his course between 1906 and 1911, Ferdinand de Saussure (1915/1959) introduced the conceptual split of the *sign* (i.e., signifier and signified) and defined three basic principles of the structural understanding of a meaningful field, namely that (1) this field is constituted of differences (e.g., teacher and student) rather than positive terms; (2) the elements of this field are defined by their relation, arrangement and combinations rather than a substance[12]; and (3) the connection between the

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[12] 'Language is a system that has its own arrangement. Comparison with chess will bring out the point. (…) If I use ivory chessmen instead of wooden ones, the change has no effect on the system; but if I decrease or increase the number of chessmen, this change has a profound effect on the "grammar" of the game' (de Saussure, 1959, p. 22).

order of the *signifier* and the order of the *signified* is based on a strict isomorphism, namely that there is a strict alignment between the acoustic image and the concept (Laclau, 2007). But if language is a form of rules and not substance, and there is a strict isomorphism between the order of the signifier and the order of the signified, then the assumption of the dualistic character of the linguistic sign and the formalistic approach to language is hardly maintained. Overcoming this inconsistency in de Saussure's theory of the sign opened the possibility for developing a linguistic theory of discourse. Since if

> the abstract system of formal rules governing the combination and substitution between elements is no longer necessarily attached to any particular substance, any signifying system in society – the alimentary code, furniture, fashion, etc. – can be described in terms of that system. (…) If formalism strictly applies, this means that the substantial differences between the linguistic and the non-linguistic have also to be dropped – in other terms, that the distinction between action and structure becomes a secondary distinction within the wider category of meaningful totalities (Laclau, 2007, p. 543).

Thus, among the various attempts in developing linguistic theories of discourse, the linguistic turn embodied a shift from classical structuralism to post-structuralism, in which the dilemmas of the autonomous *or* determined subject, closed *or* open discursive totality and the fully constituted identities *or* identities constituted around a lack were at stake. One of the most outstanding attempts in answering these dilemmas (besides Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault etc.), was Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory. Instead of giving a comprehensive overview of Lacan's concepts, focusing on the 'virtual' debate between him and Althusser seems more productive within the scope of this dissertation. In the introduction *to The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Slavoj Žižek (1989) argues that the popular contemporary debate between Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault represses (also in the Freudian sense) the (virtual) debate between Althusser and Lacan, which is, however, theoretically more important, more far-reaching than the former. Žižek asserts that the Althusser-Lacan debate had to be repressed and forgotten because it brought to the surface a 'traumatic kernel' that neither Habermas nor Foucault wanted to face directly – *the traumatic kernel of ideology*. Contrary to Habermas' and Foucault's notion of the self-transparent/self-mastering subject, Žižek contrasts Althusser's notion of the subject as representing a real break with the latter axis, 'by his insistence on the fact that a certain cleft, a certain fissure, misrecognition, characterizes the human condition as such: by the thesis that the idea of the possible end of ideology is an ideological idea par excellence!' (Žižek, 1989, p. xxiv) Althusser's notion of the subject is radically alienated in the sense that it is almost a 'non-subject' – not only a mere effect of ideology, but its condition of existence is ideological interpellation *per se*. In opposition to

Althusser's, Lacan's subject is the divided, split subject, defined by the irreducible gap between the real and its symbolization.

As discussed above, the problem with Althusser's notion of the subject is encapsulated in the oxymoron of 'individual subject,' insofar as it presupposes either the constitution of the subject even in the womb, or a pre-ideological individual which is irreconcilable with the assumption of individuals as '*always already* subjects.' This inherent problem of Althusser's subject is trapped in a vicious circle, probably most appropriately summarized by Michel Pêcheux in *Language, Semantics and Ideology*, where Pêcheux refers to the '*Munchausen effect*,'

> in memory of the immortal baron who *lifted himself into the air by pulling on his own hair.* If it is true that ideology "recruits" subjects from amongst individuals (…) and that it recruits them all, we need to know how "volunteers" are designated in this recruitment, (…) really to understand this is the only way to avoid repeating, in the form of a theoretical analysis, the "Munchausen effect", by positing the subject as the origin of the subject, i.e., in what concerns us, by positing the subject of discourse as the origin of the subject of discourse (Pêcheux, 1982, pp. 108–109).

But this self-recognizing subject, who contemplates its own image in Althusser's Absolute Subject, in the speculary, double mirror-structure of interpellation is much more coherent and stable than Lacan's. Lacan developed in his essay *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the / Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience* (1949/2006) his idea of the Mirror Stage, which became the basis for Althusser's concept of interpellation. In Lacan's understanding, the infant's experience in the mirror is a constitutive moment of the self, marked with '/'. The child, trying to make sense of the world, contemplates her own image in the mirror and experiences the Freudian 'Ideal-Ego' (Ideal-Ich), but since she is reflected in the mirror, the speculary, self-formed experience of Ego (*moi*) remains a fantasy, an unreal image pertaining to reality. The formative function of the Mirror Stage invalidates the assumption that the ability to think constitutes a unified self (*cogito ergo sum*), and thus it 'sets us at odds with any philosophy directly stemming from the *cogito*' (Lacan, 1949/2006, p. 75). Thus, contrary to Althusser's self-recognizing speculary subject (who by recognizing the Absolute Subject, misrecognizes her real relations of production), in Lacan's slanted mirror self-knowledge and self-recognition stem from misrecognition primarily – namely, that there is an irreducible gap between the self and the image. Thus, any anticipation of a wholeness, assuming a perfect overlap between the two is itself an illusion. To put it differently, for Lacan, 'reality is never directly itself, it is always incomplete. What we experience as reality is not the thing itself, it is always already symbolised, constituted and structured by symbolic mechanisms' (Curry, 2004,

p. 143). Thus, in Lacanian ontology, reality is itself directly dislocated, out-of-joint, which is a consequence of what Lacan emphasized so boldly, i.e., that 'every reality is founded and defined by a discourse' (1972/1998, p. 32), that is by the symbolic order which is inherently split. Thus, while for Althusser knowledge is fallible against the background of 'reality,' for Lacan, there is a

> basic dialectical move, that of the reversal of epistemological obstacle into ontological impossibility that characterizes the Thing itself: the very failure of my effort to grasp the Thing has to be (re)conceived as a feature of the Thing, as an impossibility inscribed into the very heart of the Real' (Žižek, 2017b, p. 3).

But before discussing the Real order, there is a third gesture, that has to be addressed, 'by which the child at the mirror turns toward the person who is carrying him and appeals with a look to this witness; the latter decants the child's recognition of the image, by verifying it, from the jubilant assumption in which *it* [elle/*she*] certainly *already was*' (Lacan, 1960/2006, p. 568). The witness (the mother) stands here for 'the big Other' – i.e., the locus of speech, simply speaking: *language*. This turning to the Other, 'the locus in which speech is verified as it encounters the exchange of signifiers' (Lacan, 1964/2006, p. 720), is a movement from the Lacanian *Imaginary order* to the *Symbolic order* – from the self-formed specular fantasies to external images of the social. Lacan distinguishes three intersecting orders of the production of subjectivity – the *Imaginary* (the order of the Ego and its conscious and unconscious spheres), the *Symbolic* (the order of symbolization, language and its realm of signifiers) and the *Real* (the order of the impossible, the traumatic limit of signification, the unsignifiable, untouchable). Just as de Saussure attempted to illustrate the system of language with the metaphor of chess, Žižek in *How to Read Lacan* also depicts the three orders as dimensions of the game:

> This triad can be nicely illustrated by the game of chess. The rules one has to follow in order to play it are its symbolic dimension: from the purely formal symbolic standpoint, 'knight' is defined only by the moves this figure can make. This level is clearly different from the imaginary one, namely the way in which different pieces are shaped and characterized by their names (king, queen, knight), and it is easy to envision a game with the same rules, but with a different imaginary, in which this figure would be called 'messenger' or 'runner' or whatever. Finally, real is the entire complex set of contingent circumstances that affect the course of the game: the intelligence of the players, the unpredictable intrusions that may disconcert one player or directly cut the game short (Žižek, 2006a, pp. 8–9).

While Lacan's Mirror Stage functions as a developmental sequence, dragging the child from the Imaginary to the Symbolic order of language, Lacan used this specular function also in his structural theory 'to depict how mirror relations – that is, the imaginary relation to the other and the [visual] capture involved in the ideal ego – drag the subject into the field where

he hypostasizes himself in the ego-ideal [the symbolic]' (Lacan, 1960/2006, p. 569). But just as the Imaginary order is constituted of an irreducible gap between the self and the image, the Symbolic is also an order where identification and alienation correlates. In the developmental sequence the child's entry into language is 'an event that irremediably splits the child into a speaking subject (*je*) decentered from an ideal ego (*moi*) whose unattainable image of perfection the child narcissistically wishes to find reflected by others, especially the mother' (Van Pelt, 1997, p. 59). This means that the speaking subject (*parlêtre*) can only identify itself in a reflected image, which offers the 'unattainable image of perfection,' wholeness, unity. The field of this *identification* is paradoxically the field of radical *alterity*, the 'discourse of the big Other,' that is the Symbolic order. The talking subject is defined in the Symbolic order by its articulation of the signifier, of which the locus is the Other: 'God,' 'Freedom,' 'Nation' etc.

> [I]t is the substance of the individuals who recognize themselves in it, the ground of their whole existence, the point of reference that provides the ultimate horizon of meaning, something for which these individuals are ready to give their lives, yet the only thing that really exists are these individuals and their activity, so this substance is actual only in so far as individuals believe in it and act accordingly (Žižek, 2006a, p. 10).

The signifier is articulated by the subject at the gaze of the big Other, but retroactively the signifier represents and articulates the subject as well, constituting its symbolic identity. Lacan's critique of the de Saussurean theory of the sign is based on the assumption that in the process of signification the relation between signifier and signified is not strictly isomorphic, but *overdetermined* in a Freudian sense, which means that there is no necessary correlation between the 'two networks of non-overlapping relations they organize' (Lacan, 1955/2006, p. 345). The logic of the signifier consists of the 'permanent slide of the signified under the signifier (the latter becoming the stable element)' (Laclau, 2007, p. 544). The consequence of this logic is the impossibility of fixing meaning, which impossibility restrains the subject to constitute itself as a unified entity *via* the Symbolic order. Thus, the subject's desire to constitute itself fails, 'because the subject of the enunciation and the subject of the enounced do not merge. Thus, against the certitude of the Cartesian subject, Lacan insists on a fading subject, for it is only "present" in its own discourse as a lack – it disappears in language' (Strathausen, 1994, p. 67). That is not to say that the subject in itself is a unified entity, with a closed system of its own meaningful field, which cannot express itself fully in language due to the overdetermined character of signification and the surplus/excess of meaning – but rather the opposite, 'this surplus of signification masks a fundamental lack. The subject of the signifier is precisely this lack, this impossibility of finding a signifier which would be 'its own': *the failure*

of its representation is its positive condition' (Žižek, 1989, p. 198). Thus, for Lacan the lack, the void opened by the failure of representation, is the place of the subject, which is *decentered*, divided, marked by a split – in Lacanian algebra the *barred $*. Comparing to the Lacanian divided subject, Althusser's notion of the subject is a much more unified and coherent entity, whose self-recognition in the ideological process of interpellation renders it even more stable, almost depriving it of its possible role as an agent. This is because Althusser's notion of the imaginary relation which constitutes the subject rather corresponds to Lacan's Imaginary order, wherein the Ego appears as a unified entity.

This explains Althusser's own question of why the individual necessarily responds to the hailing and becomes a subject, to which Althusser could only answer with the argument: '[e]xperience shows' (Althusser, 1971, p. 191). Turning around and responding to the hailing doesn't necessarily mean that the individual immediately becomes a subject, 'but that they want to be recognized as an object in the Lacanian sense: they hope to confirm their fantasy of being "whole"' (Strathausen, 1994, p. 68). The contradiction in Althusser's concept of ideology is that while it is elaborated in the realm of the Lacanian Imaginary order, at the same time it refers to the complex, heterogeneous and overdetermined social relations in which concrete individuals are interpellated as subjects, which process corresponds rather to the Lacanian Symbolic order. The interpellation of individuals works through language, the field of signification, symbolization, thus it is hardly a process exclusively of the Imaginary order. Althusser's dual-mirror structure and the speculary Absolute Subject also resemble Lacan's field of signification and the discourse of the big Other. However, as Eagleton argues, while Althusser's Absolute Subject

> keeps us obediently in our places,' Lacan's big Other is 'more fraught and fragile. (…) In seeking the recognition of the Other, I am led by this very desire to misrecognize it, grasping it in the imaginary mode; so the fact that there is desire at work here – a fact which Althusser overlooks – means that I can never quite grasp the Subject and its call as they really are (Eagleton, 1991, pp. 144–145).

In sum, the main disagreement between Althusser and Lacan lies in the notion of the subject, which for Althusser consists of positivity (self-recognition in the Other), while for Lacan it consists of pure negativity (misrecognition in the Other) – a subject as constituted around a lack which results from this failed representation. Thus, Lacan's theory is constructed by 'the deadlocked endeavour to suture the subject' (Lacan, 1966/2006, p. 731). For Lacan this notion of suture refers to the process by which the subject identifies itself with the lack, *always already* unable to establish its fullness, its identity. It means that neither the imaginary nor the symbolic identification is able to construct a wholeness, there is always a surplus of

signification which is in excess, which escapes the meaningful field that is well *beyond* Althusser's interpellation – a leftover, which makes the Symbolic order inconsistent:

> the crucial weakness of hitherto '(post-)structuralist' essays in the theory of ideology descending from the Althusserian theory of interpellation was (…) to aim at grasping the efficiency of an ideology exclusively through the mechanisms of imaginary and symbolic identification. The dimension 'beyond interpellation' which was thus left out has nothing to do with some kind of irreducible dispersion and plurality of the signifying process… 'Beyond interpellation' is the square of desire, fantasy, lack in the Other and drive pulsating around some unbearable surplus-enjoyment (Žižek, 1989, p. 139).

Žižek's critique of Althusser's concept of interpellation draws on Lacan's '*Graph of Desire*,' where the lower level, the Imaginary and Symbolic order is cut through by the upper level, that is the *Real order*. While Althusser continuously refers to '*real*' relations, his notion rather corresponds to *reality*, but the Lacanian Real means something radically different. The Lacanian Real consists only of surface without substance and opens as a fissure in the body of the Symbolic. And retroactively the Real introduces a fundamental 'wound' into the tissue of the Symbolic, *opening* within the signifying field the ontological impossibility to close itself as a unified entity. Since for Lacan not only the subject is divided and identical to a lack, a *barred $\$$*, but the order of the big Other, the Symbolic is itself also crossed out, marked with an A (*barré Autre*). This way, the Symbolic is also constructed and structured around a lack, which 'gives the subject – so to speak – a breathing space, it enables him to avoid the total alienation in the signifier not by filling out his lack but by allowing him to identify himself, his own lack, with the lack in the Other' (Žižek, 1989, p. 137). For Lacan the Real is the fissure in the Symbolic, which renders it impossible: 'the real is the impossible, that which is lacking in the symbolic order, the ineliminable residue of all articulation, the foreclosed element, which may be approached, but never grasped: the umbilical cord of the symbolic' (Lacan, 1964/1998, p. 280). The Real order as an abyss in the Symbolic implies that the 'Other (…) does not exist' (Lacan, 1960/2006, p. 700), which means that *the Symbolic order as a closed, unified totality does not exist.* The Real cleaves an irreducible fissure in the field of signification, which isn't the effect of the failure of fixing meaning in the myriad of floating signifiers, but that of an impenetrable gap of an *antagonism* (for Lacan it is sexual difference for example, where enjoyment arises from a fundamental loss between the sexual positions). The Real as an effect of this unsurmountable gap cannot be grasped as a Kantian 'thing-in-itself,' [i]t is not even remotely Kantian. (…) If there is a notion of the real, it is extremely complex and in that sense it is not graspable, not graspable in a way that would constitute a whole' (Lacan, 1974/2005, p. 80). The way we relate to the Real is through fantasy, which is not a dreamlike imagination, but rather a

process that supports the subject's construction of 'reality.' Lacan in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* depicts the function of fantasy through the ancient Greek story of two painters, Zeuxis and Parrhasios:

> In the classical tale of Zeuxis and Parrhasios, Zeuxis has the advantage of having made [painted] grapes that attracted the birds. The stress is placed not on the fact that these grapes were in any way perfect grapes, but on the fact that even the eye of the birds was taken in by them. This is proved by the fact that his friend Parrhasios triumphs over him for having painted on the wall a veil, a veil so lifelike that Zeuxis, turning towards him said, *Well, and now show us what you have painted behind it* (Lacan, 1964/1998, p. 103).

This double deception shows that in fantasy the Real doesn't appear as a hidden order, a hidden totality concealed by a veil, since there is nothing behind Parrhasios' painting. While in Zeuxis' painting the image manifests reality, in Parrhasios' case reality manifests itself as *lingering beyond*, in the form of an image. This example refers not primarily to a 'mask that conceals the Real beneath, but, rather, the fantasy of what is hidden behind the mask' (Žižek, 2006a, p. 114). This sublime *phantasm* (fantasy) becomes the locus of a renewed concept of ideology for Žižek and later for Ernesto Laclau, namely a veil which masks the impossibility of a closed totality – the fantasy which masks a void (the Real *qua* impossible), so the subject would seek *a mask behind the mask* – i.e., *the subject would construct the fantasy of an original entity behind the curtain*. From here it takes only one step to reformulate Lacanian psychoanalysis into social theory.

> [T]he stake of social-ideological fantasy is to construct a vision of society which *does* exist, a society which is not split by an antagonistic division, a society in which the relation between its parts is organic, complementary. (…) The thesis of Laclau and Mouffe that 'Society doesn't exist', (…) implies that every process of identification conferring on us a fixed socio-symbolic identity is ultimately doomed to fail. The function of ideological fantasy is to mask this inconsistency, the fact that 'Society doesn't exist', and thus to compensate us for the failed identification (Žižek, 1989, pp. 141–143).

What is at stake here as it will be discussed below is the possible resurrection of ideology after its symbolic death with the emergence of discourse theory. Žižek in 1989 was the first among those who tried to reintroduce an analytic account of ideology within the post-Marxist, discursive theory of hegemony as elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. In the following section of this chapter I will attempt to illuminate how the previously discussed thinkers in the study of ideology enter into dialogue with each other in the theory of Laclau and Mouffe, and how it is possible to elaborate a discursive account of ideology, which is both *post*-Marxist and post-*Marxist* and is capable of bringing into conversation the different accounts of ideology.

4 ~~IDEOLOGY~~ IN POST-MARXIST THEORY

'The Symbolic Order of the $ocial'

'Alice in Wonderland,' John Tenniel, 1865

The most effective and influential application of Lacanian concepts to political theory started with the provoking post-Marxian trajectory that Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe took in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985). As a response to the collapse of Marxism, and influenced by the emergence of new social movements, not least by the success of Margaret Thatcher in 1979, Laclau and Mouffe aligned with the neo-Gramscian stream in order to develop a post-structuralist discursive theory of hegemony, incorporating (among others) Lacanian concepts into a symbolic system of the social. Laclau and Mouffe locate the first political articulation of 'hegemony' in the works of Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin's concept of 'class alliances', then later in the works of Gramsci. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) reject the idea that the political issues are ultimately related to *class* struggle, determined by the relations of production in the last instance and based on a historically 'stagist' and 'inevitablist' paradigm, namely the logic of necessity[13]. In their reformulation of the concept of hegemony, there is no ultimate foundational principle of the social, thus subjects are not necessarily class subjects and the social formations do not structure themselves around a single hegemonic center

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[13] The logic of necessity was more and more problematic in the late 19th century and there were several attempts to take other factors of the social into account, other than the economy (Althusser, Bernstein, Kautsky, Lenin). These attempts were unable to break with determination *in the last instance*, thus they couldn't unlock the enormous diversity of social forms closed into the unifying depository of a politico-legal and ideological sphere of the superstructure (Rasiński, 2011a).

(e.g., class struggle). The post-foundationalism of Laclau and Mouffe is an attempt to break with the iron logic of necessity, but according to Oliver Merchart it must not be confused with anti-essentialism or the extreme relativisation of postmodernism.

> [A] post-foundational approach does not attempt to erase completely such figures of the ground, but to weaken their ontological status. The ontological weakening of ground does not lead to the assumption of the total absence of all grounds, but rather to that of the impossibility of a *final* ground, which is something completely different, as it implies an increased awareness of, on one hand, contingency and, on the other, the political as the moment of partial and always, in the last instance, unsuccessful grounding. (…) [W]hat is still accepted by post-foundationalism is the necessity for *some* grounds (Merchart, 2007, pp. 2–14).

In order to overcome essentialism and determinism, Laclau and Mouffe turn to the discursive understanding of the social and to the post-structuralist critique of de Saussure's theory of the sign, drawing on Derrida and Lacan. By rejecting the strict isomorphism between signifier and signified – as discussed above in the case of Lacan – Laclau and Mouffe arrive at an account of discourse which presumes that the signifying field is open and decentralized, thus the meaning of the sign is not determined by an underlying necessity, but only by the open and differential interplay of signifiers. For Laclau and Mouffe the question of discourse is the disperse and contingent character of signification, the unfixed and open character of any sign and subject position, without the possibility of any determination in the last instance. If the signifying field of discourse is unfixed, decentralized, disperse and open, then no privileged position can be found and thus '[t]he determination of meaning depends on the interference of various dimensions of discourse, including social, political or economic relations' (Rasiński 2011, 131). Laclau and Mouffe have a similar mode of thinking of discourse as Foucault in this sense. For Foucault, discourse does not only refer to the structuration of a meaningful field, but also to the conditions of production of meaning and the constitution of the subject, the way 'language and other forms of social semiotics not merely convey social experience, but play some major part in constituting social subjects, their relations, and the field in which they exist' (Purvis & Hunt, 1993, p. 474). Thus, Foucault goes beyond the analysis of how statements (*l'énoncé*, the minimal unit of discourse) structure meaning, and shows that 'meaning itself presupposes conditions of production which are not themselves reducible to meaning' (Laclau, 2007, p. 544). In Foucault's theory of discourse, the question of the social is the question of interrelated discursive practices and their functions within discursive formations, which as the 'system of formation of its objects, its types of enunciation, its concepts, its theoretical choices' (Foucault, 1972, p. 185) are structured by what he calls in the *Archeology of Knowledge* (1972) '*regularity in dispersion*'. Foucault understands the notion of 'regularity in dispersion' as the

only unifying principle of discursive formations, where 'one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion (…) between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, (…) a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations)' (1972, p. 38). Foucault drew attention not only to how the interrelated social, political, institutional practices, techniques and relations are mediated through and constituted by discursive formations, but also to their historical conditions of possibility. Laclau and Mouffe also emphasize *regularity in dispersion* as the unifying principle of discourse, and they also highlight the historical dimension of discursive formations. For them, discourse is '[t]he structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). But while Foucault makes a distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices, Laclau and Mouffe reject this bifurcation, since, as they argue, Foucault was 'only capable of doing this in terms of a discursive practice' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 107). Laclau and Mouffe do not argue, that 'everything is discourse' – it has nothing to do with their theory of hegemony. As post-Marxist theorists Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt (1993) put it, 'we should refuse the slogan "everything is discursive"; it obscures the much more interesting claim that all knowledge is located within discourse' (ibid., p. 492). Of course, there are social structures and mechanisms that are external to thought. But the assertion that a pure, originary reality cannot be detached from the symbolic field,

> [t]he fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has *nothing to do* with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. (…) What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 108).

Here Laclau and Mouffe are not only arguing for the constitutive role of meaning, but against a 'mental' understanding of discourse and in favour of a 'material' understanding of it, where 'linguistic and non-linguistic elements are not merely juxtaposed, but constitute a differential and structured system of positions – that is, a discourse. The differential positions include, therefore, a dispersion of very diverse material elements.' (ibidem.) In sum, every object is constituted as an element of a discourse (even non-linguistic, non-semiotic objects). Hence, the question of whether one can differentiate a discursive and a non-discursive is clearly rejected in the theoretical framework of hegemony – the other of the symbolic field is not a non-symbolic realm (but, as I will argue later, the unpresentable Real, *inherent* to the symbolic order as its umbilical cord).

Laclau and Mouffe connect the field of discourse theory to political theory through the conceptualization of power located in the category of hegemony. This involves two aspects of

post-structuralist tradition. The first has already been outlined in the previous paragraph, namely that discourse is understood as a meaningful totality, which 'transcends the distinction between the linguistic and the extra-linguistic' (Laclau, 2007, p. 545). Laclau and Mouffe don't deny that there is a 'reality' external to thought. What they deny is that it can be apprehended without language:

> An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of 'natural phenomena' or 'expressions of the wrath of God', depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 108).

The second aspect is that due to the contingent configuration of the discursive field, this structure 'cannot be explained by the structure itself but by a force which has to be partially external to the structure. This is the role of a hegemonic force. "Hegemony" is a theory of the decisions taken in an undecidable terrain' (Laclau, 2007, p. 545). This way, Laclau and Mouffe base their political theory of hegemony in the all-encompassing field of discourse which superimposes the field of social relations. 'Synonymy, metonymy, metaphor are not forms of thought that add a second sense to a primary, constitutive literality of social relations; instead, they are part of the primary terrain itself in which the social is constituted' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 110).

Considering the open and decentralized character of the social that is not determined by the last instance, but *overdetermined*[14] by it, they replace 'the "economic logic of necessity" with the "political logic of contingency"' (Rasiński, 2011b, p. 124). But besides the impossibility of any ultimate fixation of meaning, there must be partial fixations, which make meaning at least possible. Laclau and Mouffe locate the possibility of partial fixations in the discursive practice of articulation, which establishes 'a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). Through the articulatory practice, the discursively articulated element becomes a differential

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[14] The Freudian notion of overdetermination was reformulated by Althusser (1965), who tried to expand the Marxist logic of determination in the last instance. Laclau and Mouffe 'disarticulate' the concept of overdetermination in their logic of contingency, or it is possible to say that the reformulation of the concept of overdetermination allows Laclau and Mouffe to introduce the logic of contingency. 'Althusser's statement that everything existing in the social is overdetermined, is the assertion that the social constitutes itself as a symbolic order. The symbolic - i.e., overdetermined – character of social relations therefore implies that they lack an ultimate literality which would reduce them to necessary moments of an immanent law' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 142).

position, a *moment* within a discourse, through a partial overlapping connection between the signifier and the signified. This discursive field is where Laclau and Mouffe place their reformulated theory of hegemony, that is 'a political type of relation, a form, if one so wishes, of politics' (ibid., p. 139), characterized by articulatory practices that emerge 'in political fields crisscrossed by antagonisms' (ibid., p. 140). The aim of the hegemonic practice is to tendentially determine and fix meanings, to partially fix the 'ultimately unfixed character of every signifier' (ibid., p. 88), which Laclau and Mouffe call '*suturing*', understood in the Lacanian sense as partial fixation of meaning. In it,

> [a]ny discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre. We will call the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation, *nodal points*. (Lacan has insisted on these partial fixations through his concept of *points de capiton*, that is, of privileged signifiers that fix the meaning of a signifying chain. This limitation of the productivity of the signifying chain establishes the positions that make predication possible – a discourse incapable of generating any fixity of meaning is the discourse of the psychotic) (ibid., p. 112).

If the logic of difference is the logic of expanding the social field of differential moments, then suturing, as the logic of equivalence, is the logic which 'introduces negativity into the field of the social' (ibid., p. 143), which, by subverting differential moments through a surplus or excess of meaning, constructs antagonism(*s*) where positive differential positions are absorbed in an antagonistic front that constitutes negativity in the field of signification. In *Constructing Universality,* Laclau (2000a, p. 303) explains how the logic of equivalence universalizes differential moments rendering them into a chain of equivalence. He uses the following oversimplified model,
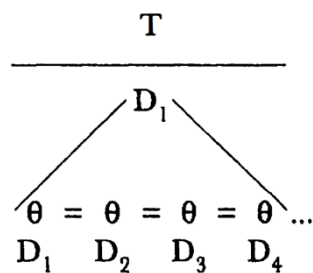
where T stands for Tsarist regime, an antagonistic force and $D_{1,2,3,4}$ represents the particular demands of differential positions, which are articulated into a chain of equivalence that constitutes an antagonistic front. D_1 represents an 'empty signifier' (e.g., freedom, liberation, etc., cf. Lacanian *Master signifier*), a particular demand that managed to empty itself from its particularity to subvert the field of differences and to represent the whole chain by absorbing all the particularities in its universality. The empty signifier, even if not attached to a signified,

is still part of the signifying field. It is empty neither because it can be attached to or floated over a multiplicity of signifieds, nor because the signifieds are overdetermined, so the signifier can never fully represent them.

> An empty signifier can (…) only emerge if there is a structural impossibility in signification as such, and only if this impossibility can signify itself as an interruption (subversion, distortion, etcetera) of the structure of the sign. That is, the limits of signification can only announce themselves as the impossibility of realizing what is within those limits – if the limits could be signified in a direct way, they would be internal to signification and, *ergo,* would not be limits at all (Laclau, 1996a, p. 37).

This means that the condition of possibility of the empty signifier is the structural limit of signification as such. The limits of a signifying system constitute both the conditions of possibility and the conditions of impossibility of signification, but these limits – since they are the limits of a *signifying system* – cannot be themselves signified in a positive manner. Laclau argues that the limits of such signifying systems are always exclusionary and antagonistic. In the antagonistic front the signifying system faces an imbalance: each element in the chain gains its identity in its difference to the others, but each of these elements become equivalent to each other, since they all represent one side of the exclusionary, antagonistic front. In this sense, the identity of all elements in the antagonistic front is blocked and split. On the one hand, their relation is based on the logic of *difference*, but facing the threatening, antagonistic force, each element terminates itself as differential by entering the chain of *equivalence*. This ambivalence, however, is constitutive of a systemic identity, which means that the condition of possibility of signifying systems is the condition of their impossibility as pure positivity, due to their exclusionary logic: 'what is excluded from the system, far from being something positive, is the simple principle of positivity – pure being. This already announces the possibility of an empty signifier - that is a signifier of the pure cancellation of all difference' (ibid., p. 38). The empty signifier can only emerge, because what the antagonistic front is trying to signify is the *limit* of signification itself, 'and there is no direct way of doing so except through the subversion of the process of signification itself' (ibid., p. 39). This subversion is achieved by the logic of equivalence, where all differential elements collapse into a chain of equivalence. But this system can exist only partially and temporarily due to its constitutive ambivalence between the logic of difference and equivalence, which also means that the empty signifier will be always inadequate. But the empty signifier is not only 'constitutively inadequate,' but is also contingent in the sense that the relation which determines that which particular signifier will function as a subversive element is determined 'by the unevenness of the social' (ibid., p. 44), that refers to the dynamic, conflictual character of the political logic of hegemony. 'This relation by which a

particular content becomes the signifier of the absent communitarian fullness is exactly what we call a *hegemonic relationship*' (ibidem.). Hegemonic politics comprise, in constructing the presence of the absence, the possibility of the fullness of society through organizing the hegemonic discourse around an empty signifier that could function as a nodal point. Let's consider, for instance, order and disorder:

> in a situation of radical disorder 'order' is present as that which is absent; it becomes an empty signifier, as the signifier of that absence. In this sense, various political forces can compete in their efforts to present their particular objectives as those which carry out the filling of that lack. To hegemonize something is exactly to carry out this filling function. (ibidem.)

In sum, just as the empty signifier is only tendentially empty (since it keeps its differential remainder as a particular demand also in the chain), the other elements of the chain can also never be fully identical[15]. This means that 'just as the logic of difference never manages to constitute a fully sutured space, neither does the logic of equivalence ever achieve this. The dissolution of the differential character of the social agent's positions through the equivalential condensation, is never complete' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 129). If the hegemonic articulation is successful, then it creates new, but only partially fixed, differential moments; if not, then the antagonistic force 'particularizes the demands by neutralizing their equivalential potential' (Laclau, 2000a, p. 303).

Whilst for Laclau and Mouffe the limit of the social is antagonism, where the presence of the antagonistic Other 'prevents me from being totally myself'[16] (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 125), Lasse Thomassen argues that the limit is also 'the mutual contamination of equivalence and difference' (2005, p. 298), which refers to the impossibility of both total equivalential negativity and total differential objectivity, since both exist through the reciprocal subversion of the other. This means that the limit of the social is inherent in the social itself and there is '[nothing] beyond differences, simply because… there is no beyond' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 126), only new differential positions. Whereas for Lacan the big Other does not exist because the Real as impossible prevents it from becoming a closed totality, for Laclau and Mouffe *society* (as a closed totality) does not exist.

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[15] As Thomassen (2005) pointed out, the relation should thus rather be represented as equivalence (≡), instead of identity (=).

[16] This is very important, because it means that antagonism is not constructed between full opposing identities, but it is antagonism that tendentially constitute identities. The relation, for instance, between the landlord and the peasant is not antagonistic. Only when a 'peasant cannot be a peasant that an antagonism exists with the landowner expelling him from his land. Insofar as there is antagonism, I cannot be a full presence for myself' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 125).

Society never manages to be identical to itself, as every nodal point is constituted within an intertextuality that overflows it. *The practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning; and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity.* Every social practice is therefore - in one of its dimensions - articulatory. As it is not the internal moment of a self-defined totality, it cannot simply be the expression of something already acquired, it cannot be *wholly* subsumed under the principle of repetition; rather, it always consists in the construction of new differences. The social *is* articulation insofar as 'society' is impossible (ibid., pp. 113-114).

From *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,* the impossibility of the social and its limits became central to Laclau's theoretical work, occupying an increasingly Lacanian position, trying to incorporate the Lacanian *Real* into his political theory (cf. Biglieri & Perelló, 2011). In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,* the limit of the social is *antagonism*, which Laclau and Mouffe define as the discursive presence of 'the limit of all objectivity' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 122), which means that antagonism is the fissure that prevents the possibility of society as a coherent, unified totality constitutive of and constituted by full identities. Antagonism is one of the necessary conceptual tools for Laclau and Mouffe to draw attention to the always already *conflictual* site of the social and to overcome the Marxist logic of contradiction, where the opposition presupposes sutured identities. The very condition of possibility of hegemonic articulation is antagonism, which functions as 'a witness of the impossibility of a final suture. (…) Strictly speaking, antagonisms are not *internal* but *external* to society; or rather, they constitute the limits of society, the latter's impossibility of fully constituting itself' (ibid., p. 125). In this sense it is antagonism that functions conceptually as the traumatic kernel of the symbolic field in the theory of hegemony – it is the *Real* as impossible.

It is no accident that the basic proposition of *Hegemony* – 'Society doesn't exist' – evokes the Lacanian proposition 'la Femme n'existe pas' ('Woman doesn't exist'). The real achievement of *Hegemony* is crystallized in the concept of 'social antagonism': far from reducing all reality to a kind of language-game, the socio-symbolic field is conceived as structured around a certain traumatic impossibility, around a certain fissure that cannot be symbolized. In short, Laclau and Mouffe have, so to speak, reinvented the Lacanian notion of the Real as impossible, they have made it useful as a tool for social and ideological analysis (Žižek, 1990, p. 249).

The quote is from Laclau's *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990), where Žižek contributed with the chapter 'Beyond Discourse-Analysis'. Žižek not only appreciates Laclau's introduction of the notion of antagonism as a 'radical breakthrough in modern social theory,' but he also elaborates a critique of Laclau's notion of the subject, which comprehends

the subject from the perspective of particular subject-positions, which – as Žižek argues – doesn't correspond to the definition of antagonism. In 1985, Laclau and Mouffe intended to overcome the classical notion of the subject (as a substantial entity dominating the social field) with the Foucauldian approach of how subjects are constituted by and constitutive of the discursive order – showing the particular, contingent character of subject-positions and the 'politically negotiable character of every identity' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 131). But, as Žižek argues, with the antagonistic relation between subject-positions 'we are overlooking the radical dimension of social antagonism, that is to say, the traumatic kernel the symbolization of which always fails' (Žižek, 1990, p. 251).

> It is not primarily the presence of the Other, that prevents fully constituted identities, it is not the external enemy who is preventing me from achieving identity with myself, but every identity is already in itself blocked, marked by an impossibility, and the external enemy is simply the small piece, the rest of reality upon which we 'project' or 'externalize' this intrinsic, immanent impossibility (ibid., p. 252).

This means that the constitutive negativity lies not primarily in the antagonistic Other (namely that antagonism, while preventing the realization of full identities, is the condition of constituting subjects), but this negativity is constitutive of the subject itself. The subject makes meaning possible, through its meaninglessness. Suture, the attempt for closure, the desire for fullness – filling the lack – 'thus, names the process by which the subject identifies itself with itself as the nonidentical; it identifies with the lack as the result of its failed representation. As such, the subject is built on the denial of the process that constitutes it' (Strathausen, 1994, p. 69). It doesn't mean therefore that the subject fails to represent its inner meaningful richness, due to a surplus of signification, but on the contrary: 'this surplus of signification masks a fundamental lack. The subject of the signifier is precisely this lack, this impossibility of finding a signifier which would be "its own": *the failure of its representation is its positive condition*' (Žižek, 1989, p. 198). Thus, Žižek proposes a Lacanian reading of the subject in the theory of hegemony – subject *qua* constituted around a lack. 'The subject is a paradoxical entity which is, so to speak, its own negative, i.e., which persists only insofar as its full realization is blocked – the fully realized subject would be no longer subject but substance' (Žižek, 1990, p. 254). Just as the condition of the social is the impossibility to constitute it as a unified entity, the condition of the subject is the ultimate failure of subjectification. Thus, for Žižek, the main achievement of Laclau and Mouffe is to open the conceptual field in political theory for the Lacanian Real in two aspects: both as the limit of the social, the condition of possibility and impossibility which structures the symbolic order; and as the limit of constituting subjects. '[I]t articulates the contours of a political project based on an ethics of the real, (…) an ethics of

confrontation with an impossible, traumatic kernel not covered by any *ideal* (of unbroken communication, of the invention of the self)' (ibid., p. 259). What such *ideals* are concealing is that the symbolic field of the social is always constituted around a deadlock. From the *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990), Laclau started to take Žižek's criticism into account and formulated the concept of *dislocation* as a new name for the Lacanian Real in the theory of hegemony. The concept of dislocation both refers to the impossibility of society and the impossibility of identities, namely, dislocation becomes the constitutive negativity of the social (the failure to close as such) and the subject as well. Following this conceptual shift, Laclau re-interpreted his notion of antagonism as a form of *mastering dislocation*. '[A]ntagonism is *already* a form of discursive inscription – i.e. of mastery – of something more primary which, from *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* onwards, I started calling "dislocation". Not all dislocation needs to be constructed in an antagonistic way' (Laclau, 2004, p. 319). With this shift Laclau got closer to the Real in the sense that he started to assume a form of external negativity (*extimité/extimacy*) which precedes its discursive constructions[17], like antagonism. Extimacy, the presence of an absence, is precisely the new location of the subject in Laclau's theory, where the subject's location 'equals the pure form of the structure's dislocation, of its ineradicable distance from itself' (Laclau, 1990, p. 60). In his last book, *On Populist Reason* (2005), Laclau introduces another reading of the Lacanian Real in his theory with the concept of *heterogeneity*. Just like in the concept of dislocation,

> [t]he break involved in this kind of exclusion is more radical than the one that is inherent in the antagonistic one: while antagonism still presupposes some sort of discursive inscription, the kind of outside that I am now discussing presupposes exteriority not just to something within a space of representation, but to the space of representation as such. I will call this type of exteriority *social heterogeneity*. Heterogeneity, conceived in this way, does not mean *difference*; two entities, in order to be different, need a space within which that difference is representable, while what I am now calling heterogeneity presupposes the absence of that common space (Laclau, 2005, p. 140).

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[17] Judith Butler (1993) pointed out that there is a certain paradox in claiming that the Real resists symbolization. Isn't claiming that 'the Real resists symbolization' a symbolization of the Real itself? As Yannis Stavrakakis argues, even if it is impossible to symbolize the Real directly, 'it is possible to encircle (even in a metaphorical way) the limits it poses to signification and representation. Although it is impossible to touch the real, it is possible to encircle its impossibility, exactly because this impossibility is always emerging within a symbolisation. (…) Butler's claim is misleading because the statement "the real resists symbolisation" is not a symbolisation of the real *per se* but a symbolic expression of the limits it poses, a recognition of its structural causality as it is revealed in its relation to the world of symbolisation' (1999, p. 83). Laclau also addressed this issue with the argument that has been already quoted above: 'we are trying to signify the limits of signification – the real, if you want, in the Lacanian sense – and there is no direct way of doing so except through the subversion of the process of signification itself. We know, through psychoanalysis, that what is not directly representable – the unconscious – can only find as a means of representation the subversion of the signifying process' (1996a, p. 39).

These different articulations of the Lacanian Real as impossible in Laclau's theory would separately deserve a comprehensive discussion. In sum, the concept of the Real in political theory had recently become the locus of the post-Marxist accounts of ideology (i.e., masking the Real – masking the impossibility of a closed totality): for Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau explicitly, while for Lotar Rasiński implicitly, if not unconsciously.

4.1 Masking the 'Real as the Impossible'

As discussed previously, the emergence of discourse theories contested the concepts of 'ideology' and made them superfluous. There have been, however, several attempts in retaining both 'discourse' and 'ideology' with elaborating *a discursive account of ideology*. One of the first semiotic theories of ideology was elaborated by V. N. Voloshinov, who claimed, in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,* that '[e]verything ideological possesses *meaning*: (…) without signs there is no ideology' (1930/1973, p. 9). Michel Pêcheux tried to extend Althusser's concept of ideology in *Language, Semantics and Ideology* (1982), introducing the act of 'forgetting,' in which the discursive formation by which the subject is constituted is concealed from the individual. The discursive trajectory in the study of ideology was also followed by Rosalind Coward, John Ellis, Roland Barthes, Paul de Man, etc. and of which Terry Eagleton gives a comprehensive summary in *Ideology* (1991). Ernesto Laclau also turned to the problem of ideology a decade after publishing *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. He argues that the anti-essentialist and postmodernist attempts of eliminating ideology as an analytical tool (the critique of the 'critique of ideology') leads to the same full positivity as in naturalistic positivism. If we assume that there is only an incommensurable plurality of discourses, 'we merely transfer the notion of a full positivity from an extra-discursive ground to the plurality of the discursive field' (Laclau, 1996b, p. 203). Thus, Laclau returns to this extra-discursive ground as a point of departure and asserts that the mere assumption of an extra-discursive reality is the ideological distortion at its purest – namely that the very idea of closure, of an originary, self-transparent meaning is the ideological illusion itself.

> If (…) what we are asserting is that the very notion of an extra-discursive viewpoint is the ideological illusion *par excellence*, the notion of 'distortion' is not abandoned but is instead made the cornerstone of the dismantling of any metalinguistic operation. What is new (…) is that what now constitutes a distorted representation is the very notion of an extra-discursive closure (Laclau, 1996b, p. 203).

Since closure as such has no particular meaning, ideological distortion consists of projecting the illusion of closure to a particular content, which ultimately lacks it, since every

particularity is always-already dislocated[18] by the conditions of impossibility to construct its fullness. Laclau understands the ideological distortion as a constitutive distortion in which 'what is concealed is the ultimate dislocation of what presents itself as a close identity, and the act of concealment consists in projecting onto that identity the dimension of closure that it ultimately lacks' (ibid., p. 205). In sum, for Laclau ideological distortion not only projects the role of closure on a particular identity, but therefore also conceals its ultimately dislocated character. Laclau asserts that the particular identity can only 'incarnate' closure – which it ultimately lacks – through the deformation of the content of the 'incarnating body', namely, through the subversion of the signifying field, which is the logic of equivalence. Laclau gives the following example, which deserves a full quote:

> Let us suppose that at some point, in a Third World country, nationalisation of the basic industries is proposed as an economic panacea. Now, this is just a technical way of running the economy and if it remains so it will never become an ideology. How does the transformation into the latter take place? Only if the particularity of the economic measure starts incarnating something more and different from itself; for instance, the emancipation from foreign domination, the elimination of capitalist waste, the possibility of social justice for excluded sections of the population, etc. In sum: the possibility of constituting the community as a coherent whole. That impossible object – the fullness of the community – appears here as depending on a particular set of transformations at the economic level. This is the ideological effect *strictu sensu*: the belief that there is a particular social arrangement which can bring about the closure and transparency of the community. There is ideology whenever a particular content shows itself as more than itself. Without this dimension of horizon, we would have ideas or systems of ideas, but never ideologies (ibid., p. 206).

Thus, in ideology, the requisite for the incarnation of the impossible object is the constitution of equivalential relations between the incarnating body and differential moments by subverting their meanings, thus they can function as alternative names for the totality represented by the equivalence.

As we've seen before, the logic of equivalence is where antagonism is constituted, thus Laclau renders the concept of ideology specific to the constitution of social antagonisms. '[A]n incarnation (…) can only proceed through equivalential deformation, (…) incarnation and deformation of particular contents through the expansion of equivalential logics is at the root of all ideological process' (ibid., pp. 207-215).

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[18] As has been discussed, Laclau understands identity in a Lacanian way, as always constituted around a lack, thus always-already dislocated. This is why only the negation of this lack, the concealment of the ultimately dislocated character of an identity can create its fullness by projecting the lack of the fullness on something external to that identity (cf. Žižek, 2000a).

The ideological character of antagonisms can be illustrated through supplementing Laclau's illustration:
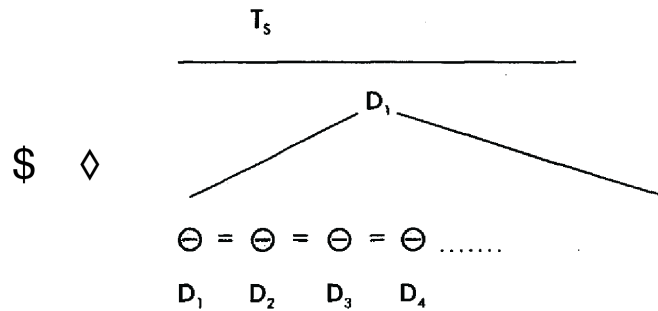
In the above figure, a signifier D_1 manages to empty itself and become an empty signifier of the chain of equivalences through subverting the signifying field, and thus it incarnates the impossible object (closure, i.e., the fullness of the community) concealing the always dislocated character of the social ($\$$), which is both the condition of possibility and impossibility ($\lozenge$) of the ideological distortion.[19] There are, however, three major problems with Laclau's reformulation of ideology in the theory of hegemony. First, he argues that closure is not only impossible, but also necessary at the same time, 'because without that fictitious fixing of meaning there would not be meaning at all' (Laclau, 1996b, p. 205). This would mean that ideology is something inevitable in the theory of hegemony, and Laclau actually agrees explicitly (tucked away in an endnote) with this inevitable character by declaring that 'illusion is a necessary one' and ideology is a 'dimension of society which cannot be suppressed (…) we will continue living in an ideological universe' (ibid., p. 220). Second, if the ideological dimension cannot be suppressed, then the critique of ideology becomes problematic, if not impossible. There seems to be no point of reference from which the critique of ideology would be possible or even necessary. A decade after his major work on ideology, Laclau turns again to the question of ideology:

> We are (…) reluctant to entirely abandon the notion of ideology. I think it can be maintained if its meaning is given, however, a particular twist. (…) This closing operation is what I would still call *ideological* which, in my vocabulary, as should be clear, has not the slightest pejorative connotation (Laclau, 2006a, p. 114).

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[19] Here I intentionally use the Lacanian matheme for *fantasy* ($\$ \lozenge a$), including the diamond-shaped *lozenge* (poinçon) $\lozenge$ as a condensation of four symbols: $\land$ (conjunction), $\lor$ (disjunction), $>$ (greater than) and $<$ (less than). By this I am trying to signal the uneven and fragile character of the ideological distortion; the dislocated character of the social being both the possibility and impossibility of 'closure'; and the unavoidable character of ideological distortion as an inherent effect of the construction of antagonisms. However, elaborating further the Lacanian understanding of fantasy would bring us well beyond the scope of this project.

So, the critique of ideology is impossible in the first instance, but is unnecessary in the last instance, since it is an inherent part of the political logic of hegemony. Because – and this is my third point – if every antagonism, every discursive attempt to construct a partial fixation of meaning is ideological, then we are again facing something similar to the positive or neutral concept of ideology. Laclau's concept introduces 'ideological distortion as a dimension of society that is inevitable but harmless' and 'ethically invariable; (…) all incarnations of the transcendent object are ethically indifferent' (Cooke, 2006, pp. 15–17). While it would be unjust to say that Laclau lacks an ethical position (his ethics correspond to the Lacanian ethics of the Real), Cooke is right that ideology as a harmless distortion loses its critical thrust. In order to be able to speak about ideology as a harmful operation, we would need to shift from the 'critique of closure to critique of closure as it is used to maintain and reproduce social relations of oppression' (ibid., p. 15).

The goal of Laclau's post-Marxist concept of ideology is to overcome the contemporary anti-essentialist, postmodernist understanding of the social as post-ideological, which mere presumption is ideology at its purest for Slavoj Žižek, who claims that 'this denial of ideology only provides the ultimate proof that we are more than ever embedded in ideology' (Žižek, 2009, p. 37). But to bring back the critical thrust of ideology as an analytical tool and understand it as a distortion or mystification, which sustains social relations of domination[20], one has to turn back to Marx's understanding of how ideology operates as a distortion whose specificity 'is its function of sustaining domination' (Larrain, 1991, p. 12). Terry Eagleton correctly points out that the idea of 'closure' needs to be re-evaluated based on the discursive setting, locating 'the ways in which signs, meanings and values help to reproduce a dominant social power. (…) Ideology is a matter of "discourse" rather than of "language" – of certain concrete discursive effects, rather than of signification as such' (Eagleton, 1991, pp. 221–223). Those effects refer to 'certain power-struggles central to the reproduction (or also, for some theories, contestation) of a whole form of social life' (ibid., p. 224). Michele Barrett also claims, in *The Politics of Truth*, that she 'would emerge with a reformulation of the theory of ideology' that would enable her to use it 'in the critical sense characteristic to Marxism, but applying it to any form of social domination or exploitation rather than restricting it to mystifications related to social class' (1991, p. vi). John Thompson also argued that the study of ideology should be the study of 'the

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[20] Here I intentionally shifted from Cooke's notion of oppression to the notion of *domination*. While these notions are often used interchangeably, I will show in the next section of this chapter why the notion of domination is more appropriate in post-Marxist political theory.

ways in which meaning (or signification) serves to sustain relations of domination' (1984, p. 4), just as Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt (1993) attempted to reintroduce ideology in discourse theory as a discursive effect, which mystifies *social relations of domination.*

Purvis and Hunt argue that both ideology and discourse 'have a distinguishable theoretical role to play in the analysis of social relations' (1993, p. 474), thus there is space for ideology in discourse theory, since (1) ideology and discourse both refer to social practices and relations mediated through communicative praxis and they both hold a distinguishable theoretical role in the analysis of those practices and relations; (2) the reintroduction of the negative/critical aspect of ideology could supplement discourse theory with the concept of 'directionality,' in the sense that ideology may function to favour certain subject positions and disadvantage others; and (3) introducing the critical aspect of ideology could highlight the 'results', 'effects' or 'consequences' of discursive practices which are rarely met in discourse analysis, since the central question in discourse theory usually addresses the historical conditions of possibility of certain discursive practices and seldom their outcomes and *effects.*

Drawing on Stuart Hall's dualistic view on ideology, where it is presented both as a process and as an effect, Purvis and Hunt suggest a distinction in Hall's dualistic view, namely an understanding of 'discourse as a process' and 'ideology as an effect.' They argue that this reformulation 'provides an important opening for a theory of ideology to go beyond charting the shifting discursive deployments and to move towards a causal account of the shifting balance of forces in order to explain the ideological effects of these ever-present and often subterranean discursive struggles' (1993, p. 486).

This reformulation of ideology, they argue, could get rid of the inherent contradictions of Marxism, while retaining its critical thrust by focusing on the constitution of the subject and the production of those truth-claims within discourses, which 'reinforce and reproduce dominant social relations' (ibid., p. 497). Focusing on these concrete effects of ideology gives a character of 'directionality' to this account. Purvis and Hunt describe their account of ideology through the example of the discursive practice wherein men politely open doors for women, where the discursive practice of door-opening

> only acquires its full ideological effect through its ironic reversal of the systematic relations of subordination that characterize patriarchal social relations. This effect is 'ideological' in that it pertains to relations of domination/subordination, facilitates their reproduction (…) by the mystification in which the apparent deferential treatment of women masks the structural inequalities that underlie and are the condition of such practices. Thus, what makes some discourses ideological is their connection with systems of domination. (ibidem.)

Purvis and Hunt also argue that in its purest form ideology not only mystifies domination, but presents it as natural, neutral, inevitable and universal. But what is domination and how does it relate to power? The conceptual precondition to reformulate ideology in the theory of hegemony as a harmful operation, which distorts, maintains and reproduces relations of domination, is to give an account of power and domination, and the way they function in hegemonic relations. Laclau and Mouffe have a similar 'mode of thinking' of power like Foucault. As Rasiński (2011a) summarizes, in contrary to 'classic formulations of power', both accounts reject economic reductionism and essentialism and locates power in the concept of discourse, both approaches emphasize its conflictual site and its disperse and decentralized character (that power is always contingent and historical) and both views pay attention also to the productive site of power. Just as Foucault focuses on the 'micro-physics of power' (Foucault, 1975) and 'relations of forces' (Foucault, 1980a), Laclau and Mouffe also refer to power in a slightly similar way as 'a contingent social logic', which is 'constructed in a pragmatic way and internally to the social, through the opposed logics of equivalence and difference' and which acquires its meaning only 'in precise conjunctural and relational contexts' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 142). It is surprising after considering these similarities that Laclau and Mouffe define subordination as any legitimized hierarchical social relation 'in which an agent is subjected to the decisions of another' (ibid., p. 153), oppression as 'those relations of subordination which have transformed themselves into sites of antagonisms' (ibid., p. 154) and domination as 'those relations of subordination which are considered as illegitimate from the perspective, or in the judgement, of a social agent external to them.' (ibidem.) This way, they turn back to what Rasiński calls the 'classic formulation of power', where the general question is the legitimacy of power or the lack of it. What I propose is that Foucault's understanding of relations of damination, or as he calls it 'states of domination,' seems more appropriate in the theory of hegemony.

Foucault in the mid-1980s summarized his ethics as a task 'to acquire the rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the ethos, the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible' (Foucault, 1997, p. 298). Foucault understands domination as a form of 'relations of power' in which 'the power relations, instead of being mobile, allowing the various participants to adopt strategies modifying them, remain blocked, frozen' (ibid., p. 283). In the state of domination 'practices of freedom' or possibilities of resistance may exist, but in extremely limited ways. In sum: in states of domination 'power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom.' (ibidem.) Laclau and Mouffe

also refer to the possibility of partial fixation of power, as a regularity in dispersion, which they connect to the construction of nodal points. While they basically locate oppression and domination between antagonistic forces, I propose that the Foucauldian concept of domination can be introduced to the theory of hegemony only in the field of differences, in the field of differential moments. If domination is a perpetually fixed power relation, then the social logic of this fixation (cf., cementing function) is not the logic of equivalence, which subverts differential positions, but the logic of difference, which tendentially defines and partially fixes discursive moments. Of course, the logic of equivalence also attempts to incarnate the role of closure, but antagonism – as its discursive form – is the site of conflict or struggle, where power is 'mobile, reversible and unstable' (Foucault, 1997, p. 292). Power can be partially fixed only when the logic of difference subverts the antagonistic relation, 'when stable mechanisms replace the free play of antagonistic reactions' (Foucault, 1982, p. 794).

Thus, I argue that the only strategic way in the theory of hegemony to cement power relations in a perpetually asymmetrical manner is *to prevent their subversion, deconstruction and disarticulation,* namely to prevent them from transforming into antagonisms – or into any other attempts of mastering dislocation – and to keep them excluded from their representation in antagonisms. This discursive excess, which escapes the field of representation, is called in Laclau's recent writings '*heterogeneity*' in a Derridean fashion.

4.2 Masking the 'Real as Extimacy'

Before discussing what is beyond the field of representation, let's have one more look at what kind of exclusion one finds within the field of representation. As already discussed, on the two sides of the antagonistic front there is an antagonizing force and an antagonized force. But in 'reality' (that is in the political reality of the social) the situation is more complex. Due to its overdetermined character, the social is crisscrossed with antagonisms, and for Laclau it offers the possibility to extend his analysis of the conceptual dichotomic frontier. He raises the possibility that, due to an interruption in the chain of equivalences, the antagonistic frontier can become blurred, for instance in the case when an empty signifier (i.e., the Master signifier) is articulated to different links in a different chain of equivalences. This is possible if the other hegemonic side of the frontier or a rival hegemonic project articulates the same demand as an empty signifier to a different chain of equivalences. Laclau (2005, p. 131) illustrates it as follows:
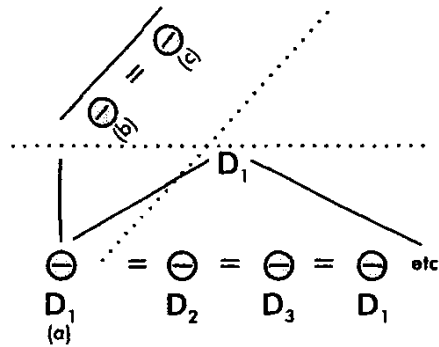
When the same signifier is articulated to rival hegemonic projects (like the articulation of 'people' as historical actors), this articulation 'generates an autonomy' of the signifier. It doesn't mean that the signifier escapes the chain of equivalence, but 'that its meaning is indeterminate between alternative equivalential frontiers. I shall call signifiers whose meaning is "suspended" in that way *floating signifiers*"' (ibidem., italics added). The meaning of the floating signifier will be tendentially fixed by the result of the hegemonic struggle. This is of utmost importance, since if there were no floating signifiers, we wouldn't be able to talk about hegemonic struggles. Thus, within the field of representation the identifiable exclusions correspond to the discursive exteriority of an antagonism (the hegemonic Other, rival hegemonic projects, floating signifiers, etc.).

So, then what characterizes the exclusion that is outside the field of representation? Laclau calls *social heterogeneity* the specific exteriority which escapes the attempt of mastering the dislocated character of the social. Social heterogeneity consists of those elements that cannot be included in any structural location within the construction of an antagonism. But heterogeneity is not simply an exterior space to the field of representation – it also functions as a condition of possibility of the antagonistic relation. 'These remainders are absolutely essential for any equivalence for if they were to vanish, the chain would collapse into simple identity' (Laclau, 1996b, p. 219). Recalling Michael Walzer's interpretation of the Prague demonstration in 1989 in *Thick and Thin* (1994), Laclau gives the example of the empty signifier which tendentially united the social field of the protest ('justice') and the elements of the chain of equivalence which gave content to it ('the end of arbitrary arrests, equal and impartial law enforcement, etc.'). Within this contingent construction of the antagonistic front the signifier 'justice' incarnates specific demands, but it also becomes 'imprisoned' by them. After the relations of the elements in the chain of equivalence is set, the chain is not infinitely extendable:

> Some new links would simply be incompatible with the remainders of particularity which are already
> part of the chain. Once the 'end of arbitrary arrests' has become one of the names of 'justice', the

'prevalence of the will of the people over all legal restrictions' could not without difficulty enter into the same system of equivalences. This does not mean that the particularistic remainder of the 'end of arbitrary arrests' will be always the same – on the contrary, new equivalential links can modify the meaning of 'arbitrariness' or of 'arrest' – but the important point is that deformation does not operate unimpeded. There is a resistance of meaning which operates in the opposite direction. (ibidem.)

It is important to note that Laclau's notion of 'differential remainders' or 'remainders of particularity' has two sides. On the one hand it appears in the previous diagram illustrated with the two semicircles (θ) above the demands (D), which refers to the split character of the signifier – the upper semicircle represents the equivalential character of the signifier, entering into a common opposition with other elements, while the lower semicircle suggests that the signifier preserves partially its differential character, which is its remainder of particularity. On the other hand, the notion of heterogeneity, from *On Populist Reason* (2005) onwards, refers also to the field of heterogeneity, which Laclau exemplifies with Hegel's 'people without history,' Lacan's *caput mortuum* (the leftover of chemical experiment) and Marx's *lumpenproletariat*. As Laclau argues, by the isolation of the proletariat as the historical protagonist group from the outsiders of historicity (the lumpenproletariat), Marx not only set the limits of objectification in constructing the antagonistic relation of the proletariat and the capitalist class, but this very exclusion made the antagonism possible (ibid., p. 146-148). The lumpenproletariat is precisely the particular remainder that cannot be included in any structural location within the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, but it is also nonetheless a constitutive exteriority, which both makes the construction of antagonism possible and threatens it as a subversive 'outside.' '[F]orces which have constructed their antagonism on a certain terrain show their secret solidarity when it is that very terrain which is put into question. It is like the reaction of two chess players to somebody who kicks the board' (ibid., p. 141).[21] Thus the *radically absent* field of heterogeneity is in the first instance not something external to discourse, it is part of the field of discursivity, but it acquires its character of a Lacanian Real[22] from the perspective of

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[21] Notice that this description of heterogeneity as analogous with an exterior subversion of the game of chess is almost entirely similar to Žižek's elaboration of the Real in his analogy between the Lacanian three orders and the game of chess.

[22] As already discussed, the Lacanian Real cannot be signified directly. The only way it can represent itself is through the subversion of signification. Laclau's heterogeneous is very close to this understanding of the Real. Heterogeneity can be thought of as a lack, which is only representable through its subversive character. Heterogeneity 'is an ontological terrain in which the failure inherent to representability (the moment of clash present in antagonism which, as we have said, escapes direct representation) becomes itself representable, even if only through the traces of non-representability within the representable (as in Kant's noumenon: an object which shows itself through the impossibility of its adequate representation)' (Laclau, 2006a, p. 105).

the antagonistic frontier, *as the subversive (traumatic) outside, which is lurking behind the field of representation*. From the perspective of the field of representation the heterogeneous 'cannot be subsumed under any single "inside" logic. The construction of any "inside" is going to be only a partial attempt to master an "outside" which will always exceed those attempts' (ibid., p. 148). Laclau illustrates it with the following diagram (ibidem.):
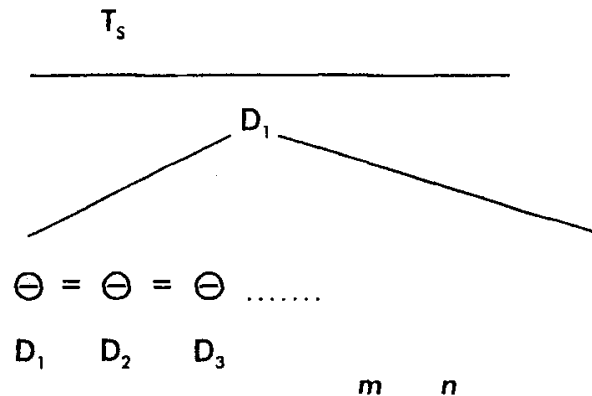
In this diagram *m* and *n* represent the remainders of particularity that cannot be included in the antagonism. The field of social heterogeneity cannot be apprehended by dialectical reversal or as a binary opposition, it is closer to a leftover, a waste product of *inclusion par exclusion*, inclusion through exclusion (Foucault, 1973/2002, p. 78). It is also very close to what Lacan called *extimité* – extimacy, that is 'not placed in the "inside" or the "outside". It is placed at a point of *extimacy*. Using this neologism, Lacan means that the most intimate is located on the outside and announces its presence as a strange body that recognizes a constitutive rupture of the intimacy' (Biglieri & Perelló, 2011, p. 60). But it is also a condition of possibility of constructing antagonism that 'presupposes heterogeneity because the resistance of the antagonized force cannot be logically derived from the form of the antagonizing one' (Laclau, 2005, p. 150). Simply speaking, the field of heterogeneity is *the cradle of struggles*, of constructing antagonisms. Thus, the concept of heterogeneity can be comprehended at least from three aspects. First, the antagonistic force,

> will always be something more than the pure opposite of power. There is a Real [of it] which resists symbolic integration. Secondly, in the diagram heterogeneity is also present in the particularism of the equivalential demands – a particularism which, as we know, cannot be eliminated because it is the very ground of the equivalential relation. Thirdly, as we have seen, particularism (heterogeneity) is also what prevents some of the demands from incorporating themselves in the equivalential chain (ibid., p. 152).

With the introduction of the concept of heterogeneity Laclau extends the field of hegemony analysis by envisaging other possible forms of mastering dislocation besides the form of antagonism. As Lasse Thomassen correctly points out, the 'question here is whether or

not, and to what extent, (contingent) hegemonic articulation is subsumed to antagonism as the necessary end of hegemony' (2005, p. 293). For Thomassen, the limit of objectivity cannot be simply summarized by Laclau's different names of the Real (antagonism, dislocation and heterogeneity), but it is reflected also 'in the mutual contamination of equivalence and difference' (ibid., p. 297). Thus, Thomassen impels those who are interested in hegemony analysis to start focusing also on the logic of difference besides the logic of equivalence as also 'a way of constructing hegemonic discourses' (ibid., p. 305). This is very important in two aspects. First, Thomassen illuminates the logic of difference and heterogeneity as important albeit often neglected sites of hegemony analysis and second, he extends Laclau's account of ideology to embrace the field of heterogeneity. He argues that if 'discursive closure is ultimately impossible, if there is always something heterogeneous, then (…) the attempt to conceal it can be said to be ideological.' (ibidem.) The concealment of the heterogeneous as an ideological distortion can be inscribed in the previous diagram, where the concealment of the dislocated character of the social had been included:
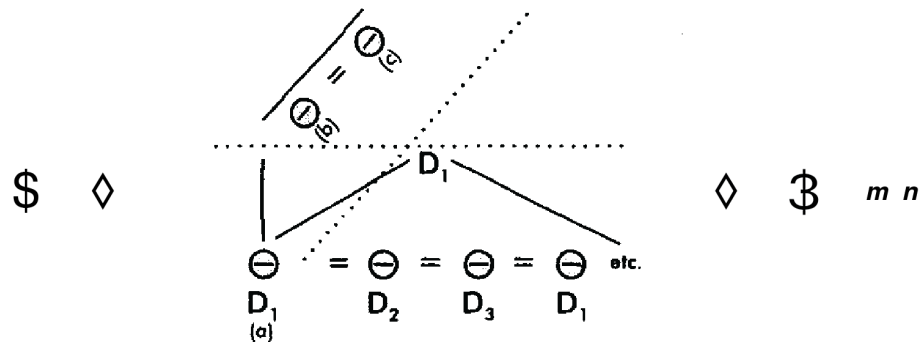
My aim with this extended diagram is to illuminate that the ideological distortion of the impossible object (the fullness of the community) occurs in two aspects. On the one hand, the empty (and floating) signifier incarnates the role of closure, concealing the always dislocated character of the social ($), which is both the condition of possibility and impossibility (◊) of the ideological distortion. On the other hand, the always dislocated character of the social is concealed by the incarnation of closure also through the exclusion (∉) of elements (*m* and *n*) – which cannot be inscribed in any structural location within the antagonism, but which makes antagonism possible.

4.3 The Ethics of the Real

In this way it is possible to extend Laclau's account of ideology one step further. But how would it be possible to inscribe the Foucauldian concept of domination within this framework, which inscription – as discussed – is necessary in order to turn back to Marx (cf., ideology as a *mystification of domination*) within post-Marxist theory? And how is the conceptualization of

domination possible in a post-foundational framework? There are two basic interconnected obstacles that such a project (inscribing the concept of domination in the theory of hegemony) has to overcome. One is related to Laclau's understanding of domination (oppression), and the other is connected to his relation to universalism and ethics.

As discussed in Rasiński (2011a), Laclau has a similar mode of thinking of power as Foucault. Laclau also emphasizes the disperse, contingent character and the productive side of power relations. He argues, in an interview, that 'the possibility of a free society depends on the existence of relations of power' (1999, p. 19). Thus, power for Laclau is nothing 'bad', on the contrary, freedom presupposes power. In this sense, Foucault's notion of 'games of power' falls on fertile soil in Laclau's theory of hegemony, where hegemonic struggle presupposes the conflictual, open character of the social. As Laclau argues:

> I would not like to live in (…) a society from which freedom would have been totally eliminated. This is the paradox of freedom: in order to have freedom you have to institute the other of freedom, which is power. You can destroy some forms of power, but the destruction of these forms of power would involve establishing new relations of power of a different kind. (…) [U]nrestricted freedom would be the same thing as a complete lack of freedom. You can only free some things by unfreeing some others, and in this sense power and hegemony are constitutive of social relations (ibid., p. 20).

As for oppression and domination, Laclau retains the standpoint he developed with Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, namely oppression understood as a relation characteristic to antagonisms, and domination understood as illegitimate subordination. In the interview from 1999, he explicitly identifies the two sides of the antagonistic frontier as the positions of the oppressor and the oppressed. 'The oppressed (…) constitute their identity by denying the identity of the oppressor. But the process of advancing the claims against a system of oppression destabilizes both the identity of the oppressor and the identity of the oppressed' (ibid., p. 24). Thus, both oppression and domination are tendential and always displaced by re/dis-articulatory processes. It doesn't mean that Laclau is indifferent toward oppression, on the contrary, in principle he stands for 'any struggle against oppression' (ibid., p. 8). But at the same time Laclau claims that in the postmodern age we have to reject grandiose eschatological narratives of emancipation in order to come to terms 'with our own finitude and with the political possibilities that it opens. (…) We can perhaps say that today we are at the end of emancipation and at the beginning of freedom' (1996a, p. 19).

This rejection of eschatological narratives brings us to the core of Laclau's ethics, which Žižek identifies with the ethics of the Real, 'an ethics of confrontation with an impossible, traumatic kernel not covered by any ideal (of unbroken communication, of the invention of the

self)' (1990, p. 259), that is *the ethics of the impossibility of society*. The ethics of the Real in this sense refers to the rejection of great meta-historical narratives of a possible harmony, totality and closure of the social, which is at the heart of Laclau's project of radical democratic imaginary, based on constant struggle and resolve, a continuous contamination of universality and particularity. 'The feminist or ecological political subjects [are] (…) *like any other social identity*, floating signifiers, and it is a dangerous illusion to think that they are assured once and for all, that the terrain which has constituted their discursive conditions of emergence cannot be subverted' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 112). There is no way to abolish power relations, to escape from antagonisms and to overcome the precariousness and contingency that dominate the social. The potential in mastering the conflictual character of the social lies in the constant re-negotiation of hegemonic relations. This consideration is also at the heart of the political reading of the Lacanian ethics of the Real:

> Lacan's admonitions about the dangers of seeing the present in the past can equally serve to warn us of the difficulties involved in imagining the future. (…) [T]he political implications of Lacan's approach to history might turn out to have a surprisingly Foucauldian flavour. That is, the impossibility of mapping out the future according to some grand metahistorical narrative might lead, not to political inaction, but to a series of intelligently fought tactical battles (Evans, 1996, p. 38).

This denial of any underlying law which would explain social-political practices leads Laclau to a specific understanding of universality as well. As already shown through the example of the empty signifier, universalization is both necessary and impossible – necessary because it is the condition of constructing antagonisms, and impossible because the representation will always be constitutively inadequate. What Laclau denies to classical universalism is its assertion with a precise content, thus what he stands for is a universality 'deprived of any kind of positive content. (…) [I]f the moment of universality had a content given *a priori* once and for all, no dialogical process would be possible' (1999, p. 14). For Laclau any kind of universality has to be contextual.

But however radical Laclau's democratic imaginary is, due to the lack of a definite positive standpoint, he has been strongly criticized for falling into a liberal, statist position.[23] Certainly it is very problematic when it comes to evaluating or analyzing different antagonisms. Is it conceptually on the same level to talk about a struggle led by the Ku Klux Klan and a struggle led by black and minority groups? For Laclau, it seems like it is:

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[23] These critical standpoints will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

if you are struggling against racism and sexism, you are going to exclude from your project some people who are defending, for instance, traditional values; you are going to exclude the moral majority, the Ku Klux Klan, and similar groups. So asserting a radical democratic project will include these types of exclusion (ibid., p. 24).

I argue, that this is the consequence of the lack of a discursive concept of domination in Laclau's theory, which would, however, perfectly fit his criteria regarding universality. As understood in the Foucauldian sense outlined above, domination does not have a positive content, it only refers to 'perpetually asymmetrical', fixed power relations that are stable, immobile and irreversible historically *longue durée*. The positive content and the historical character of domination(s)[24] is always contextual and this is what makes Foucault's ethics with regards to domination applicable in Laclau's theory. The ethical standpoint, which is against all kinds of domination, is the form of universality which is *deprived of all positive content.*

<div align="center">* * *</div>

As previously discussed, if domination is a fixed, immobile, frozen power relation, then to understand the social logic of this fixation (i.e., cementing function) in the theory of hegemony, one has to – in accordance with Thomassen – draw attention to the logic of difference, which tendentially defines and partially fixes discursive moments. The logic of equivalence is the site of struggle, where power is 'mobile, reversible and unstable' (Foucault, 1997, p. 292). Power can be partially fixed only 'when stable mechanisms replace the free play of antagonistic reactions' (Foucault, 1982, p. 794). The only strategic way in the theory of hegemony to fix and cement power relations in a perpetually asymmetrical manner is *to prevent their subversion, deconstruction and disarticulation,* namely to prevent them from transforming into antagonisms – or into any other attempts of mastering dislocation – and to keep them excluded from their representation in antagonisms. However, a question immediately arises: Is it power or meaning that is fixed through hegemonic articulations?

Before answering this question, let's recall what *fixation* refers to in the theory of hegemony: every 'discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre. We will call the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation, *nodal points'* (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 112). While Laclau and Mouffe refer to partial, tendential fixation, Laclau in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* introduces Husserl's distinction between 'sedimentation' and 'reactivation'. For Laclau,

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[24] This is an intentional theft from Laclau's use of the term emancipation(s).

if we are looking for an origin of the 'institution of the social', the only logic we can reveal is contingency, since this institution was 'only possible through the repression of options that were equally open' (1990, p. 34). This refers to the form of exclusion that was discussed in the case of heterogeneity. A successful hegemonic project can construct a centre only through the repression of the excluded elements. Thus, when hegemony analysis looks for the origins of such a hegemonic project, what it reveals are the discarded historical options, 'the terrain of the original violence, of the power relation through which that instituting act took place.' (ibidem.) In the case of a successful hegemonic struggle

> 'forgetting of the origins' tends to occur; the system of possible alternatives tends to vanish and the traces of the original contingency to fade. In this way, the instituted tends to assume the form of a mere objective presence. This is the moment of sedimentation. It is important to realize that this fading involves a concealment. If objectivity is based on exclusion, the traces of that exclusion will always be somehow present. What happens is that the sedimentation can be so complete, the influence of one of the dichotomous relationships' poles so strong, that the contingent nature of that influence, its *original* dimension of power, do not prove immediately visible. Objectivity is thus constituted merely as presence. (ibidem.)

The loosening of the sedimented forms of objectivity is possible through *reactivation*. Laclau understands reactivation not as a return to the origins, where hegemonic alternatives were repressed, but 'rediscovering, through the emergence of new antagonisms, the contingent nature of so-called "objectivity"' (ibid., p. 35). This rediscovery through the emergence of new antagonisms, is the condition to present the *historical* character of the original act of institution by which its 'stagnant forms that were simply considered as objectivity and taken for granted are now revealed as contingent and project that contingency to the "origins" themselves.' (ibidem.) For Laclau, the sedimented forms of 'objectivity' make up the *social*, on which the emergence of antagonisms constitutes the *political*. This sedimented character of the social largely impacts which rival hegemonic projects could possibly emerge, which signifiers will be capable of representing the chains of equivalence. 'While this is ultimately contingent, it is not arbitrary. The particular signifiers are not equally able or likely to take up this task because it takes place in an already partly sedimented terrain permeated by relations of power' (Thomassen, 2005, p. 295). Laclau also argues that on the sedimented terrain of the social, such structural locations can emerge 'which represent points of high concentration of power,' and consequently '[n]ot any position in society, not any struggle is equally capable of transforming its own contents in a nodal point that becomes an empty signifiers' (Laclau, 1996a, p. 43). Now, if the condition of possibility of constructing antagonism is a sedimented social field, and if its condition of impossibility is that it cannot include every element into the structural locations of

mastering dislocation, then it is possible to assume the existence of such sedimented forms which are historically *longue durée* and frequently excluded from antagonisms (or any other forms of mastering dislocation). Drawing on the previous diagram, I will illustrate such exclusions with the matheme:

$$m \notin_{(t)} A$$

A particular element (*m*) is excluded ($\notin$) on a historically long-term basis (t) from any structural location within antagonisms (*A*). But with this matheme almost nothing has been illuminated about the characteristics of domination. One could think of, for instance, the sedimented institution that almost every country in the world has laws relating to and aimed at preventing child labour. While child labour is not completely extinct, the demand of the 'legislation of child employment' is definitely excluded from the construction of antagonisms historically *longue durée*. And even if there are factories and corporations who would accumulate more capital by the legislation of child labour, the frequent exclusion of the 'legislation of child employment' from antagonisms wouldn't count as a state of domination in a Foucauldian sense.

This is why it is necessary to make a distinction between sedimented forms of objectivity, which are the historical results of successful hegemonic struggles that loosened perpetually asymmetrical relations of power, and excluded forms of objectivity that cemented asymmetrical power *longue durée*, but had been displaced due to the historical result of successful hegemonic struggles. In terms of the previous example, the radical restriction of child labour is a historical result of successful hegemonic struggles that started to loosen the asymmetrical relations of power characteristic to child labour in the 20th century. For instance, in 1911 the mass walkouts of schoolchildren in the UK and Ireland found solidarity in wide industrial unrest and strikes. Schoolchildren demanded an end to corporal punishment in the form of the cane and the strap, an age limit fixed at 14 in the factories, shorter working hours, etc. (cf. Marson, 2012). Child labour implied perpetually asymmetrical relations of power which allowed 'an extremely limited margin of freedom' (Foucault, 1997, p. 283). Considering this successful hegemonic struggle, which loosened the grounds of domination inscribed in child labour, the exclusion of the discourse which implied these states of domination would not count as domination at all from the perspective of Foucault's ethics ('to play these games of power with as little domination as possible'). Then what would count as domination, and how does it enter into discussion with Laclau's theory of hegemony?

First, as has been pointed out, a discursive concept of domination, if intended to function as an ethical direction in the theory of hegemony, cannot have a positive content. However, the

endowment of the notion of domination with positive content or a specific practice has been characteristic to political philosophy: Thomas Hobbes' (1651/1968) conditions of violence and enslavement, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1754/1987) oppressive establishment of property and laws, Hegel's (1807/1977) master-slave dialectic, and Marx's (1845a/1971) dominating ruling class – just to mention a few. In these conceptualizations an origin, a necessary agent, a specific social relation or practice fills the notion of domination with a positive content. This tendency has been contested by contemporary republican philosophy, which in the past few decades has become the vanguard school in the theorization of domination. Absolutely central to the endeavors of republicanism is the conception of freedom as *non-domination*, as independence from arbitrary power. What is at stake for contemporary republican philosophy is constructing a universalist account, a general theory of domination. Philip Pettit (1997) and Frank Lovett (2010) are among the most influential philosophers of this philosophical enterprise in constructing a universalist account, a general theory of domination, whose normative claim is that 'as a matter of justice, the political and social institutions and practices of any society should be organized so as to minimize domination' (Lovett, 2010, p. 2). But however successful the republican attempts are in universalizing an account of domination into a general theory, the arbitrary power conceptions of domination put way too much emphasis on the individual and on the interest of the agents, while they do not reflect the structural and historical mechanisms that constitute these individuals. Hence republican thought could not contribute much to social criticism, which has pervaded the spine of this chapter so far. For the exception is a metaphor, developed by liberal theorist Isaiah Berlin (1969), which is a recurring example in republican explications (cf. Grant, 2013). Berlin's measurement of freedom (as the other of domination) refers to the number of doors (i.e., options) open to an individual. In the republican negative liberty conceptions, this metaphor has been changed and started referring to closed doors, to individuals locked in a room, and to different scenarios of possible escape from the trap (e.g., persuasion, collective force, etc.). If there was ever a masterpiece which addressed this phenomenon of captivity, it is undoubtedly the surrealist film *The Exterminating Angel* (*El Ángel Exterminador*), directed by Spanish filmmaker Luis Buñuel in 1962. The plot starts with a formal dinner party at a lavish mansion. When the guests start preparing to return home, they are unable to leave not only the house, but a certain room, for some inexplicable reason. The doors are all open, but they are caught and trapped in the mansion for a long time (days or months), which they cannot even estimate. The characters become contentious, malignant, and hysterical. One of them dies, a couple commit suicide. The other guests, however, manage to break open a wall and get water from a pipeline, they find some paper to eat and they also find

opium in a box in order to relieve pain. Some of them even attempt to liberate themselves by performing a mystical ceremony. Finally, they find out that if they reconstruct all the circumstances (positions, movements, utterances) of the dinner party when they became trapped, they can then leave the room. To thank the Lord for their mysterious escape from the mansion, they attend a church mass. After the service, however, they find themselves trapped again, now in the cathedral with the mass and the clergy, unable to leave due to some inexplicable reason. I propose that a discursive account of domination that is compatible with Laclau's theory of hegemony can be extracted from this plot and Foucault's works, considering the following general assumptions.

Domination has no origin. For Foucault, power is an aspect of social relations and it has no origin, in the sense that it has no infrastructure that would primarily define its aims, tactics and strategies. Foucault rejects the classical formulations of power, which were based on either State apparatuses, juridical practices or economic relations. 'By power, I do not mean "Power" as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule' (Foucault, 1978b, p. 92). Foucault understands power as an omnipresent, meticulous web of a multitude of forces that interweave the social sphere, which constitute and organize, assemble and disperse them. Foucault's attention is focused on the microphysics of power instead of the macro perspective of the classical accounts of it (albeit besides *local tactics*, Foucault also discusses *larger strategies* as well). One great example that could illuminate Foucault's understanding of power is (ironically) Lacan's metaphor of the river. As Richard Boothby points out, for Lacan it is impossible to measure the energy of the river, one would need a dam, for instance, to talk about energy. It is possible to presuppose the force, but it is only accessible in a meaningful way with a dam:

> To say that the energy was in some way already there in a virtual state in the current of the river is properly speaking to say something that has no meaning, for the energy begins to be of interest to us in this instance only beginning with the moment in which it is accumulated, and it is accumulated only beginning with the moment when machines are put to work in a certain way, without doubt animated by something of a sort of definite propulsion which comes from the river current (Lacan in Boothby, 1991, p. 62).

Parallel to this, Foucault regards the particular forms of power – that were described by classical theories – as concrete and contextual strategies: 'these are only the terminal forms power takes' (Foucault, 1978b, p. 92). The classical accounts ultimately failed to unveil the microphysical, capillary operations of power at the molecular level of the social. Thus, Foucault rejects to formulate a theory of power, his intention is to make it useful as an analytical category,

which focuses on these molecular levels, 'the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power' (ibid, p. 93). Power, however omnipresent, does not 'embrace everything,' it is an aspect of social relations. In the same way, domination in Foucault's understanding is an aspect of power relations, which refers to perpetually asymmetrical relations of power. In this way, what stands for the analysis of power is also applicable to the analysis of states of domination – just as power, domination also has no origin, in the sense that there is no essential, determinate or fundamental operation or strategy that would be able to give the notion of domination a positive content. Just like in Buñuel's film: the guests are trapped in the room for some *inexplicable reason*, which is unidentifiable. Domination has a multitude of states, and its operations and strategies are always contextual and are always subject to concrete analysis.[25]

Domination has no source. Contrary to the classical formulations of power and domination, which relied on the identification of a source (a King, a Master, an oppressor, a dominating group, etc.), a discursive account of domination must reject such identifications. In turn it would be also superfluous to identify a primary or ultimate group of the oppressed, exploited, alienated, etc. For Foucault the question is not that of 'solid and global kind of domination that one person exercises over others, or one group over another, but the manifold forms of domination that can be exercised within society' (1980a, p. 96). It means that since power is not possessed, but rather *exercised*, domination is also not something that can be possessed. Exercising power means that power is exercised by subjects and subjects are constituted by power in an intersubjectively subjected manner. This approach is very close to Laclau's conflictual understanding of power, which emphasizes the perpetual contestation of power through hegemonic struggles. Laclau also rejects the possibility of identifying a privileged hegemonic actor, 'as all historical experience shows, it is impossible to determine *a priori* (…) the hegemonic actors' (2005, p. 150). If domination has no origin and no privileged source, then it is impossible to escape it by sleight of hand – with the elimination of a certain social group, an institution, etc.

This is also the problem in Buñuel's film. The guests can identify neither the origin of their regrettable predicament nor the source, an ultimate oppressor who would bear the burden of responsibility of the guests' misery. They either have to turn against each other or to God, trying to identify someone responsible for their suffering.

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[25] To avoid misunderstandings: I don't argue that there is nothing analytically identifiable in specific states of domination. Rather, I use Buñuel's film as a metaphor to conceptualize domination *per se*.

Domination allows an extremely limited margin of freedom. As discussed, power always presupposes a certain degree of freedom and resistance. The total lack of freedom or the total lack of power would assume the existence of a closed totality. Without freedom it would be impossible to talk about power relations. Power is always a subject to contestation, it is 'mobile, reversible, and unstable' (Foucault, 1997, p. 292). The same is true for states of domination. Even if, in the case of domination, power is 'blocked, frozen' (ibid., p. 283) and perpetually asymmetrical, there is still an 'extremely limited margin of freedom' (ibidem.) and possibility of resistance. 'Even when the power relation is completely out of balance, when it can truly be claimed that one side has "total power" over the other, a power can be exercised over the other only insofar as the other still has the option of killing himself, of leaping out the window, or of killing the other person' (ibid., p. 292). Foucault gives the example of the state of domination in the marital structure the 18th and 19th centuries. While power relations between men and women were perpetually irreversible, 'women had quite a few options: they could deceive their husbands, pilfer money from them, refuse them sex.' (ibidem.)

Domination allows for a limited margin of freedom and possibility to resist. In Buñuel's film, the guests were also able to acquire water and food, to calm their pain with opium and to make love in the closet, in order to survive captivity. But after all of these considerations, where is the proper 'place' of the discursive account of domination in Laclau's theory of hegemony?

* * *

In what sense is domination *discursive*? In the first instance, it is discursive in the sense that it is an aspect of power, which is for Foucault discursive *per se*: on the one hand, power is conducive to what is sayable within a 'discursive landscape'[26] and to who is allowed to speak. On the other hand, discourse is also the means of mastering power:

> [D]iscourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (Foucault, 1978b, p. 101).

The discursive landscape of the social is interwoven with power: it is everywhere, 'not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (ibid., p. 93). Power is

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[26] I understand the interdiscourse of the social as a landscape in a Wittgensteinian fashion. Wittgenstein often uses the notion 'landscapes' in his *Philosophical Investigations* as a metaphor to refer to the heterogeneity and complex relation of the elements of a picture (Binkley, 1973). Philosophy can be understood as a journey across the landscape, a 'travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction', where approaching the same landmarks again and again from different directions allows for 'new sketches to be made' (Wittgenstein, 1986, p. V).

immanent in social relations, by which it is produced continuously. Richard A. Lynch gives a very clear example of how someone is dressed up. It is on the one hand both a discursive practice and a meaningful representation of the subject, and on the other hand, the fact that the subject is dressed up, and dressed up in specific way is interwoven by 'a number of other, "capillary" (friends) and "macro" (fashion) as well as extra-legal power relations' (2011, p. 18). Power is thus a special tissue of relations of force, a productive matrix immanent in social relations, a blanket of network and a 'moving substrate' (Foucault, 1978b, p. 93) that infiltrates the discursive landscape. Foucault also argues that, while power is obviously exercised by subjects and on subjects, it has a *nonsubjective* dimension. He asserts that even if the relations of power, their operation, their 'logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, (…) yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them' (ibid., p. 95). It is due to his methodological considerations that he focuses on the *physics* of power in the first instance instead of the agents that exercise it. This said, it is not a coincidence at all that Foucault's account of relations of power and *force* (not to mention resistance) are in an implicit conversation with Newtonian physics. As Richard A. Lynch points out, the Newtonian definition of force is analogous with Foucault's. The Newtonian matheme of force ($F = ma$) implies that greater mass requires greater force to move and accelerate. 'The important point here is that "force" is whatever serves to put an object into motion, regardless of the origin or source of that force. Force may be introduced by gravity, magnetism, or some other means' (2011, p. 20). Without falling into extremes, it is possible to argue that since domination is a specific aspect of power relations, it is also a specific aspect of the physics of force, very similar to Albert Einstein's understanding of *gravity* that he developed in the theory of general relativity in 1915. Contrary to Newton's laws that regarded gravity as a force immanent to objects, Einstein found that gravity is a distortion in the fabric of space-time.
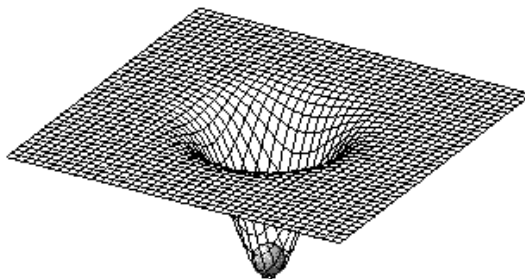
In this picture (above), the fabric of space-time is deformed by a massive object, like the Sun, and this distortion is felt as gravity. One could imagine setting a heavy object in the centre of a trampoline. If one would roll a small ball around the edge, it would spiral inward toward the heavy object. This is also how the Sun tugs at the planets in the solar system. As an analogy,

it is also possible to translate the concept of gravity to the historical entity of the discursive landscape (space-time fabric). The Lacanian concept of *nodal points* has already been discussed as used in Laclau's theory – partial fixation of meaning. In a certain social setting there are multiple nodal points, 'some of them may be highly overdetermined: they may constitute points of condensation of a number of social relations and, thus, become the focal point of a multiplicity of totalizing effects' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 139). Nodal points could 'represent points of high concentration of power' (Laclau, 1996a, p. 43), that is always contextual to the specific sedimented terrain of the social. Each nodal point structures the historical entity of the discursive landscape, thus each nodal point has a certain gravity, but it is always tendential, nodal points appear as lightweight objects and easily disintegrate by rearticulation, by 'the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 113).

The gravity of states of domination also deforms the historical entity of the discursive landscape around nodal points – *meaning is fixed by the operations of power, and power is perpetually fixed by meaning*. But in the case of states of domination, where power relations are perpetually irreversible, nodal points appear as massive objects and the field of gravity is much stronger. Like in the case of a neutron star:
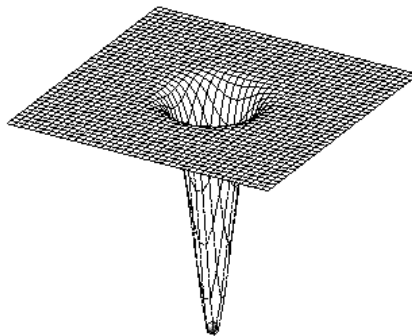
The stronger the gravity, the harder to escape from the warped space around the object. In the case of tendentially-fixed meanings, escaping their discursive terrain or displacing the nodal points is easily imaginable through the subversion of meaning. Though when it comes to the massive objects of states of domination, both escape from it, and the subversion of the meaningful massive object is problematic. In the gravitation of states of domination meaning is not only fixed, but articulations passing through their field of gravity is deflected radically, like light is deflected from its original straight path passing by objects in the fabric of space-time (pictured below).
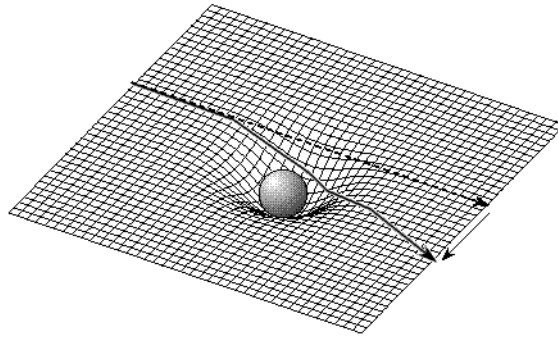
This deflection is characteristic to articulatory practices, since they establish a 'relation among elements such that their identity is modified' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105), but in the case of states of domination this deflection becomes a kind of 'refraction'. For instance, in Nazi Germany the word 'camp' (lager) became radically fractured, its meaning had been permanently deflected by the barbarism of the Holocaust. This might also be one reading of Theodor Adorno's famous quote that, 'Writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.' Just as the world, words also have been radically fractured by genocide, and the seismic aftershocks are still structuring the discursive landscapes of the social. There is a famous thought experiment in Einsteinian physics: What if the Sun would disappear in the blink of an eye? People would remain unaware of it for eight minutes while the traumatic memory of the Sun would still structure their world.

Thus, massive objects, like states of domination leave deep traces in the social fabric, and it is important to note that I understand domination not as a direct embodiment of perpetually asymmetrical power relations, but more like a gravitational force which is both a consequence and a structuring function of relations of power, which keeps power relations blocked and frozen. As Foucault posits, the interconnections of power 'delineate general conditions of domination, and this domination is organised into a more-or-less coherent and unitary strategic form' (Foucault, 1980a, p. 142). In sum: domination (1) denotes perpetually asymmetrical power relations, (2) has no origin and (3) no source, it (4) allows for an extremely limited margin of freedom and it (5) constitutes of and structures the historical entity of the discursive landscape and power relations immanent in it. But what are the conditions of possibility of domination?

* * *

In one of his last articles, *The Subject and Power* (1982), Foucault provides a reading of Laclau's theory of hegemony *avant la lettre*, which gives an interpretation of the primarily *linguistic* theory of hegemony from the aspect of *power*. Foucault starts his argument with the explication of the notion of *strategy*, which refers to the means and tactics put into action to

arrive at the objective of obtaining advantage over others. Strategies are implemented in two distinct procedures: in *relations of power* and in *confrontations/struggles*. While the strategies implemented in power relations designate the means employed to implement and sustain power in an effective way, and to install and maintain the conduct upon the conduct of others, strategies in situations of confrontation/struggle aim at depriving 'the opponent of his means of combat and to reduce him to giving up the struggle. (…) [T]he objective is to act upon an adversary in such a manner as to render the struggle impossible for him' (ibid., p. 793). And since there are no power relations without a certain degree of freedom and the possibility of resistance, relations of power always potentially imply the situation of confrontation/struggle. Each of the two (relations of power and confrontation/struggle) functions as a 'permanent limit' for the other – on the one hand the possibility, or presence, of confrontations/struggles sets a limit to relations of power, as a possible subversion of stable mechanisms; on the other hand, power relations set a limit to confrontations/struggles, because the stable mechanism of power relations is both the goal and the termination of confrontations/struggles:

> A relationship of confrontation reaches its term, its final moment (and the victory of one of the two adversaries), when stable mechanisms replace the free play of antagonistic reactions. Through such mechanisms one can direct, in a fairly constant manner and with reasonable certainty, the conduct of others. For a relationship of confrontation, from the moment it is not a struggle to the death, the fixing of a power relationship becomes a target – at one and the same time its fulfilment and its suspension (ibid., p. 794).

This is almost one-to-one Laclau's style of thinking: the continuous, mutual contamination of relations of power and confrontations/struggles is the backstroke of the mutual contamination of logic of difference and the logic of equivalence in Laclau's theory. Differential moments are always potentially subverted by the logic of difference, while antagonisms (chains of equivalence) are potentially subverted by the logic of difference. This is where Laclau's theory goes awry in Foucault: 'every strategy of confrontation dreams of becoming a relationship of power, and every relationship of power leans toward the idea that, if it follows its own line of development and comes up against direct confrontation, it may become the winning strategy.' (ibidem.) There is thus a reciprocal contamination of the two distinct logics, which as a 'moving substrate' puts into motion the 'historical fabric' that is the historical entity of the discursive landscape. It is in-between these two logics (relations of power and confrontation/struggle), where Foucault provides a more comprehensive reading on domination, compared to the already discussed 'perpetually asymmetrical relations of power.'

> In fact, it is precisely the disparities between the two readings which make visible those fundamental phenomena of 'domination' which are present in a large number of human societies. Domination is in fact

a general structure of power whose ramifications and consequences can sometimes be found descending to the most recalcitrant fibers of society. But at the same time it is a strategic situation more or less taken for granted and consolidated by means of a long-term confrontation between adversaries (ibid., p. 795).

Foucault points out extremely important features regarding domination here. First, domination is a fundamental phenomenon of human societies. Second, domination is a result of a confrontation, where one of the adversary groups managed to fulfil and suspend struggle, through fixing relations of power, and where these fixations could resonate down to the deepest micro-capillaries of power relations. And third, the mutual contamination of the two logics of relations of power and confrontation means that fixed power relations always imply resistance *in potentia*, thus its maintenance or subversion requires the recurring reanimation of confrontation/struggle. And precisely it is this long-term confrontation, what makes domination such a massive structuring body in the social fabric, like massive objects in the fabric of space-time.

> [W]hat makes the domination of a group, a caste, or a class, together with the resistance and revolts which that domination comes up against, a central phenomenon in the history of societies is that they manifest in a massive and universalizing form, at the level of the whole social body, the locking together of power relations with relations of strategy and the results proceeding from their interaction. (ibidem.)

The massive object of domination is capable of structuring the whole historical entity of the discursive landscape with its power relations and confrontations and their interactions. And besides these extremely relevant features regarding domination, the condition of possibility of domination – i.e., how do confrontations manage to fix power relations – has also been answered. The condition of possibility of domination is 'to act upon an adversary in such a manner as to render the struggle impossible for him' (ibid., p. 793), and then to maintain the fixed relations of power through either the logic of relations of power or confrontations/struggles, namely by any instrument 'which reduces the other to total impotence' (ibid., p. 794). Considering these explications, it is finally possible to locate the precise 'place' of the discursive account of domination in Laclau's theory.

4.4 The Mystification of Domination

Foucault provides a deeper understanding to Laclau's theory by providing the matrix of power for a theory whose motivation is linguistic in the first instance. But how is it possible to render a struggle impossible and to reduce the other to total impotence in the symbolic order of the social? It has already been discussed in Laclau's terminology, that to render a struggle impossible is to exclude it perpetually from antagonisms. It was illustrated with this matheme:

$$m \notin_{(t)} A$$

A particular element (m) is excluded ($\notin$) on a historically long-term basis (t) from any structural locations within antagonisms (A). But with this formula almost nothing had been illuminated about domination and about the particular element (m). With the example of child labour, a clarification has been made that the permanent exclusion of this element (m) can only be connected to domination if the exclusion is *not* the historical result of successful hegemonic struggles that loosened the grounds of perpetually fixed, cemented relations of power. It is, however, very important to note that this question is not determined by the element itself, but by the context of articulatory practice which tendentially defines its meaning. The meaning of child labour is extremely different in regards to the historical domination of children as factory workers, and in Makarenko's Gorky Colony Dzerzhinsky labour commune, where child labour was part of an emancipatory pedagogical activity. But one could also think of the transitions in Central-Eastern Europe in 1989-1990, which cast off the signifier 'communism' into marginality. While the transitions put an end to dictatorial regimes, the exclusion of the notion of 'communism' which designates the domination exercised by the 'really existing' communisms is extremely different from the notion of 'communism' that has been used by the critiques of the Soviet bloc and the marginal anti-capitalist struggles today. It cannot be emphasized enough that the analysis of domination has always to take the contextual meaningful totality, the historical discursive landscape into account.

What makes the exclusion of a specific element from antagonisms conducive to rendering a struggle impossible is that this element is not just any possibly excluded element. '[R]ejected alternatives do not mean everything that is *logically* possible, but those alternatives which were *in fact* attempted, which thus represented antagonistic alternatives and were suppressed' (Laclau, 1990, p. 34). Thus, in the case of states of domination, those elements are excluded from antagonisms which would be capable of loosening the field of perpetually asymmetrical, fixed power relation, that would be capable of subverting the field of domination and render it into struggle, i.e., antagonism. Thus, the excluded element (m) in the analysis of domination always refers to *subversive* signifiers.

The excluded, subversive signifiers – following Laclau's terminology of 'particular remainders' – are going to be called 'subversive remainders' from now on. What could function as a subversive remainder is obviously a question that a contextual analysis has to take into account. It is also important to make clear that the exclusion of the subversive signifier from the structure of antagonism doesn't refer to any kind of antagonism. It refers, on the one hand, to those antagonisms which cross the field of domination in the first instance, and, on the other

hand, to the antagonism that is rendered impossible. Considering these, a reformulated matheme would look like this:

$$\frac{\text{Ƨ} \quad \notin_{(t)} \quad A}{d}$$

Subversive elements (Ƨ) that would be capable of rendering a specific state of domination into a struggle are excluded ($\notin$) on a historically long-term basis (t) from any structural locations within antagonisms (*A*) which however criss-cross the sedimented terrain of the domination. It doesn't mean that any attempt to render the struggle possible is excluded. As Foucault had shown, domination always implies resistance *in potentia*. But if in a specific state of domination power relations are perpetually fixed, it means that any attempts to construct antagonism had been reduced to impotence either through strategies of power relations or through strategies of confrontation. But contrary to Foucault's, this account of domination is a linguistic one, it considers the dialectic of how meaning is fixed by power and how power is fixed by meaning, and emphasizes the latter. *It is a contribution to Laclau's post-foundational, linguistic theory of hegemony with an account of domination, whose primary focus is how power relations are fixed perpetually by articulatory practices*. It is undeniable that the fixed power relations imply a certain fixation in meaning as well. With this, the question that has been raised before ('Is it power or meaning that is fixed through hegemonic articulations?'), is now answered.

The fixation and radical sedimentation that is characteristic to states of domination is thus possible through signification. But while in the case of constructing antagonisms meaning is tendentially fixed through the constitution and expansion of the chain of equivalences and the exclusion of elements (i.e., social heterogeneity), in the case of states of domination meaning is fixed solely through the exclusion of meaning. The exclusion of subversive signifiers, which could render perpetually asymmetrical power relations into situations of confrontations/struggles conceal the ultimately dislocated, historical and contingent character of states of domination. This is what Laclau points out in the case of sedimentation, namely that excluded alternatives are always fading, and 'this fading involves a concealment. (…) [T]he sedimentation can be so complete, (…) that the contingent nature of that influence (…) do not prove immediately visible' (Laclau, 1990, p. 34). This is where the Foucauldian ethics regarding domination (that is against all kinds of domination) proves to correspond to the Lacanian ethics of the Real, to which Laclau subscribes. The exclusion of the subversive signifiers projects closure, the fullness of the community on the entity of domination by concealing its dislocated character – this is the reason why states of domination can appear as pre-given, natural, eternal, ahistorical and closed entities. In this precise sense *domination is a*

form of mastering dislocation, and in this same sense *domination is the other of antagonism*. If the other of power is *freedom*, then here, the other of domination is *struggle*. Just as in the case of antagonisms, where Laclau designated the concealment of the dislocated character of the social as ideological distortion, the concealment of the dislocated character of states of domination is also ideological. Any hegemonic articulatory practice, which is related to states of domination and which excludes the subversive signifiers that could turn domination into struggle *in potentia*, is ideological *de facto*. This is one way to turn back to Marx and his understanding of ideology as the mystification of domination *within* post-Marxist theory.

$$\frac{a \lozenge \not\exists \, \text{Ƨ}}{d}$$

In the above matheme, a hegemonic articulation (*a*) crosses the field of domination and excludes the subversive signifiers (Ƨ) that would be capable of rendering a specific state of domination into a struggle, thus the articulation conceals and distorts (◊) the ultimately dislocated, historical and contingent character of domination. It is of utmost importance that ideology stems not from any sort of articulatory practice, but from *hegemonic articulation*. The conditions of a hegemonic articulation consist of (1) confrontation with other articulatory practices that are antagonistic in character and (2) the instability of the frontier between them. Laclau and Mouffe, in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,* gave two examples of what does not count as hegemonic articulation. Their first example is the 'reorganization of an ensemble of bureaucratic administrative functions' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 135). While this is definitely an articulatory practice – organizing moments from dispersed elements – it is not hegemonic because there is no antagonistic confrontation with other articulatory practices. Their other example is that of millenarianism, where the antagonistic frontier is present, but the distance between the two sides of the frontier is impenetrable, thus no hegemonic articulation is possible. So, what would count as an ideological, hegemonic articulation?

In the following chapters different cases of advanced marginality will be discussed: hyperghettos, slums, shantytowns, etc. What is very often dominating the discursive landscapes connected to advanced marginality is the problem of *trash*, *pollution* and *dirt*. These characteristics are not certain consequences of the culture, the habits or illiteracy of the people living in these marginalized spaces, but the lack of or difficult access to public services and utilities: the lack of waste removal service, the lack of regular cleaning that shall be financed by the local government, or the lack of money to afford what are nowadays trendy 'environmentally friendly' products. One of these expensive, environmentally friendly products is wood, which during winters is a question of life and death for these people. However, most

of them cannot afford to buy such an eco-friendly product, and they are compelled to find an alternative resource, which is very often trash, plastic waste, textiles etc. Heating with trash is very often articulated by the exasperated middle-class neighborhood as *air pollution* and, due to successful pressure from the neighborhood community, the local government usually imposes fines for 'environmental degradation'. Here, a hegemonic articulation (*air pollution*) as part of an antagonism, constructed with reference to the discursive formation of environmentalism, crosses the field of domination and excludes the subversive signifiers (e.g., *social-economic deprivation*, *irresponsible government*, etc.) that would be capable *in potentia* of rendering a specific state of domination into confrontations/struggles, thus the articulation conceals and distorts (◊) the ultimately dislocated, historical and contingent character of domination, in which people cannot afford to heat their homes. This ideological distortion has extreme consequences in 'reality' – since the local governments usually impose huge fines, people are left without any means to stop 'degrading the environment', and of course they will continue heating with trash, which retroactively contributes to the ideological distortion that presents the situation (the state of domination) as 'their way of life'. Such ideological articulatory practices are only possible due to the overdetermined character of the social. This not only means that, in postmodern global capitalism, the social *as such* is overdetermined, and identities are overdetermined by other identities, but also refers to the expanding polysemy of the interdiscourse. The social demands and the antagonisms crossing the expanding fabric of the discursive landscape became so numerous, manifold and fragmented, that they are not only insatiable but they are also capable of deactivating each other. While in 1842 Marx was trying to understand why, in the midst of extreme pauperization in Rheintal did the Landtag classify the act of collecting wood as theft, in postmodern global capitalism he would have to consider manifold other classifications: rupture in the balance of the eco-system, violent expropriation of public spaces and so on. But the expanding polysemy of the discursive landscape also has its consequences to the practico-theoretical *critique of ideology*. It is becoming more and more obscure which signifiers and what kind of articulatory practices would be able to subvert specific states of domination. And even if through a successful hegemonic articulation domination could be subverted into a struggle, there is no guarantee that the subversive meaning would bring any success to an antagonistic confrontation. But how is the practico-theoretical critique of ideology, the *demystification of domination* possible? There are two possible, complementary trajectories. The first is what we shall call 'interpretive demystification'.

4.5 The Interpretive Reading of Ideology

Following the line of argumentation that has been explicated so far, it seems possible to argue in an Althusserian fashion that ideology in itself 'has no history', only the historical entity of the discursive landscape and the given state of domination *has historicity*. While Laclau's account of ideology (concealing the Real, the dislocated character of the social) focused primarily on fixing a particular meaning through power, in the discursive account of ideology that has been elaborated here, the emphasis is on the opposite: what is at stake is *fixing a particular power-relation through meaning*. In Laclau's case specific meanings are fixed, while here *specific meanings are excluded* in order to fix domination. Ideological articulation conceals the always-already dislocated, historical and contingent character of any domination, e.g., by representing it as *inevitable, natural, eternal*, etc. The ideological distortion reproduces and sustains domination, which is on the one hand *represented* as what it is, namely a differential, fixed moment in the social, and on the other hand its subversion is *prevented* through the ideological articulation. In ideology, (1) the subversive signifiers are excluded from signification, exposed to the half-light of social heterogeneity; (2) states of domination are excluded from antagonisms, becoming *absentees of the logic of equivalence*; but (3) states of domination are also *included in the social*, as differential, fixed moments. As Žižek put it, 'the "excluded" are, of course, visible, in the precise sense that, paradoxically, *their exclusion itself is the mode of their inclusion*: their "proper place" in the social body is that of exclusion…' (2009, p. 101) In ideology, *inclusion par exclusion* is also characteristic to the subversive remainders, the waste products and leftovers of ideological articulation, lingering behind in the social heterogeneity, in *extimacy*. In order to understand the relation between the extimacy of the subversive remainders and the field of representation of the ideological articulation, two concepts need to be discussed: the Wittgensteinian notion of 'aspect change' and the Žižekian idea of 'parallax shift'.

In his attempt to release the tension of the Marxist 'paradox of ideology', Rasiński (2018) makes use of Wittgenstein's critique of language and argues that Wittgenstein's philosophical method of 'perspicuous representation' points toward the possibility of seeing our situation in different arrangements or aspects, without the authoritarian imposition of a new vision, a new picture, that was so characteristic in Marxist accounts of ideology, namely revealing the hidden reality of the picture that was blurred by ideology. Rasiński proposes that ideology 'always presents itself as *the only possible and inevitable* understanding of the reality' (ibid., p. 140). He brings back Wittgenstein's example of Jastrow's picture, which can be seen either as a duck or as a rabbit (Wittgenstein, 1986, p. 194):
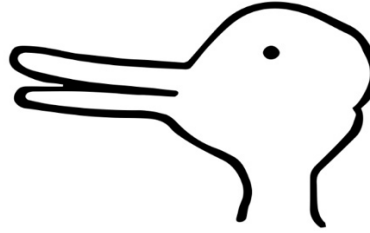
Rasiński argues that recognizing both the rabbit and the duck, what Wittgenstein calls 'aspect dawning' (which is an *irreversible* process), can help us in seeing this picture as a picture and thus saving ourselves from 'aspect blindness', i.e., *ideology*. Seeing the picture as a picture, a situation as particular arrangements of elements, is 'to understand that what we perceive is never the real object or pure fact, but it is always a picture, and moreover, what we see as the picture depends on the way we arrange its elements.' (ibidem.) Rasiński doesn't clarify, however, how ideology is able to present the only, inevitable understanding of reality, and his account of ideology seems very similar to Laclau's, namely that the incarnation of the impossible object, an originary meaning (either rabbit or duck), is the ideological distortion *par excellence*. In line with this Wittgensteinean concept of aspect change, Slavoj Žižek introduced the notion of 'parallax view', which refers to different views of an object, which views or positions are Kantian antinomies in terms of that there is an insurmountable gap between the different views, where it is impossible

> to use the same language for phenomena which are mutually untranslatable and can be grasped only in a kind of parallax view, constantly shifting perspective between two points between which no synthesis or mediation is possible, (…) there is no rapport between the two levels, no shared space - although they are closely connected, even identical in a way, they are, as it were, on the opposed sides of a Moebius strip (Žižek, 2006c, p. 4).

The parallax designates a radical incompatibility of two views, 'the confrontation of two closely linked perspectives between which no neutral common ground is possible.' (ibidem.) A parallax view is similar to aspect change considering that the contours of one view, one aspect 'can become clear only when the identity of others is blurred' (ibid., p. 258). Both aspect change and parallax view refer to the change in the object as a change in how one arranges its elements. Similarly, both aspect dawning and parallax shift provide 'a new line of sight,' modifying the identity of both the object and the subject:

> The standard definition of parallax is: the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight. The philosophical twist to be added, of course, is that the observed difference is not simply "subjective," due to the fact that the same object which exists "out there" is seen from two different stances, or points of view.

It is rather that, as Hegel would have put it, subject and object are inherently "mediated," so that an "epistemological" shift in the subject's point of view always reflects an "ontological" shift in the object itself' (ibid., p. 17).

The relation between the ideological articulation and the ideological distortion, namely the ideological meaning and the excluded subversive signifiers, is that of a parallax – two completely incompatible and irreducible aspects of the object, where a slight shift between the two views modifies both the subject and the object. The gap, however, between the two views can only be grasped by an aspect change or parallax shift. Articulating the discursive practice of heating with trash as 'air pollution' is radically insurmountable with what this articulation excludes, e.g., 'social deprivation.' It doesn't mean that it is not graspable, the phenomena in the shift are connected, but a synthesis between the two views requires constantly shifting perspectives. This is also the only way to see Jastrow's duck-rabbit as a picture – one either sees the rabbit or the duck, and a constant shift could create the synthesis necessary to see the picture *as a picture*.

The parallax shift, however, is not a guarantee for constructing antagonism. The question of 'How to subvert a system, that has subversion as its basic operation?' is one of the central problems of the practico-theoretical *critique of ideology* in postmodern global capitalism. Because even if a subversive remainder is capable of constructing antagonism in the sedimented terrain of domination, due to the infinitely expanding polysemy of the discursive landscape, it is possible that the other hegemonic side of the constructed antagonistic frontier or a rival hegemonic project articulates the same demand to a different chain of equivalences. As has been discussed in the case of constructing *floating signifiers*, when the same signifier is articulated to rival hegemonic projects, this articulation 'generates an autonomy' of the signifier, thus there is no guarantee that the subversive meaning would bring any success to an antagonistic confrontation. This is a certain deadlock of constructing confrontations/struggles on the terrain of domination in postmodern global capitalism.

> The deadlock of 'resistance' brings us back to the topic of parallax: all is needed is a slight shift in our perspective, and all the activity of 'resistance,' of bombarding those in power with impossible 'subversive' (ecological, feminist, antiracist, antiglobalist…) demands, looks like an internal process of feeding the machine of power, providing the material to keep it in motion (Žižek, 2006c, p. 334).

This deadlock is thus a central problem for resistance, that is going to one of the central dilemmas of the next parts of the dissertation.

* * *

I assert that there are three tragedies of the discursive account of ideology in the theory of hegemony. First, ideology presents domination as what it is, as a differential, fixed moment of the discursive landscape, and, unfortunately, there is nothing false in it – domination is a perpetually fixed, irreversible and stable state of power relations that is prevented from being transformed into an antagonism. Second, ideology is able to exclude subversive meanings from the field of representation (which can be understood in a Gramscian way as a 'cementing' function of ideology), thus concealing the ultimately dislocated, historical and contingent character of domination. Third, the relation between the ideological articulation and the subversive remainder is that of a parallax, which implies a central dilemma to the critique of ideology. This problem of the parallax can be illustrated by Adelson's illusion (1995):
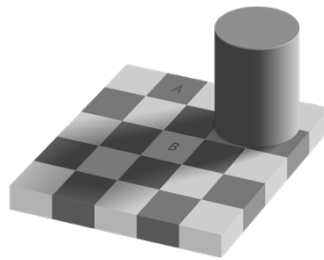
By analogy, the checkerboard represents the discursive landscape, which in this example seems continuous and sutured (i.e., the illusion of fullness), every white field is surrounded by a black field and vice-versa. Let's assume, that field 'B' represents a state of domination among the differential moments of the social (every other field) and the cylinder represents the ideological articulation that mystifies domination. Now, on the picture it seems like the checkerboard is complete, every field is in its 'proper' place, but the sublime trick is that *it only seems proper in the shadow of the object*. If we were to remove the object from the picture, it would turn out that field 'B' has exactly the same color as field 'A', and the discontinuous character of the checkerboard (the dislocated character of domination) would be revealed:
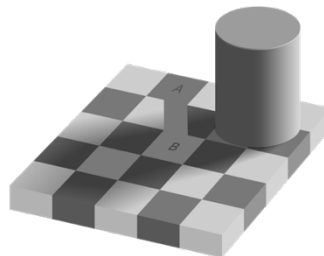
This way, field 'B' acquires its 'proper' place only in the shadow of the object. Thus, ideology not only conceals the dislocated character of domination, but consequently, and on another level, 'ideology is effective precisely by constructing a space of false disidentification, of false distance towards the actual co-ordinates of those subjects' social existence' (Žižek,

2000a, p. 103). This, however, also means that in ideology a special kind of parallax is constituted between the two views, wherein the ideological articulation superimposes the subversive remainders. It is as if the contours of the duck or the rabbit would have been strengthened in Jastrow's picture. In Adelson's picture it is the shadow which the ideological articulation casts onto the sedimented terrain of domination – the shadow, which fades the contours of exclusion and constructs a false distance towards it. Thus, when it comes to the critique of ideology through a parallax shift or an aspect dawning, not only the picture *as a picture* is revealed, but also a radical asymmetry between the two views. As Žižek notes, in a Hegelian reading of the parallax

> the two levels involved in a parallax shift are radically asymmetric: one of the two levels appears to be able to stand on its own, while the other stands for the shift as such, for the gap between the two. In other words, Two are not simply One and One, since Two stands for the very move/shift from One to Two. (A simplified example: in the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, the proletariat stands for the struggle as such) (2006c, p. 42).

Just as in Žižek's explication, the exclusion involved in an ideological articulation stands for the parallax shift as such. Why is it so? Because what the exclusion signifies is a *lack* in the first instance, and this lack – as the Lacanian Real – stands merely for the subversion of the process of signification, it stands solely for the parallax shift itself. The question of what *is* excluded, what constitutes this lack comes only after the shift. It is as if specific contours of the duck rabbit would have been faded to such a degree that the contours would only signify the subversion of signification itself, the possibility of an aspect change, but not the other aspect as such. This is another reading of how the 'shadow' of an ideological articulation conceals not only the excluded signifiers (the subversive remainders), but also the lack of them – it conceals also the 'Real as extimacy'. This means, consequently, that what a practico-theoretical critique of ideology faces on the sedimented terrain of domination is a lack in the first instance – a lack, in the shadow of the ideological articulation. Only a deep analysis is able to draw the contours of any of the subversive remainders, which are always superimposed by the ideological articulation. And still, even if the subversive remainders would be revealed, there would be no abstract narrative with which the critique of ideology could grasp and encompass the two views into one big story. Žižek (2017c), in a recently published interview, makes it very clear:

> Let's take today's Middle East crisis: Israel – Palestine. (…) [H]ere I don't believe in this abstract humanism, this UNESCO type [of narrative]: 'But let us tell a general story…' No, there is no general story where there is a place for all of it. All there is, at a general level, is the logic of the struggle itself. We have incompatible perspectives. It is basically – to be honest – a new, slightly modern way to make the old

Marxist point of social antagonism, class struggle or whatever. The idea being, again, that the gap is irreducible. It cannot be overcome through some kind of a higher perspective. All we can do is to formulate the antagonism.

The lack of a grand narrative which would be able to encompass the two views of a parallax means for the critique of ideology that it has to handle its criticism cautiously – and it should also be a lesson for the liberal wing of social theory. Because, as Žižek points out, the lack of an abstract narrative designates the impossibility of the recently celebrated left-leaning liberal concepts – of reconciliation, of a consensus through dialogue, or of a reunion of antagonistic forces. The only level of abstraction is the logic of struggle *per se*, and the task of the practico-theoretical critique of ideology is to facilitate the construction of the antagonism – the struggle that is prevented by the ideological articulation. The possible trajectories of an ideology criticism that is concerned with the construction of antagonisms are going to be explicated in detail in the following chapters. Here only a hint of the theoretical possibilities is going to be discussed. One of the trajectories of constructing antagonisms – as argued before – is *interpretive demystification*.

The 'discursive inventory' for such a critique of ideology is what Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 111) call the *general field of discursivity*, which denotes a discursive excess, a surplus of meaning which overflows signification, thus it also functions as both the condition of possibility and impossibility of different discourses – no discourse can constitute itself as a closed totality. While discourses attempt to suture to field of discursivity, the latter always subverts this attempt, since the articulation of elements (e.g., floating signifiers) into discursive moments is never complete. The field of discursivity is inherent in discourses and also constitutes an 'exteriority' between competing discourses. The existence of the field of discursivity is what makes hegemonic articulation, and the rearticulation of floating signifiers, eventually possible. The field of discursivity thus refers both to the excess of meaning within a discourse and the surplus of meaning on the level of the 'discursive exterior', which is the discursive field of other discourses.

In ideology, the *subversive remainders* of the ideological distortion are floating elements in the field of discursivity. Thus, on the level of interpretive demystification, a practico-theoretical critique of ideology concerned with constructing antagonisms would put such discourses into motion, which could 'arrest the flow' of the subversive remainders and structure them into an antagonistic frontier. I claim that an interpretive demystification has to analyze the ideological articulation, the discursive landscape and the sedimented terrain of domination

on which the ideological distortion operates, the constitution of subjects connected to it, the 'shadow' that the ideological articulation casts on the field of domination, etc. The critique of ideology could not consist of showing the different views of the parallax as parts of a bigger whole. No all-encompassing grand narrative is possible in ideology. Thus, ideology criticism must aim at displacing and transposing the ideological articulation which conceals the dislocated character of dominations, which casts a 'shadow' on it. The 'shadow' of the ideological articulation, which conceals the subversive remainders is precisely *the obscure object of ideology* that the interpretive demystification has to address in order to represent domination as historical and contingent – and the social logic of this dislocation is struggle, i.e., constructing antagonism.

In the case of places of advanced marginality, where trash constitutes a central problem, there is a certain tendency – elaborated in detail in the next chapters – that marginalized communities try to take action against ideological articulations, mostly dominated by environmentalism. The ideological articulations of 'they are polluting the air', 'they degrade public places', 'they are poisoning our environment' cast a shadow on the state of domination that is contextual to places of advanced marginality. These ideological articulations leave the subversive remainders hang in *extimacy*. People, living in advanced marginality feel, absolutely rightly, that these articulations are unjust. In some cases, with the help of social workers, they manage to *reactivate* a subversive remainder and articulate it into a rival hegemonic project. For example, they *reactivate* the subversive remainders of the 'rights of children' to live in a 'safe environment'. This way, they are able to 'steal' the master signifier (environmental protection, eco-friendly neighborhood, whatever…) from the ideological articulation, and articulate it in a different chain of equivalences.[27] Laclau's (2005, p. 131) illustration might be helpful here again:

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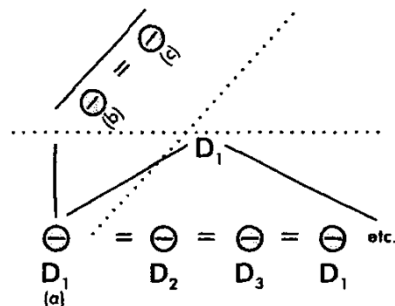
[27] One should not be surprised by these reactionary logics of the communities living in advanced marginality. In domination, accessing an extremely limited margin of freedom, the decision of strategies (of power relations and of confrontations) and the discursive inventory of that strategy is rarely these communities' privilege.

The master signifier of 'environmental protection' is articulated in the community's rival hegemonic project, and attaches it tendentially to a different chain (b, c….), thus D_1 floats between the rival hegemonic projects. The community, which acts against the ideological articulation, often organizes events – for example, when they collectively try to clean up the area. This creates a constant parallax shift between the two views of the object of the trash: trash, as proof of the community's degradation of the environment; and trash, as a general, common risk that endangers children (since it often contains chemicals, used needles, etc.). With such a rival hegemonic project, the ideological articulation and its shadow can be tendentially dislocated.

But these interpretive demystifications (even on the abstract level of theory) are short-lived, and even in the case of a successful rival hegemonic project, domination still persists. The apparent impossibility to construct permanent struggles is one of the central dilemmas of the contemporary radical emancipatory politics of the Left. Due to the extreme gravity of the terrains of dominations, which pulls back the attempts to fight, and also due to the expanding polysemy of the social, the conflictual/confrontational sites of dominations became extremely fragmented in postmodern global capitalism. Even if the community, as in the above example, managed to reactivate its field of domination through the subversive signifiers of the 'rights of children' to live in a 'safe environment', in some cases, these subversive remainders themselves are radically rearticulated by another ideological articulation. Especially when the neighborhood 'recognizes' that the marginalized community has children. In such cases, the reactivated subversive remainders become a part of an ideological articulation again – 'these children *really* should have the right to live in a safe environment' – which often has tragic consequences. Just like in the case where taking people's money is the result of people not having money to heat with wood, taking their children becomes the result of people not taking care of transporting and processing their trash, or at least of getting rid of it, e.g., by burning it. (٢)

4.6 The Affectual Reading of Ideology

The discursive landscapes of trash, waste, garbage, etc. are of central importance in postmodern global capitalism. Less attention has been paid (in theory, not in practice), however, to a special, historically invaluable kind of waste: excrement. It was Friedensreich Hundertwasser, the Austrian architect, who wrote the (supposedly) first manifesto about the importance of excrement, entitled the *Shit Culture – The Sacred Shit* (1979). In the beginning of the 1970s, Hundertwasser became interested in the concept of healthy houses, the organic

cycle of excrement and the architecture of composting toilets, i.e., *fecology*. He compares the way Western civilizations treat shit to committing suicide, and juxtaposes his approach, which treats excrement as being valuable as gold. 'The shit is more important, than food', he writes, 'the shit is our soul':

> Our garbage, our waste is flushed away far. We thus poison rivers, lakes and seas, (…) our waste is destroyed. The shit never comes back to our fields, never going where the food comes from. The cycle of eating works for shit. The cycle of shit to eat is broken. (…) Every time we press the rinse water, in faith, to perform a sanitary action, (…) it is a wicked deed, a sacrilegious gesture of death. (…) What happens to our shit afterwards, we repress, like the death.

The same criticism is formulated by Luis Buñuel in his surrealist film *The Phantom of Liberty* (*Le Fantôme de la Liberté*)[28], but with a twist. During a typical dinner party, the guests arrive, but instead of taking seats around the table on chairs, they are seated on toilets. They talk about issues concerning defecation, the ecological problems connected to it, and in the meantime, they also defecate. The twist in the story comes when one of the guests politely excuses himself, leaves the table and enters the 'restroom', where he, in safe solitude, can have his dinner. In the 'typical' scenario, people know very well that the most normal thing is that eating involves defecation, but in Western countries people often still act as if it would be some regrettable misfortune, excusing themselves politely at the dinner table for having their pleasures. It is, however, reversed in Buñuel's film: people know very well that defecation presupposes eating, but they still act as if eating would be some regrettable misfortune one has to privately or secretly live with.

In Astra Taylor's film, *Examined Life* (2008), Slavoj Žižek comes back to the phenomenon that, as Hundertwasser noted, there is a certain repression in the way people relate to their excrement, to trash, garbage and so on. Žižek argues in the film that people's everyday experience is that trash 'disappears from our world. When you go to the toilet, shit disappears. You flush it. Of course, rationally you know it's there in canalization and so on, but at a certain level of your most elementary experience it disappears from your world.' But, of course, it doesn't disappear. Just as in the case of excrement, where people are rationally aware that it goes through canalization, in the case of trash 'we all know' – continues Žižek – 'in what danger we all are. But why don't we do anything about it? I know very well, there may be global

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[28] This is an explicit reference to the *Communist Manifesto* ('A spectre [phantom] is haunting Europe – the spectre [phantom] of Communism'). Buñuel was closely connected to the Communists during the 1930s, but he became critical in the 1950s.

warming, everything will explode, be destroyed, but after reading a treatise on it what do I do?' This way of thinking ('I know it, but still, I act as if I didn't know…') is the central idea of Žižek's account of ideology and the critique of ideology. Besides interpretive demystification as one way of ideology criticism, Žižek opens up new possibilities for the critique of ideology, through a Lacanian reading of Marx.

Žižek's starting point in developing an account of ideology stems from the critique of the classical Marxist theories of ideology. As stated before, the main argument of these accounts was that the production of illusions is determined by the economy, which is thus conducive to the illusoric consciousness of people, which 'false consciousness' however functioned also in theory as a promise for revolution. But after the 1950s, and especially after the 'golden age' of capitalism, the Marxist theory of ideology drifted into a crisis because it more and more seemed that the awakening of the conscoiussness of people had been cancelled. The post–World War II era was characterized by the conquest of consciousness, the successful integration of masses into the ideological superstructures. The new era required new theoretical approaches, and these theoretical pursuits, from the Frankfurt School to the Althusserian school, were directed toward showing that the relations of production are not exclusive determinants of a society, and to draw the attention to and open up the wider cultural (superstructural) aspects of social life. Within these attempts the basis of ideological illusions was either replaced from the base to the superstructure or eliminated, contributing to a new promise of revolution of counter-cultures, or of a cultural revolution, that retroactively could change the socio-economic structure (Kiss, 2014). The theory of hegemony as elaborated by Laclau and Mouffe was a radical break with these accounts, showing the ultimately dislocated character of the social and the lack of a privileged point of rupture (e.g., economy, culture, law, art etc.). As stated earlier, if there is only the lack of an immanent law, a lack of an original meaning that societies attempt to suture, then the only possible ideological distortion is to conceal this lack (to conceal the Real). This account of ideological distortion, which later became a central thrust of Laclau's account of ideology, was first developed by Žižek in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Drawing on Lacan's concept of fantasy (phantasm), Žižek argues that the classical accounts of ideology – which maintained that the ideological illusion was supposed to function like rose-tinted glasses, blurring the reality of the subject into a dreamlike illusion – cannot be kept any longer in a Lacanian, post-Marxist theory.

> Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself: an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel

(conceptualized by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe as 'antagonism': a traumatic social division which cannot be symbolized) (Žižek, 1989, p. 45).

Thus, for Žižek, ideology does not function as a dreamlike construction, as a point of escape for the subject, but on the contrary, ideology supports and structures reality by constructing precisely those positive forms of objectivity, which retroactively mask *that there is none*.

> The thesis of Laclau and Mouffe that 'Society doesn't exist', (…) implies that every process of identification conferring on us a fixed socio-symbolic identity is ultimately doomed to fail. The function of ideological fantasy is to mask this inconsistency, the fact that 'Society doesn't exist', and thus to compensate us for the failed identification (ibid., p. 141-143).

This precise understanding of the ideological distortion (i.e., masking the Lacanian Real) has already been discussed in detail, this was also the central consideration, which functioned as a basis for my elaboration of the concept of ideological articulation as a mystification of domination. Žižek arrives at this account of ideology from a quite different starting point and thus formulates a more detailed reading of ideology. The point of departure for Žižek is the Lacanian critique of the classical accounts of ideology, and for this enterprise he couldn't have found a better starting point than Marx's concept of commodity fetishism. Žižek states that the classical, 'naïve' interpretations of commodity fetishism – the 'social relation between men (…) assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things' (Marx, 1867/1992, p. 165) – exclusively paid attention to the secret, the hidden content behind the fantastic form. The reason behind the fascination of classical political economy and critical theory with commodity fetishism is that this concept offered a possibility to its interpreters to unmask the secret, to look behind the fantastic form and elevate the pure objectivity, an ordinary positive content, objective knowledge that had been masked. The classical interpretations assume that, due to the pervasive system of production in capitalism, people regard their social relations as relations between things. People attribute sensuous and social powers to commodities, which are in fact ordinary expressions of the relations of production. This way – as goes the argument – people 'misrecognize' their real conditions and their real relations in the production of commodities. Žižek argues that this type of interpetation of commodity fetishism counts as a *symptomatic* reading in the Lacanian universe. Just as in the psychoanalytic concept of the symptom, its very existence relies on the subject's non-knowledge, 'false consciousness' of its essence. Thus the symptomatic reading of commodity fetishism flows into the classical account of ideology. Behind the symptom there is always a hidden, positive content, which is repressed,

and, moreover, the surface of the symptom is always threatened by 'the return of the repressed' content. For instance, the fantastic form of the commodity represses the objective reality of capitalist relations of production. For Žižek, however,

> all this is already well known: it is the classic concept of ideology as 'false consciousness', misrecognition of the social reality which is part of this reality itself. Our question is: Does this concept of ideology as a naïve consciousness still apply to today's world? (Žižek, 1989, p. 25)

The answer is, of course: *No*. Žižek draws on Peter Sloterdijk's concept of the cynical and *Kynicism* (as a 'perverted negation of the negation'), and returns to the formula of false consciousness one last time – 'They do not know it, but they are doing it' (Marx, 1867/1992, pp. 166–167) – and proposes that the ideological illusion today is not on the side of *knowing*, but *on the side of doing*. Contrary to the classical accounts of ideology, Žižek notes, that

> on an everyday level, the individuals know very well that there are relations between people behind the relations between things. The problem is that in their social activity itself, in what they are *doing*, they are *acting* as if money, in its material reality, is the immediate embodiment of wealth as such. They are fetishists in practice, not in theory. What they 'do not know', what they misrecognize, is the fact that in their social reality itself, in their social activity – in the act of commodity exchange – they are guided by the fetishistic illusion (Žižek, 1989, p. 28).

Thus the ideological illusion is not any more on the side of *knowing*, but on the side of *doing*, that is, that what is misrecognized is not the social reality, but the illusion itself that structures and supports this reality through real social activity – in sum, what Žižek calls *ideological fantasy*. These discrepancies between knowing and doing open up new possibilities for Žižek to develop his account of ideology beyond the level of the symbolic, discursive structuration of the social, to look beyond the field of representation in order to extract a pre-symbolic level of Lacanian *jouissance* (enjoyment in meaning or enjoy-meant), i.e., how 'an ideology implies, manipulates, produces a pre-ideological enjoyment structured in fantasy' (ibid., p. 140). As Yannis Stavrakakis argues, '[if] we want to examine how hegemonies are sustained, how identifications stick and political discourses get sedimented – obstructing or enabling social change – we need to take into account form and force, symbolic structuration and *jouissance*' (2007, p. 102). So one needs to take into account not only the effectual implications of ideology (how domination is mystified by the structuration of the meaningful field), but also its *affectual* functions. Žižek finds these affectual functions of how ideology structures social reality extremely relevant in postmodern global capitalism, which on the one hand manufactures the most beautiful dreams of our times, but on the other hand contaminates the world with its 'by-products' to an extreme degree. Žižek's insertion of *jouissance* in his

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concept of ideology is an attempt to answer how the subjects are integrated in a system, whose horrors are relentlessly haunting their life in front of their eyes:

> [I]n our allegedly 'post-ideological' era, ideology functions more and more in a *fetishistic* mode as opposed to its traditional *symptomal* mode. In the latter mode, the ideological lie which structures our perception of reality is threatened by symptoms *qua* 'returns of the repressed' – cracks in the fabric of the ideological lie – while the fetish is effectively a kind of *envers* [reverse] of the symptom. That is to say, the symptom is the exception which disturbs the surface of the false appearance, the point at which the repressed Other Scene erupts, while the fetish is the embodiment of the Lie which enables us to sustain the unbearable truth (Žižek, 2009, p. 65).

The fetish thus functions as an escape from the catastophies of the world, and also as a guarantee, that inspite of all the sufferings and horrors that haunt the subject's everyday experience, it is still possible to live a decent life, to immerse oneself in enjoyment, to parenthesize the unacceptable misery 'regarding the pain of others'. In this precise sense, ideology functions as a phantom of liberty.

In terms of the above example concerning trash: in the *symptomatic* mode one can repress the terrific impacts of the overproduction of waste. If one throws out the trashbag in the afternoon, it will dissapear before sunrise. But the ideological fantasy will be continuously threatened by the symptom – the return of the repressed, the return of the trash – in the form of the stink of the landfills, the pollution of waste incinerator, the local effects of global warming etc. In the *fetishistic* mode (fetishistic disawoval), one can be completely aware (*knowing*) that the environments are threatened by big capital's negligence in its brutal contamination of lands and waters in the first instance, but s/he can start segregating and sorting the waste (*doing*) to somehow come to terms with the unbearable truth. In the fetishistic mode, the *trash* itself becomes the fetish *per se*. But sometimes 'the line between the two is almost indiscernible' (ibidem.), the same *doing* can function either as a symptom or as a fetish. One may be completely aware, that the institution of elections in Western liberal democracies is highly corrupted, that the elected representatives very rarely represent the people and that it is only a theater of democracy. But still, one can participate in the ritual of voting, which will be either threatened by symptoms (it turns out that the election was *really* corrupted, that the representatives only care about their pockets, and thus one *really* participated only in a theater play) or function as a fetish ('I know very well that it is a theater, but still I act as if voting would be the only chance to put an end to this corrupted system'). Or in a much simpler fashion: a picture of a dead relative can always remind one of the trauma of loss (symptom), or the beloved relative can continue living in the picture (fetish).

With the distinction between *knowing* and *doing* and between *symptom* and *fetish,* Žižek takes at least three crucial steps. First, by restructuring Marx's concept of commodity fetishism – 'They know it, but they do it anyway' – Žižek almost completely reproduces the young Marx's concept of the *opium*, as the 'the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless circumstances' (Marx, 1843, p. 71). The opiatic aspect of Žižek's concept of ideology means not that what we knew was tolerable is unbearable in the last instance – but that what we know is unbearable in the last instance, is still tolerable. In this sense, Žižek also brings back one of Marx's central thrusts regarding the question of the exasperatingly integrative ideological structures of capitalism. Second, Žižek almost resuscitates Althusser in two aspects: (1) Žižek draws attention (just as Althusser did with the State Apparatuses, and social practices, like praying) both to the material aspect of ideology and also to the 'practical' (i.e., discursive practice) aspect of it. Ideology is *lived* and *materialized* in objects and social practices. A great example is the social practice of giving money to organisations that, in the name of the donor, do *not* give the money to those in need of it. And (2) Žižek, even if in a twisted and implicit way, reformulates Althusser's concept of *interpellation* with the notion of the 'temptation of meaning'. Similarly, to the fetishistic disavowal, the temptation of meaning is also a structuring function of ideology to enable the sustainment of the unbearable truth – if not otherwise, at least finding a meaning for it. For instance, '[w]hen something horrible happens, our spontaneous tendency is to search for a meaning. It must mean something' (Žižek in Taylor, 2008). For Leszek Kołakowski also, ideology has a tempting character, which

> acts like a Fata Morgana which makes beautiful lands arise before the eyes of the members of a caravan and thus increases their efforts to the point where, in spite of all their sufferings, they reach the next tiny waterhole. Had such tempting mirages not appeared, the exhausted caravan would inevitably have perished in the sandstorms, bereft of hope (Kołakowski as cited in Hirschman, 1967, p. 32).

The temptation of meaning provides the symbolic condition to at least tolerate the unbearable conditions. Lastly, (3) Žižek elaborates a pertinent critique of the critiques of ideology as false consciousness, by asserting that the ideological illusion is not on the side of knowing, but on the side of doing. Since the ideological fantasy is not on the side of knowing in the fetishistic mode of ideology, 'the interpretive demystification is much more difficult' (Žižek, 2009, p. 68). This is where Žižek introduces a distinction between (1) *discursive, symptomal reading* of ideology, that is the deconstruction of the discursive landscape, 'demonstrating how a given ideological field is a result of a montage of heterogeneous "floating signifiers", of their totalization through the intervention of certain "nodal points",' and (2)

affectual, *fetishistic reading* of ideological fantasy, 'articulating the way in which - beyond the field of meaning but at the same time internal to it – an ideology implies, manipulates, produces a pre-ideological enjoyment structured in fantasy' (1989, p. 140).

Taking the previous example of advanced marginality and environmentalism, the discursive, interpretive reading of ideology is relatively easy. The ideological articulation (e.g., air pollution, environmental degradation) crosses the sedimented terrain of domination (e.g., suburban advanced marginality), which imposes an antagonism (environmentalism) on the sedimented terrain of domination and displaces its antagonistic frontier – thus it is no longer the antagonistic Other (big capital, local government, etc.), which prevents the fullness of the community, but the marginalized poor. This involves also the attribution of opposing features to the marginalized community, which depicts the image of the antagonistic Other on them: e.g., the marginalized exploit the locals' money (through aid); they live in dirt, but buy the most expensive devices at the same time, etc. In sum, what is *repressed* here through ideological articulation is the dislocated character of the state of domination, represented as a pre-given, natural, eternal, ahistorical entity by the exclusion and repression of the subversive signifiers. As Žižek points out

> [w]ith the establishment of bourgeois society, the relations of domination and servitude are *repressed*: formally, we are apparently concerned with free subjects (…); the repressed truth – that of the persistence of domination and servitude – emerges in a symptom which subverts the ideological appearance of equality, freedom, and so on (ibid., p. 22).

This same example, however, goes awry in a *fetishistic* reading, namely how the image of the 'marginalized' structure pre-ideological enjoyment (*jouissance*). The fetishistic reading is also with reference to masking the Lacanian Real – both as masking the ultimately dislocated character of the social ('Society is impossible'), and as masking the dislocated, contingent and historical character of the specific state of domination. The mystification involved in masking the Real serves the construction of an imaginary fullness of the community, which, however, cannot be realized without coming to terms with the distance between the desired vision of fullness and its Real, namely that the factual society is dislocated. The answer for coming to terms with this distance is obvious: the 'marginalized poor', the Jews, the migrants, etc. This is how the fetish is structured through ideological articulation: the fetish 'simultaneously denies and embodies the structural impossibility of "Society": it is as if in the figure [the Gypsy, the Jew, the migrant, etc.] (…) this impossibility had acquired a positive, palpable existence – and that is why it marks the eruption of enjoyment in the social field' (ibid., p. 142). The void, the ultimate fissure of the social is masked by its embodiment, its incarnation in the fetishistic

object, which provides the fantasy-scenario for the palpable corruption of the fullness of the community.

> The notion of social fantasy is therefore a necessary counterpart to the concept of antagonism: fantasy is precisely the way the antagonistic fissure is masked. In other words, *fantasy is a means for an ideology to take its own failure into account in advance.* (ibidem.)

This is why the interpretive demystification in its discursive symptomal mode is insufficient: it is not enough to rearticulate marginalized poor's predicament, and represent the historical and contingent character of a state of domination, because it will not necessarily pass through (traverse) the fetishistic disavowal ('I know very well, that these people are poor, but still…'). There remains a certain *as if* with the fetishistic object – 'I know, but still, I act as if I didn't know.' The problem is that the *Lie*, with which one renders the unbearable truth tolerable, is not necessarily *false*. For the critique of ideology, it is crucial to note that ideological distortion is not primarily a question of the truth or falsity of the hegemonic articulation. There is nothing false in saying that heating with plastic trash is polluting the air. The crucial task of the critique of ideology is thus not only to articulate that the marginalized poor are 'really' poor (have no money to heat properly, are suffering by the exclusion from local services), but also to answer why environmental degradation has in the first instance nothing to do with the marginalized community, which only functions as 'a way to stitch up the inconsistency of our own ideological system' (Žižek, 1989, p. 49).

The fetishistic motive of ideology criticism is not 'discursive' but affectual, in the sense that what it demystifies is a void, that there is nothing behind fantasy, which masks precisely this void. In this precise way 'fantasy is not to be interpreted, only "traversed"' (ibid., p. 141). And for Žižek, traversing (*going through*) fantasy is a transformative feature of the critique of ideology, and a complementary ideologico-critical aspect to interpretive demystification. Going back to the example of advanced marginality, the marginalized community first appears in ideology as a social symptom, 'the point at which the immanent social antagonism assumes a positive form, erupts on to the social surface, the point at which it becomes obvious that society "doesn't work", that the social mechanism "creaks"' (ibid., p. 143). With fetishistic fantasy, however, the marginalized poor start to embody this 'creak' as becoming the corruptive element of the society, which has to be eliminated or radically suppressed. Traversing this fantasy construction allows for coming to terms with the Real (that the social itself is 'out of joint') and hence for the discursive *rearticulation* and *reactivation* of what is lingering behind the fetishistic object (the totality of symbolic overdetermination, subversive remainders, large

networks of floating signifiers in the field of discursivity). Paradoxically, the Marxist notion of 'totality' becomes highly relevant for the post-Marxist critique of ideology: understood not as an ideal, unified system of a closed totality, but as 'a critical notion – to locate a phenomenon in its totality does not mean to see the hidden harmony of the Whole, but to include within a system all its "symptoms," its antagonisms and inconsistencies, as integral parts' (Žižek, 2009, p. 76). In ideology criticism, there is always more than a suspicion of structures, in terms of the Marxist notion of totality. The ideological articulation in which marginalized poor are responsible for polluting the air is a symptomal reference to a meaningful totality, a mystification of the 'capitalist economy of trash'. In such situations of ideological articulations (marginalized poor degrade the environment), the strategy of the classical accounts of the critique of ideology usually concentrate exclusively on the antipathy toward the marginalized. The attempts of demystification eventually end up in organizing sensitization trainings (e.g., privilege walk), dialogical circles about marginalization, touching meetings with poor people, and so on. It is important, as an interpretive attempt, but these interpretive demystifications are difficult, precisely because – as has been stated – a *fetishistic motive* would reveal something more and different here. Namely, that the sublime object of ideology is not 'the marginalized poor' as such – they appear rather as the figure, as the direct embodiment of the corruption, degradation and destruction of lands, rivers, environments by the capitalist economy of trash and waste. The capitalist economy of trash contaminates urban, suburban and rural environments to such a degree that it really is a threat for the people. And in ideological fantasy, they come to terms with this unbearable truth through the fetishistic object of 'the marginalized poor.' While a classical account of ideology would solely focus on how the marginalized poor are represented in a false way, traversing fantasy allows for the confrontation with the traumatic kernel of enjoyment: the marginalized poor, who pollute the environment is the opiatic *Lie*, which renders the unbearable truth tolerable. As Terry Eagleton argues in *Ideology*, 'much of what ideology says is true, and would be ineffectual if it were not' (1991, p. 221). In the above case, there is nothing false in people's concern for their environment, neighborhood, and community. But in ideology the threat is incarnated by the figure of 'the marginalized poor' that paradoxically casts a 'shadow' both on its situation (the specific state of domination) and on the global capitalist economy of trash. So again, ideology is not a question of false consciousness in the first instance, but of the 'truth' it tells.

As Žižek notes in *Mapping Ideology*:

> We are within ideological space proper the moment this content – 'true' or 'false' (if true, so much the better for the ideological effect) – is functional with regard to some relation of social domination (…) in an

inherently non-transparent way: *the very logic of legitimizing the relation of domination must remain concealed if it is to be effective.* (…) [I]t is easily possible to *lie in the guise of truth* (1994, p. 8).

The *Lie*, again, is not to be understood as falsity, but as an ideological effect – the exclusion, a repression, a mystification of states of domination. Thus, for the practico-theoretical cirique of ideology it is crucial to take the 'truth' into account, that ideology 'stutters'. In order to engage with a discursive, symptomal, interpretive reading, ideology criticism also has the crucial task of traversing fantasy, that is 'of "going through the fantasy [*la traversée du fantasme*]", an ethics of confrontation with an impossible, traumatic kernel not covered by any ideal' (Žižek, 1990, p. 259). The 'zero level' task for the critique of ideology is thus the confrontation with the Real (*i.e., there is no big Other*), not in order to eliminate it but to 'come to terms with it, to learn to recognize it in its terrifying dimension and then, on the basis of this fundamental recognition, to try to articulate a *modus vivendi* with it' (Žižek, 1989, p. xxviii). Coming to terms with the Real means (1) the confrontation with the 'Real as impossible', the *ultimately dislocated character of the social*, that the symbolic order is structured around an impenetrable lack and that there is no one final antagonism, no last, final struggle – 'This is the final struggle / Let us group together, and tomorrow…' – and no tomorrow in the form of an ideal; (2) the confrontation with the 'Real as extimacy', the repressed, concealed, historical and contingent character of the sedimented terrains of domination – that while there is no one final struggle, there are still repressed, excluded struggles, perpetually fixed power relations.

The logic of traversing fantasy in order to come to terms with the Lacanian Real is, simply speaking, a reference to the *envers* of Marx's 11th Thesis on Feuerbach: The philosophers have hitherto only [tried to] *change* the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to *interpret* it. As Žižek concludes in Sophie Fiennes's *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (2012), the first task of the critique of ideology is not changing the reality into an expression of our dreams, but to change the way we dream.

> One of the big problems of all great revolutionary movements of the 20th century (…) is that they did change the social body but the egalitarian communist society was never realized. The dreams remained the old dreams and they turned into the ultimate nightmare.

The task is thus again to change our 'dreams' and the way we 'dream' in the first instance, which involves both a fetishistic-affectual and a discursive-interpretive reading of ideology, which, as it will be discussed in the next parts, presupposes a strategic attitude and – of utmost importance – a pedagogical stance.

PART II

THE SPECTRE OF POVERTY

As I argued, the previous part was not only an introduction to the different concepts of ideology, but also an introduction to the language (or 'lalangue') of 'ideology criticism'. In the same manner, the following part also has a certain functionality beside the explication of the ontological and methodological considerations of the dissertation. It is intended to function as a 'middle ground' between the previous part (theoretical considerations) and Part III, which is a discussion of the empirical research. While it is practically cumbersome and quite oversimplifying to make such a distinction, maybe analytically it is possible to say, that while Part I stands for how I 'look at…' (i.e., through the analytical tool of ideology criticism) and Part III is the discussion of how I 'see' what I'm actually 'looking at', the following part is concerned with what the particular thing is that I want to look at, from what angles it is possible to look at it, and what can be said about it in advance from the points of view I prefer. Thus, the following part is more intensely dominated by value choices, personal commitments, virtual debates with researchers, and strong, definite statements and assertions. When I write about the poor, the underclass, the margins of the society, the structure of urban poverty, the institutions of marginality, the privileged apparatus of the School or the ethnographic stance, it could seem like, that I'm talking about something abstract and that I'm elevating my objects to a point of universality. I admit it, but I also think that this is a 'style of thinking' when writing about ontological and methodological considerations, which in themselves approximate to the 'universal'. However, at the same time, since I was writing this part already after my empirical research at the margins of the society, in the institutions of marginality, and in schools, the following part (just like the previous) is inevitably contaminated by practice. But I consider this contamination a positive condition of the following part, because it provides a breathing space, it enables the flow of conceptualization to avoid the complete alienation in the universal. Finally, it may seem, that this following part is about the poor, the underclass or certain social groups, but I always intended to write about structures, which are necessarily about 'us' as well. And in this sense this following part is also about relations (class relation, institutional relations, the relation between reality and fantasy, etc.) which I tried to depict similarly to drawing a map. The problem with the mapping work (that is maybe a constitutive condition of it as well), however, is not that what has been mapped inevitably changes (a map can be still useful), but that a map is always based on exclusions (just as universality). One of these exclusions that I regret is that I didn't write more about the structures and relations of rural poverty, that would be so important nowadays. But still, as long as this following part is a 'map' with its constitutive exclusions, it can functionally fulfil its role as a 'middle ground' between how I 'look at…' (Part I) and how I 'see' what I'm actually 'looking at' (Part III).

5 ONTOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

'The Return of the Repressed'

Western imperialism today is the imperialism of relativism, of 'that's your point of view'; it's the little sideways glance, the wounded protestation, at anyone who's stupid, primitive, or presumptuous enough to still believe in something, to affirm anything at all. You can see the dogmatism of constant questioning give its complicit wink of the eye everywhere in the universities and among the literary intelligentsias. No critique is too radical among postmodernist thinkers, as long as it contains a little nothingness of certitude. Scandal for the past century has come from any too noisy negation; today scandal bursts from any affirmation that does not tremble.

<div align="right">The Invisible Committee: The Coming Insurrection</div>

'A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of [poverty]. All the powers of [the Empire] have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre:' the Pope and the Queen, Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg, the International Monetary Fund and *La Banque Mondiale*, the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, and so on. Behind the mega-spectacles of postmodern global capitalism, the contradiction between growing economic production and globally widening poverty rates traces the Real contours of the 'postmodern condition'. The unprecedented degree of economic development and increasing social inequalities choreograph the surreal waltz of our time, characterized by the deepening of poverty and the dilation of the social strata threatened by impoverishment. The brutal and traumatic Real of the globalization of extreme poverty and the 'democratization of deprivation' makes ever more controversial the unprecedented pace and extent of economic production.

According to Credit Suisse's *Global Wealth Pyramid 2017* (2017, p. 21), 3.4 billion people (70,1% of world adults) belong to the lowest quartile of the wealth pyramid (with a wealth range of less than $10,000), while 36 million people (0,7 % of world adults) belong to the top quartile of the pyramid (with a wealth range of $1 million of higher). The top quartile of the pyramid collectively controls $128,7 trillion – namely, *the half of the total wealth of the world is in the 'invisible hands' of 36 million people* (0,7 %). By contrast, 3.4 billion people in the lowest quartile control $7.6 trillion (2,7 % of the total wealth of the world). According to the *Child Poverty in Rich Nations* study published in 2000 by UNICEF, the global economic conditions in which deprivation, starvation, and inequalities could be solved (or at least radically mitigated) are already present. For instance, UNICEF investigated the necessary amount of GNP (gross national product) for the eradication of child poverty in each OECD member state. The data is astonishing: the lowest amount is calculated in Sweden (0.07 percent of gross national product), and the highest amount (0.66 percent of GNP) in the United States (cf. Shaikh, 2005). It seems that the economic conditions are not lacking at all for the successful

fight against poverty. However, the United Nations' most recent *Human Development Report* (2016) argues that despite the remarkable decrease of the global extreme poverty rate ($1.90 a day), that is a drop from 35% measured in 1990 to 11% measured in 2013 (mostly due to the decrease of poverty in East- and South Asia),

> not all the news is good news. Substantial human deprivations persist despite the progress. One person in nine in the world is hungry, and one person in three is malnourished. (…) Even with all the impressive progress in reducing poverty over the past 25 years, 766 million people, 385 million of them children, lived on less than $1.90 a day in 2013. Poor nutrition causes 45 percent of the deaths among children under age 5. (…) Unless the world tackles deprivation today, 167 million children will live in extreme poverty by 2030, and 69 million children under age 5 will die of preventable causes (2016, pp. 25–29).

Furthermore, unbridled economic development unfolds its detrimental symptomatic effects in increasingly diverse forms: pollution, migration, climate change, local conflicts, violence, and so on. These 'can no longer be considered national concerns; they have become global concerns.' (ibidem.) However, the mainstream solution to cope with these problems is apparently and surprisingly simple: unregulated global capitalism. And while the 'postmodern condition' is characterized by the diversification of new antagonisms and dominations (race, gender, ability, environment, etc.), poverty, hunger and 'basic deprivations are common among various groups. Women and girls, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, migrants – all are deprived in the basic dimensions of human development' (ibid., p. 5). Even if the post-Marxist and postmodernist turns contributed to a large degree to the extrication of what has been considered 'superstructures' in the Marxist model, anti-essentialist and post-foundational theories rendered 'class struggle' not only equal with other antagonisms and dominations, but also blurred and eclipsed the concept of *class* and *the critique of political economy* after the 1970s.

I consider this often-disavowed problem as one of the most crucial challenges for *any* contemporary discourse on the Left, namely: Is it theoretically and practically sufficient to render class as one among the equivalent sites of antagonisms and dominations? Nancy Fraser – the prominent feminist scholar who dedicated most of her works to this dilemma – argues that, while the different struggles are always intertwined, it is at least analytically necessary to distinguish between two different logics of political conflict: the political logic of *recognition* and the political logic of *redistribution* (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). The former refers to domination related to symbolic injustices characterized by the structural problems of the (non)recognition of identities (race, gender, sex, ability, etc.), while the latter addresses domination related to socio-economic injustices, rooted in the political-economic structures.

Fraser notes that the distinction between the political logics of recognition and redistribution are at least analytically necessary, since – as she argues – the two distinct logics are centered around mutually contradictory demands. While the logic of recognition promotes the affirmation of identities and differentiation of social groups, '[r]edistribution claims, in contrast, often call for abolishing economic arrangements that underpin group specificity. (An example would be feminist demands to abolish the gender division of labour.) Thus they tend to promote group de-differentiation' (Fraser, 1995, p. 74). But due to the overdetermined character of the social, people are subjected to multiple intersecting forms of domination, thus social struggles often inevitably have to engage with both the political logic of recognition and redistribution. For Fraser, the interference of the contradictory political aims (differentiation vs. de-differentiation) of the two logics appears as the 'recognition-redistribution dilemma' characteristic to new antagonisms.[29] In Marxist terms, the political logic of class struggle (since it is *ab ovo* an anti-capitalist struggle) promotes the radical transformation of the economic structures, and the abolishment of class division *per se*. The aim of class struggle 'is not simply to cut itself a better deal, but "to abolish itself as a class". The last thing it needs is recognition of its difference' (ibid., p. 76).

Fraser's main criticism regarding the emergence of new antagonisms is that while the politics of recognition brought new and important sites and forms of domination into focus, from the 1980s identity politics not only started to distance itself from class politics, but it also slowly displaced the critique of political economy. Partly due to the Eastern-European transitions and the dissolution of the Soviet bloc from the late 1980s, 'the uncoupling of the politics of recognition from the politics of redistribution reflected a larger historical development: the simultaneous rise of identity politics, on the one hand, and of global economic neoliberalism, on the other' (Fraser, Dahl, Stoltz, & Willig, 2004, pp. 375–376). Fraser argues that the historical bloc after the transitions in 1989-1990, which she calls a global 'post-socialist age,' is characterized by the displacement and disavowal of class struggle. Attempts at engaging

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[29] Fraser gives various examples of how the logic of recognition collides with the contradictory logic of redistribution in new antagonisms: the structuring role of gender within the labour market between paid productive labour and unpaid reproductive labour; the structuring role of race regarding the radical exclusion of social groups from productive labour, and so on. In order to reconcile and bring the two distinct political logics into synthesis, Fraser promotes *transformative* demands instead of *affirmative* ones. She argues that affirmative demands leave intact the underlying structures: the affirmative logic of recognition promotes the expansion, affirmation and solidification of different identities (multiculturalism), and the affirmative logic of redistribution promotes merely more just distribution of wealth (liberal welfare state). By contrast, transformative demands would promote the deep restructuring of social relations: the transformative logic of recognition would destabilize identities (deconstruction) and the transformative logic of redistribution would radically restructure the mode of production and the relations of production (socialism).

in class politics and the critique of political economy are regularly discredited as outdated and old-fashioned essentialism. Fraser not only notes that 'identity-based claims tend to predominate, as prospects for redistribution appear to recede' (Fraser, 1995, p. 68), but she has recently become more radical in her critique of how identity politics maintain and reproduce neoliberal capitalism, especially regarding the contemporary feminist movement, which Fraser reprehends as 'capitalism's handmaiden':

> I fear that the movement for women's liberation has become entangled in a dangerous liaison with neoliberal efforts to build a free-market society. That would explain how it came to pass that feminist ideas that once formed part of a radical worldview are increasingly expressed in individualist terms. Where feminists once criticized a society that promoted careerism, they now advise women to 'lean in'. A movement that once prioritized social solidarity now celebrates female entrepreneurs. A perspective that once valorized 'care' and interdependence now encourages individual advancement and meritocracy (Fraser, 2013).

What Fraser basically tries to articulate throughout her *oeuvre* is that it is insufficient to equate social antagonisms: i.e., to lean back in the reassuring academic deadlock of 'intersectionality' and compensate for the lack of class politics with trendy and profitable academic trajectories of civil society, identity politics, performativity, liberal democracy and so on. I assume that if there is a central challenge for post-*Marxist* endeavors, then it is to confront the Marxist roots in its most hazardous terrains – namely, how to re-establish the privileged position of class politics and the critique of postmodern global capitalism *without* a retrogression to essentialism, classism and foundationalism.

This challenge became the basis of one of the most significant and relentless debates of the new millennium – a debate between Laclau and Žižek from 2000 to 2006. The importance of this debate is also indicated by its escalation into *ad hominem* confrontations, which Žižek summarized in his last official response to Laclau with a good deal of irony: 'The difference between Laclau and me is that while Laclau tells me that my text is boring and stupid, I am telling him politely that his is interesting' (2006b, p. 185). That is, of course – at least for Žižek – the 'politically correct' way to decry Laclau's work… and well, strictly speaking, Laclau's pamphlets throughout the debate *are* interesting. Laclau's political standpoint has been unequivocal and coherent since the publication of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, where he and Mouffe introduced the project of 'radical plural democracy.' They argue that the decline of feudalism stirred up the fundamental structuring division of Western societies (people/ancien régime) and thus, after the French Revolution, political struggle and the construction of antagonisms became fragile and unstable:

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> [T]he opposition people/ancien régime was the last moment in which the antagonistic limits between two forms of society presented themselves – with the qualification noted – in the form of clear and empirically *given lines* of demarcation. From then (…) there was no politics without hegemony (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 151).

For Laclau and Mouffe, this political restructuring was characterized by the displacement of the 'democratic imaginary' and the 'generalization of the hegemonic form of politics' (ibidem.). The fall of the ancien régime and the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789 culminated in what Laclau and Mouffe call, after de Tocqueville, 'democratic revolution,' which, as a new structuring logic of the social, became conducive to the *reactivation* of various and heterogeneous sedimented terrains of domination through the discursive displacement of the democratic imaginary. Their central thesis is that, 'only from the moment when the democratic discourse becomes available to articulate the different forms of resistance to subordination that the conditions will exist to make possible the struggle against different types of inequality' (ibid., p. 154). They call the penetration of the democratic discourse into the heterogeneous social relations 'irradiation effect,' by which they mean that every reactivation generates anew 'equivalential displacements' of the democratic imaginary, resulting in new antagonisms. This way, the equivalential displacement of the democratic imaginary 'impedes the stabilization of subordination as difference' (ibid., p. 159). While Laclau and Mouffe agree that from the end of the 19th century, and especially after the Second World War, the commodification by Capital is infiltrating an increasing multitude of social relations and that '[t]here is practically no domain of individual or collective life which escapes capitalist relations' (ibid, p. 161), still they hold, that anti-capitalist struggle is not a privileged point of rupture in the social. The lack of a unifying principle and the lack of any privileged subject position in the construction of antagonisms renders 'class' and the struggles for the transformation of the mode and relations of production into one hegemonic project among others within the heterogeneous field of the social. Instead of the allegedly essentialist revolutionary project of 'class struggle,' Laclau and Mouffe propose the project of 'radical and plural democracy.' By this they mean the infinite broadening and deepening of democratic displacements across a plurality of identities 'on the basis of the generalization of the equivalential-egalitarian logic' (ibid., p. 167). Laclau and Mouffe argue that since the democratic revolution opened up a political logic of the social without a predetermined direction, it was thus also conducive to the emergence of anti-egalitarian and totalitarian hegemonic projects (from the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century to the contemporary new Right from Reagan and Thatcher on). A viable possibility for the Left '*therefore cannot be to*

renounce liberal-democratic ideology, but on the contrary, to deepen and expand it in the direction of a radical and plural democracy' (ibid., p. 176). Therefore, at least for Laclau and Mouffe, the struggle against capitalist modes of production is necessary, but only one among the many equivalential-egalitarian projects of radical plural democracy.

> Of course, every project for radical democracy implies a socialist dimension, as it is necessary to put an end to capitalist relations of production, which are at the root of numerous relations of subordination; but socialism is *one* of the components of a project for radical democracy, not vice versa (ibid., p. 178).

Thereby, Laclau and Mouffe reject the idea that the abolition of capitalist relations of production would be conducive to the consequent abolition of other instances of domination, thus they also reject a unifying discourse for the Left as such. And even though they promised a 'socialist strategy' in the title of their book, Laclau and Mouffe surprisingly ended up with the proposal of the broadening and deepening of the liberal-democratic imaginary. Thus it is not surprising at all, that after the publication of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,* Laclau and Mouffe were attacked by several scholars, who they discredited in their response, *Post-Marxism Without Apologies* (1987), as 'fading epigones of Marxist orthodoxy' (ibid., p. 81). Their response was especially addressed to Norman Geras' article *Post-Marxism?* (1987), where Geras mobilized an exemplary armory of the Marxist critique against the post-Marxist project: economic determination and relative autonomy of the superstructures, the privileged position of class relations, objective interests, etc. Laclau and Mouffe defended their argument regarding these aspects of the critique without doubt, on the grounds of the theory of hegemony, which has been already explained in detail throughout the previous chapter. Geras, however, points at two crucial problems, for which – I argue – Laclau and Mouffe did not provide satisfactory answers. The first is related to one of the conceptual endeavors of the previous chapter, regarding *the relative lack of a normative standpoint for measuring domination* in the theory of hegemony. Geras correctly points out that such a theory risks supporting *any* political struggles. Laclau and Mouffe addressed this threat, that 'through the democratic revolution, a purely social power can emerge, presenting itself as total and extracting from itself alone the principle of law and the principle of knowledge' (1985, p. 187), and they proposed the project of radical plural democracy precisely because of this acknowledgement. But what are the historical conditions of possibility – as Geras wonders – of this proposal itself? As he suggests,

> [o]ne could note again, for instance, how absolutely everything (…) has discursive 'conditions of possibility', while the question as to what may be the conditions of possibility of discourse itself, does not trouble the authors so much as to pause for thought (Geras, 1987, p. 69).

Laclau and Mouffe argue in response that their choice is not accidental at all, 'it is, rather, deeply rooted in the history of modern capitalism' (1987, p. 97). They argue that, in societies with a 'low technological level of development,' the structuring illusion of the social consisted of the overlap between the being of the object and the object itself (the overlap between the ontic and the ontological), which produced the illusion of a stable discursive field, the illusion of strict isomorphism. 'It is only in the contemporary world, when (…) the dislocating rhythm of capitalist transformation constantly alter the discursive sequences which construct the reality of objects, that the merely historical character of being becomes fully visible' (ibidem.). But how shall we understand that the condition of possibility (and we should immediately add – the condition of impossibility) of 'discourse' (and the discursive theory of hegemony, and the project of radical plural democracy as well) is 'the dislocating rhythm of capitalist transformation'?

This is one of the basic questions that structures the debate between Laclau and Žižek in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (Butler, Laclau, & Žižek, 2000), a book wherein by contrast to Norman Geras, James Petras and other Marxist critics of post-Marxism, Žižek elaborates a Marxist critique of Laclau's post-Marxist project *from within* post-*Marxist* theory. Žižek's initial question is whether considering the postmodern plurality of antagonisms, and the equivalent struggles for recognition, is sufficient in practico-theoretical terms, or 'does the recent resurgence of right-wing populism compel us to rethink the standard co-ordinates of "postmodern" radical politics, and to revive the tradition of the "critique of political economy"' (ibid., p. 10)? For Žižek it is not clear whether Laclau's post-Marxist project is a proposal for a universal logic of the political or is it a specific political logic characteristic to postmodern global capitalism. Žižek answers his own doubts implicitly with the question: 'Is this frame [the political logic of hegemony] really a non-historical universal, or simply the formal structure of the specific ideologico-political constellation of Western late capitalism?' (2000a, p. 107). He argues that the transition from the economic logic of necessity to the political logic of contingency is not simply an epistemological shift from 'ill' essentialism to the historically adequate logic of the post-foundational theory of hegemony, but also a passage that took place against a background, which Laclau himself identifies as the 'dislocating rhythm of capitalist transformation.' But, as Žižek notes, by focusing almost exclusively on the shift from essentialism to historical contingency, Laclau gently puts into brackets the structuring principles as conditions of (im)possibility of this very shift itself. Žižek's main argument – that he already developed in his first book – is that the characteristic ideological closure of capitalism is not only ahistorical naturalization and neutralization, but also 'over-rapid

historicization' (1989, p. 51). Marx in *The Poverty of Philosophy* already drew attention to how bourgeois economists tend to historicize every institution expect their own:

> There are only two kinds of institutions for them, artificial and natural. The institutions of feudalism are artificial institutions, those of the bourgeoisie are natural institutions. (…) Every religion which is not theirs is an invention of men, while their own is an emanation from God' (Marx, 1847/1955, p. 54).

For Žižek the same holds for Laclau: the post-structuralist deconstruction of every identity and the emphasis on the radically contingent historicist attitude involve the risk of becoming 'the ideological form of "postmodern" global capitalism' in the hands of 'today's apologists for liberal-democratic capitalism' (2009, p. 22). For Žižek, Laclau's radical historicism remains callous to its own historical contingency:

> [T]he problem for me is *how to historicize historicism itself.* (…) Here we have the difference between historicity proper and historicism: *historicism* deals with the endless play of substitutions within the same fundamental field of (im)possibility, while *historicity* proper makes thematic different structural principles of this very (im)possibility (ibid., p. 106-112).

For Laclau, however, the irradiation and generalization of the political logic of hegemony is specifically characteristic only in 'contemporary societies' (Laclau, 2000c), and today, through this 'insight' into the historically contingent logics of the political, one can 'interrogate the past and find there inchoate forms of the same processes that are fully visible today' (ibid., p. 200). Laclau is quite explicit that for him the conditions of possibility for the logic of contingency becoming fully visible are the displacement of the democratic imaginary and the 'dislocating rhythm of capitalist transformation.' Therefore, I don't fully agree with Žižek that Laclau doesn't account for the 'dialectical tension between the domain of historical change itself and its traumatic "ahistorical" kernel *qua* its condition of (im)possibility' (Žižek, 2000a, p. 112). But I fully endorse Žižek's remark, when he argues that the generalization of the political logic of hegemony should be considered as a historical and contingent result of hegemonic struggle *per se*:

> it is contemporary global capitalism with its dynamics of 'deterritorialization', which has created the conditions for the demise of 'essentialist' politics and the proliferation of new multiple political subjectivities. So, again, to make myself clear: my point is *not* that the economy (the logic of Capital) is a kind of 'essentialist anchor' that somehow 'limits' hegemonic struggle – on the contrary, it is its *positive condition*; it creates the very background against which 'generalized hegemony' can thrive (Žižek, 2000c, p. 312).

It could seem that Žižek arbitrarily emphasizes the 'logic of Capital' as the condition of (im)possibility of the generalization of the political logic of hegemony. Laclau, on the other

hand, puts the emphasis on the displacement of the logic of egalitarian equivalences (democratic revolution), bracketing the dislocating logic of capitalist transformation as conditions of (im)possibility. But then, in Žižek's case, what justifies privileging the latter? I argue that there is a distinction that has to be made from the point of view of the discursive concept of domination. While the logic of the displacement of the democratic imaginary is conducive to the *reactivation* of the sedimented forms of 'objectivity', *the logic of Capital is itself a sedimented terrain of domination* – and moreover, a unique, specific form and process among the states of domination, which makes it capable of functioning as the structuring background 'against which "generalized hegemony" can thrive.' For Terry Eagleton, post-Marxist theory is itself the 'living testimony' of capitalist domination, when it sweeps under the carpet that 'the whole theory is itself historically grounded in a particular phase of advanced capitalism' (ibid., p. 219). In line with Nancy Fraser, Žižek's main criticism is not only that today a false choice is imposed on the radical emancipatory Left (postmodern identity politics or class struggle), which should be answered with the refusal of choice and engagement with both. The case is not simply that class antagonism and the critique of the logic of Capital is rendered as only one instance among the 'intersecting' struggles, but – as Nancy Fraser also pointed out – that *postmodern identity politics has been overshadowing class antagonism* since the 1970s, and Laclau's commitment to the project of radical democracy becomes problematic precisely under the light of this shadow. This shadow not only signals a decentering of social antagonisms, but also itself appears as a hegemonic project – one which apparently is capable of neutralizing the sedimented terrain of global capitalist domination. As a consequence, with the disavowal of the logic of Capital, struggles for recognition took on the burden of the suffering that is produced by capitalism, and thus they appear with excessive weight in the political. In *States of Injury,* American political theorist Wendy Brown made a similar point, namely that 'the political purchase of contemporary American identity politics would seem to be achieved in part *through* a certain renaturalization of capitalism that can be said to have marked progressive discourse since the 1970s' (1995, p. 60). She wonders: to what extent does this disavowal of class antagonism 'not only preserves capitalism from critique, but sustains the invisibility and inarticulateness of class – not incidentally, but endemically?' (ibid., p. 61).

5.1 The Logic of Capital

I propose that considering the logic of Capital *as a sedimented terrain of domination* could bring light to its structuring role precisely through its disavowal from antagonisms. As explicated in detail in the previous chapter, the ideological process of maintaining a state of

domination is through its prevention from being articulated into an antagonism – that is its exclusion from any structural location within antagonisms. Apparently – incidentally or endemically – identity politics endorse the structuring fantasy of this ideological closure. It is in this sense that the logic of Capital is the 'positive condition' of the hegemonic struggle – as a disavowed terrain of domination. And precisely in this sense it is possible to argue that 'capital has hegemonised the place of hegemony' (McMillan, 2012, p. 186). But is this surprising at all? 'Is this not also one of the consequences of the notion of hegemony?' (Žižek, 2000a, p. 98).

As argued before, the condition of possibility of the logic of Capital to function as a structuring background against which the political logic of hegemony can thrive is its 'oddity' as a state of domination. While the discursive account of domination refers to perpetually asymmetrical, fixed power relations, where power is fixed by meaning and meaning is fixed by power, the logic of the Capital *as* domination is characterized by 'deterritorialization' and the 'detotalization' of meaning. In their book *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977)*,* Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari distinguish between the coding and territorializing flows of the despotic State and the postmodern decoding and deterritorializing flows of the capitalist machine. 'The capitalist machine (…) is faced with the task of decoding and deterritorializing the flows, (…) the decomposition of the socius' (ibid., p. 33-35) and reterritorializes (connects) different flows of labor and capital in order to accumulate and subtract surplus. But capitalism in itself has no meaning, it is not a discourse or a formation on its own terms, it is only meaningful in its infinite decoding and decomposition of meaning. Žižek argues in a similar fashion, drawing on Alain Badiou's *Logic of Worlds*:

> capitalism is effectively not a civilization of its own, with a specific way of rendering life meaningful. Capitalism is the first socio-economic order which *detotalizes meaning*: it is not global at the level of meaning (there is no global 'capitalist world view:' no 'capitalist civilization' proper; the fundamental lesson of globalization is precisely that capitalism can accommodate itself to all civilizations, from Christian to Hindu and Buddhist). Capitalism's global dimension can be formulated only at the level of truth-without-meaning, as the 'Real' of the global market mechanism (Žižek, 2009, p. 25).

Laclau also acknowledges this specificity of capitalism, namely, that it is 'not advancing in the direction of an increasing homogenization of the social structure but, on the contrary, towards an ever greater social and institutional complexity' (Laclau, 2000b, pp. 52–53). A great deal of Žižek's *oeuvre* is an attempt to illustrate this expanding complexity, how capitalism can accommodate itself to a variety of discourses – from Western Buddhism to biogenetics. But it also tells a lot about how big capital accomodates and commodifies new antagonisms – *how*

the logic of Capital devours struggle per se.[30] Capitalism thus produces its own surreal theatre: the recent commitment of the international oil and gas corporation ExxonMobil in fighting climate change (*sic!*); the International Monetary Fund's awakening, in 2016, that neoliberal economic policies *really are* conducive to deepening inequalities (the IMF even published a paper with the title 'Neoliberalism: Oversold?'); and Apple, standing behind almost every possible struggle (from diversity in the workplace to the eradication of child poverty and climate change), while Foxconn workers assemble Apple products in Chinese 'sweat factories' on daily wages averaging from 1 to 2 dollars. But maybe the most explicit and controversial spectacle of the commodification of struggles is encapsulated in a recent Pepsi advertisement from 2017 entitled *Live for Now Moments Anthem* with the message that people should all unite in struggle, join the conversation on the streets and celebrate diversity – in general, the struggle for recognition. The plot starts with an official photoshoot of super model Kendall Jenner, who suddenly recognizes that there is a huge protest on the street. She takes off her wig (throwing off the chains of the beauty industry) and joins the march: banners, pickets, fist bumps follow. At the climax of the scene, Jenner walks to the police line and hands a can of Pepsi to a police officer, followed by the celebrating approval of the marchers. This ad came out in the midst of the Black Lives Matter protests in the US, which stood up against police brutality, thus it became a huge scandal. Even though Pepsi apologized, the video had over 1.6 million views on YouTube in only 2 days. What is striking here is not only how big capital frames and supports new antagonisms (thus mystifying capitalist domination), but also how the critique of the advertisement and the emotional outburst that followed retroactively provided the commercial reach, i.e., the promotion of the product. But wasn't it already emphasized in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Marx & Engels, 1848/1969) that Capital transforms its own harms and the resistance against it in such a way that maintains and reproduces the prevailing structures by 'redressing social grievances in order to secure the continued existence of bourgeois society' (ibid., p. 31)? Hence, the phantom of liberty, that is today the liberal-democratic imaginary (the deepening of which Laclau argues for), is not simply the ideological mask of capitalism. The vision of freedom and equality are not the rose-tinted glasses of exploitation and capitalist domination: 'the gist of Marx's analysis is that the legal-ideological matrix of freedom-equality is not a mere "mask" concealing exploitation-domination, but the very *form* in which the latter is exercised' (Žižek, 2009, p. 125). Thus, again, the logic of Capital

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[30] One shouldn't forget one of the most famous graffities from 1968 – even if we all participate in a struggle, someone will extract surplus from it: '*I participate. You participate. He participates. We participate. They profit.*'

is the very background against which hegemonic struggles thrive, and this background is not opposed to the contingent and dispersed logic of the political, on the contrary: the *foreclosure* of Capital is the sedimented terrain, the very horizon which reactivates the field of the political through deterritorialization, decoding and the detotalization of meaning, political subjectivities and so on. The contemporary repression and disavowal of capitalism and class struggle, the renunciation of class politics and the rejection of such attempts by reference to 'essentialism' is at least a sign of the ideological triumph – the successful hegemonic project – of global capitalism (cf. Žižek, 2008). The critique of political economy, and the politicization of economy in postmodern and post-Marxist politics, is in short supply *not despite* the ideological triumph of capitalism, but precisely *because of* 'the very notion and form of the "political" within which it operates is grounded in the "depoliticization" of the economy' (Žižek, 2000a, p. 98). If capitalism is a sedimented terrain of domination, then the discursive function of maintaining it is through ideological mystification, which involves depoliticization, neutralization, and so on.

By declaring, however, that capitalism has 'hegemonised the place of hegemony', there is a high risk of retrogression to 'essentialism' or a new model of the 'base and superstructure'. I especially find it risky that, from *The Ticklish Subject* (1999a) on, Žižek starts to refer to Capital as the Lacanian Real. It is not surprising that Laclau furiously refuses this conceptual shift in Žižek's arguments, stating that, apparently 'Žižek's thought is not organized around a truly *political* reflection but is, rather, a *psychoanalytic* discourse which draws its examples from the politico-ideological field' (Laclau, 2000a, p. 289). While Laclau basically shares Žižek's concern that the contemporary Left has resigned from global political strategies in favor of partial, 'issue-orientated politics' (2000c, p. 202), he nevertheless considers the formula 'Capital *qua* Real' as a cheap trick that masks Žižek's retrogression to foundationalism. 'All this cheap metaphoric use of the reality/Real duality to refer to something that is no more than the old base/superstructure distinction is entirely out of place' (2006b, p. 658). Žižek, however, elaborates the 'Capital *qua* Real' formula at least in two distinct ways. One of his arguments is that, regarding the political logic of hegemony, wherein the logic of difference and the logic of equivalence mutually contaminate each other in constant resignification, 'today's Real which sets a limit to resignification is Capital: the smooth functioning of Capital is that which remains the same, that which "always returns to its place", in the unconstrained struggle for hegemony' (2000b, p. 223). Laclau is partly correct that the problem with this trajectory is that Žižek attributes a positive content to the concept of the Real, which cancels the structuring function of the Real as the unsignifiable fissure in the Symbolic order. I am – in agreement with Laclau

– more convinced that the Real is more an 'ahistorical kernel' which points to a lack, i.e., that there is no *a priori*, originary ideal 'that always returns to its place', rather the Real is 'the a priori of historicity *itself*' (Žižek, 2000c, p. 310). Žižek develops, however, another argument for the formula 'Capital *qua* Real' in his last debate with Laclau in 2006, which I find more convincing. Žižek sketches a multidimensional matrix of the Lacanian triad (Imaginary, Symbolic, Real orders), where each order can be present in the other and even in itself: thus Žižek distinguishes between the *imaginary* Real, the *symbolic* Real and the *real* Real. Capital as Real appears in this multidimensional matrix as closer to the function of the *symbolic* Real, which Žižek understands as the Real, which brings 'consistency' to the field of signification (2006b) – 'capital is thus the consistent background against which shared social life operates, even if capital is inconsistent in itself' (McMillan, 2010, p. 169). But what does it mean that the logic of Capital brings consistency to the field of signification? It is again connected to the specific logic of Capital as a form of domination, namely its logic of deterritorialization and detotalization of meaning. As already argued, capitalism is worldless, namely,

> although it is global, encompassing the whole world, it sustains a *stricto sensu* worldless ideological constellation, depriving the large majority of people of any meaningful cognitive mapping. The universality of capitalism resides in the fact that capitalism is not a name for a civilization, for a specific cultural-symbolic world, but the name for a truly neutral econo-symbolic machine (Žižek, 2006b, pp. 196–197).

It is precisely in this sense that capitalism on the one hand brings consistency to the symbolic order of the social, and on the other hand – as a worldless logic – '*remains the same in all possible worlds.*' (ibidem.) I propose it is only in this sense that the logic of Capital can be understood as a 'positive condition' or a background of hegemonic struggles without a retrogression to essentialism. And for such a theoretical enterprise there is no need to inscribe Capital into the concept of the Lacanian Real.

I am tempted to call the distinctive logic of Capital in hegemonic struggles as that which brings '*consistency into contingency*'.[31] While in states of domination power fixes meaning, in the specific case (almost a Hegelian universal exception) of capitalist domination, power is also effective in its divergent, dispersive and decoding flows regarding signification. I propose that one convincing attempt to acknowledge the hegemonic 'weight' that capitalism superimposes on the symbolic field of the social is *through approaching it as a state of domination with its specific logic of the detotalization of meaning*. Conceiving capitalism as a sedimented terrain

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[31] Here the cross reference to Foucault's 'regularity in dispersion' is completely intentional.

of domination is not to say that it structures the social and the political as a 'base', but rather that on the one hand it represents a strong (if not the strongest) instance of 'gravity' (a heavily sedimented field of 'objectivity' infiltrating ever-deeper and wider complexities), and on the other hand – *via* its logic of detotalizing meaning – represents an 'anti-gravitational' effect[i] as well (bringing consistency into contingency). Of course, the social is historically contingent *per se*, but capitalism (which is also a historically contingent formation) fuels the expanding polysemy of the social, which dialectically maintains capitalist domination. So it is not only that capitalism, as a sedimented terrain of domination, brings consistency into contingency through the detotalization of meaning, but also that 'the "postmodern" universe of globalized contingency – (…) the radically contingent-hegemonic nature of political processes' (Žižek, 2000c, p. 319) deepen and widen the sedimentation of capitalist domination.

Isn't this bizarre marriage between postmodernism and capitalism the central focus of contemporary Marxist and post-Marxist theorists of late capitalism from David Harvey and Fredrick Jameson to Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt? Isn't the outlandish cross-modulation between postmodernism and post-Fordist capitalism the focal theme of, for instance, David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), showing that, contrary to the modernist thrust of finding meaning and depth in the fragmented experience of the Enlightment, postmodernist thrust is characterized by fragmentation, fluidity, dispersion, irony and so on? Harvey argues that as the limits of Fordist production became more and more visible in the 1970s (inconsistency, contradictory and crisis-prone aspects of overaccumulation), the question appeared: 'how the overaccumulation tendency can be expressed, contained, absorbed, or managed in ways that do not threaten the capitalist social order' (ibid., p. 181). The answer was 'flexible accumulation' – the 'devaluation of commodities' with the extension of macro-economic control, and the 'absorption of overaccumulation' through temporal and spatial displacements of production and consumption:

> Flexible accumulation has been accompanied (…) by a much greater attention to quick-changing fashions and the mobilization of all the artifices of need inducement and cultural transformation that this implies. The relatively stable aesthetic of Fordist modernism has given way to all the ferment, instability, and fleeting qualities of a postmodernist aesthetic that celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodification of cultural forms (ibid., p. 156).

And isn't this 'depthlessness' of postmodern capitalism, the mutual contamination of the economic and the cultural, the central thrust of Frederick Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) as well? For Jameson, the cultural logic of capitalism refers to 'a "mode of production" in which cultural production finds a specific functional place

and whose symptomatology is in my work mainly drawn from culture' (ibid., p. 405). For Jameson – as also for Harvey – the postmodern condition is not only a 'simulacra' of differences and flexible overaccumulation, but – partly because of it – also a logic of totalizing, of *embracing* the differences. As Neil Smith argues in his book *Uneven Development,* 'capital is like a plague of locusts. It settles on one place, devours it, then moves on to plague another place. Better, in the process of restoring itself after one plague the region makes itself ripe for another' (1984/2008, p. 202). Ernest Mandel – from whom Jameson borrows the term 'late capitalism' – goes so far as to argue that the totalizing, unifying character of late capitalism is conducive to its celebrated heterogeneity and differentiality:

> as the outcome of the uneven and combined development of states, regions, branches of industry and firms, unleashed by the quest for surplus-profit, it [the entire capitalist system] forms an integrated unity, but it is an integrated unity of non-homogeneous parts, and it is precisely the unity that here determines the lack of homogeneity (1975/1999, p. 102).

And isn't this all-embracing, accelerating expansion of late capitalism that which Deleuze and Guattari identify besides the logic of deterritorialization, decoding and detotalization of meaning? Isn't it a comradely Derridean *hauntology* to install (and not to deconstruct) Marx[32] *within* post-structuralist theory, by saying that if capitalism 'is continually expanding, and acquires a consistency entirely its own, (…) this is because capitalism for its part has no exterior limit, but only an interior limit that is capital itself and that it does not encounter, but reproduces by always displacing it' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1977, pp. 230–231)?[33]

The logic of Capital as both characterized by the detotalization of meaning and by the totalization and unification of the 'world(s)' is the logic that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri try to encompass in the notion of 'Empire' in their trilogy *Empire* (2000), *Multitude* (2004) and *Commonwealth* (2009). Hardt and Negri argue that, while there has always been a contradiction between the logic of Capital and the modern sovereignty of nation states, this contradiction was, up until a certain point, mediated by colonialism and imperialism – European powers, for instance, were quite successful in both maintaining strong nation states and 'outsourcing' the

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[32] More precisely, Marx's famous observation in the 3rd volume of *Capital*: 'The *real barrier* of capitalist production is *capital itself*.' (1894/1999)

[33] This reference to the infinite displacement of limits is also a direct invocation of Marx's *Grundrisse* (1861/1973): 'while capital must on one side strive to tear down every spatial barrier to intercourse, i.e. to exchange, and conquer the whole earth for its market, it strives on the other side to annihilate this space with time, i.e. to reduce to a minimum the time spent in motion from one place to another. The more developed the capital, therefore, the more extensive the market over which it circulates, which forms the spatial orbit of its circulation, the more does it strive simultaneously for an even greater extension of the market and for greater annihilation of space by time.' (ibid., p. 539)

accumulation of Capital to colonies, but imperialism 'also created and reinforced rigid boundaries among the various global spaces, strict notions of inside and outside that effectively blocked the free flow of capital, labor and goods – thus necessarily precluding the full realization of the world market' (2000, p. 332). But as Marx has already stated, '[t]he tendency to create the world market is directly given in the concept of capital itself' (1861/1973, p. 408), thus retaining rigid boundaries sets a limit to capital. Rosa Luxemburg noted that this limit might bring the collapse of capitalism and – as Hardt and Negri continue this line of thought – 'Rosa Luxemburg was essentially right: *imperialism would have been the death of capital had it not been overcome.* The full realization of the world market is necessarily the end of imperialism' (2000, p. 333). The weakening of imperialist powers, especially after the Second World War, and the nuclear threat of the Cold War was the hot bed of the 'Empire', which Hardt and Negri understand as a 'new global form of sovereignty' composed of 'a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule' (ibid., p. xii). The Empire has incorporated the entire Globe – it has *no outside* (Capital's infinite immanence is that it produces its own contradictions) and *no absolute center*, i.e., power is distributed unevenly in the constant deterritorializing and reterritorializing flows of the logic of Capital. Since the Empire has a hierarchical structure of its own in the global network of the circulation of Capital, it 'became more important and decisive in all the zones and regions in which the old imperialisms had previously operated' (ibid., p, 251). Of course, it doesn't mean that the role of nation states is eliminated in favour of the global command of transnational corporations – the case is much more complex: '[a]lthough transnational corporations and global networks of production and circulation have undermined the powers of nation-states, state functions and constitutional elements have effectively been displaced to other levels and domains' (ibid., p. 307). Hardt and Negri conceptualize the world-order in the *Empire* as a pyramid (with the military superpower of the United States on the very top and NGOs at the bottom, working on the incorporation of the masses into the Empire), and later in *Commonwealth* as a three-dimensional chess game, where powers have to play both vertically and horizontally.

> Even the dominant countries are now dependent on the global system; the interactions of the world market have resulted in a generalized disarticulation of all economies. Increasingly, any attempt at isolation or separation will mean only a more brutal kind of domination by the global system, a reduction to powerlessness and poverty. (ibid., p. 284)

Only in this mixed or 'hybrid' constitution[34] of the Empire is the contemporary struggle for strong nation states and the emergence of new walls on the borders comprehensible. Therefore, this all-encompassing character of Empire, namely that the logic of Capital infiltrates every aspect of the social in a Foucauldian 'cappilaric' manner, does *not* mean that Empire is an establishment of uniform relations – on the contrary, *Empire is constitutive of differences* and 'hybridization'. Consequently, in the historical bloc of the Empire, political projects and strategies of multiculturalism, radical democracy, or the political logic of identity politics 'unwittingly contribute to its [the Empire's] functioning' (Hardt, Negri, Brown, & Szeman, 2002, p. 182). Since globalization in the Empire 'works through hybridization and multicultural formations, (…) those projects lose any necessary relation to liberation or even contestation. In fact, they could be complicit with imperial power itself' (ibidem.). And it is precisely in this sense that I tried to grasp the tension between totalization and detotalization, characteristic to postmodern global capitalism, in the notion of 'bringing consistency into contingency'. This framework also has consequences for the critique of ideology (especially for understanding the flattering and death of ideology criticism in postmodern and post-structuralist theories):

> When we begin to consider the ideologies of corporate capital and the world market, it certainly appears that the postmodernist and postcolonialist theorists who advocate a politics of difference, fluidity, and hybridity in order to challenge the binaries and essentialism of modern sovereignty have been outflanked by the strategies of power (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 138).

Thus, it is of utmost importance for the critique of ideology to ask one of its most basic questions: What if the formulation of a problem is *part of* the problem itself? Isn't the anti-utopian, post-ideological, 'reformist' consensus of postmodernism an ideological closure *par excellence*? The devaluation of those projects which try to seriously challenge the prevailing order as 'totalitarian' or 'utopian' signals that '*today's predominant form of ideological "closure" takes the precise form of mental block which prevents us from imagining a fundamental social change, in the interests of an allegedly "realistic" and "mature" attitude*' (Žižek, 2000c, p. 324). This confronts any project of ideology criticism with the task to contest this realistic and mature attitude: 'today, actual freedom of thought means the freedom to

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[34] This notion refers to the constitution of the Roman Empire. Hardt and Negri argue that the contemporary Empire consists of distinct forms of bodies: 'the monarchic unity of power and its global monopoly of force [WTO, OECD, World Bank, etc.]; aristocratic articulations through transnational corporations and nation-states; and democratic-representational *comitia*, presented again in the form of nation-states, along with the various kinds of NGOs, media organizations, and other "popular" organisms' (2000, pp. 314–315).

question the predominant, liberal-democratic, "postideological" consensus – or it means nothing' (Žižek, 2001, p. 194). In practical terms, it doesn't mean to denounce postmodern identity politics in favour of class politics, on the contrary – the task is to embrace both and to acknowledge that the concept of *class* needs to be at least reclaimed in the historical bloc of the generalization of hegemonic political struggles.

5.2 The Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real Class

It is quite symptomatic that Laclau, from the *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990) on, vehemently rejects the notion of class antagonism, since for him it is 'totally insufficient to explain the identity of the agents involved in anticapitalist struggles. It is simply the remainder of an old-fashioned conception…' (Laclau, 2000c, p. 203). Laclau argues – and repeats in almost all of his works – that 'class antagonism is not inherent to capitalist relations of production' (ibid., p. 202), the relation between the capitalist and the worker (the buyer of labour power and the seller of labour power) is for Laclau a contradiction and not an antagonism (namely, it doesn't prevent the worker from being a worker). Laclau has already explained this conceptual standpoint with Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*: '"Serf", "slave", and so on, do not designate in themselves antagonistic positions' (1985, p. 154). And – at least for Laclau – the same holds for class. In itself it is *not* an antagonistic position:

> if there is going to be antagonism, its source cannot be internal to the capitalist relations of production, but has to be sought in something that the worker is outside those relations, something which is threatened by them: the fact that below a certain level of wages the worker cannot live a decent life, and so on (Laclau, 2000c, p. 202).

I find, however, multiple problematic points with Laclau's explication. First of all, a basic distinction has to be made between class and identity, which Laclau often conflates incorrectly with one another.[35] Second, due to this conflation of class and identity, Laclau arrives at workers' demands as 'reactions' towards what threatens their 'worker identity', by which

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[35] In 2016, the day after Donald Trump won the election in the United States, Žižek gave a lecture at New York University with the title 'What the Liberal Left Doesn't Want to Hear', where he showed why it is problematic to conflate identity and class through an example where class is really understood as an identity. Žižek here refers to – and makes fun of – Silicon Valley capitalists, who have recently opted to argue that 'if we deconstruct gender binary shouldn't we also deconstruct class binary? (…) So there are not only capitalists and proletarians, but there is a multiplicity of positions which cannot be reduced to this binary. (…) What if we have bi-class (a proletarian sub-employing and exploiting other proletarians), masturbatory cross-class (small company, self-employed owner exploiting himself), class-queen (a motherly capitalist who takes care of her workers, but tolerates no trade unions), PTC (proletarian-to-capitalist), CTP (capitalist-to-proletarian), class-bender, class-queer, pan-class, non-class, trans-class, a-class, class-fluid, non-binary trans-class, two spirit (George Soros or Bill Gates, half-time ruthless manipulators, half-time the most generous humanitarians), and so on.'

Laclau clearly aligns with gradualist and reformist politics. Because – and this is my third point – what Laclau overlooks, is that the very existence of 'class' signals a state of domination, and the fact that Laclau overlooks this, is a consequence of Laclau's account of oppression *as* antagonistic relation. As I've tried to explicate in detail in the previous chapter, if domination is the other of antagonism, then Laclau is still right: there is no class antagonism – but not because it is not inherent to capitalist relations. There is no class struggle precisely because class *is* inherent to capitalist relations where the very existence of 'class' indicates the other of struggle: domination.[36] Thus, when Laclau argues that '[t]here is nothing in the worker's demands which is intrinsically anti-capitalist' (ibid., p. 203)[37], isn't he unconsciously drawing our attention to the consequence of a successful hegemonic struggle (capitalism) which fixed perpetually asymmetrical power relations by preventing the subversion of them through ideological mystification? As Victor Wallis noted, '[w]hat distinguishes class difference from any type of non-class difference (…) is that class difference is inherently a matter of domination. (…) In summary, class stands by itself as a relationship inherently grounded in domination' (2015, pp. 614–615). Again, this means that the very existence of 'class' signals the presence of a sedimented terrain of domination, and this terrain has a name: *capitalism*. But, of course, class is not the ultimate answer in postmodern global capitalism, and the task therefore is *not* choosing between the politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution or identity politics and class struggle.[38] As both Fraser and Žižek argue, the task today is to take both postmodernism and class politics into account, with the proviso that, within the contemporary hegemonic constellation (historical bloc), identity politics predominate, while

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[36] Of course, I am not saying that there are no instances of class struggle at all: from the Zapatistas to the Rojava conflict, there are antagonisms constructed along strong class characteristics. What I am trying to say is that, contrary to the Marxist explanations of class relation as struggle, I propose to put the emphasis on class as a state of domination *per se,* with a clear distinction between domination and struggle.

[37] Of course, for Laclau the emphasis is on the argument that there is no necessary relationship between a subject position and a demand, it is always a result of hegemonic articulation. But Terry Eagleton is to a large extent critical with Laclau precisely because of this standpoint: '[i]f there is no "necessary" relation between women and feminism or the working class and socialism, then the upshot would be a disastrously eclectic, opportunistic politics, which simply drew into its project whatever social groups seemed currently most amenable to it' (1991, p. 218). And here I agree with Eagleton, that there *is* a 'necessary' relation between class and anti-capitalist demands (as well as between feminism and women, and so on).

[38] As Žižek puts it, the proper answer to the question of choice between class struggle and postmodernism is *the refusal of choice*: 'In a well-known Marx Brothers joke Groucho answers the standard question "Tea or coffee?" with "Yes, please!" – a refusal of choice. (…) [O]ne should answer in the same way the false alternative today's critical theory seems to impose on us: either "class struggle" (the outdated problematic of class antagonism, commodity production, etc.) or "postmodernism" (the new world of dispersed multiple identities, of radical contingency, of an irreducible ludic plurality of struggles). Here, at least, we can have our cake and eat it…' (2000a, p. 90)

class politics apparently recede. Hence the acknowledgement of the disavowal of class politics foreshadows a strategical task at least for the radical emancipatory Left: to reconceptualize and reclaim class and class politics in a historical bloc characterized by the generalization of hegemonic struggles, but *not* at the expense of politics of recognition. However, the mainstream conceptualization of class as a category for describing distributional inequalities (i.e., stratificaton model) narrows to a large extent the concept of class itself. As Márk Áron Éber (2015) argues, the concept of class in Marx, Weber, Wright, Bourdieu, etc. is rather a strucutral category with the role to capture the relations of production and the contradictions inherent in the logic of Capital:

> [C]lasses are created within the process of production and the relations of production in Marx, are determined by market situation in Weber, are formed within the field arising as a result of the relations of capitals in Bourdieu – and one should add: all this is rooted in a historical progress for all of them. (…) Narrowing the social division of labour, as well as the complex structures of ownership and of wealth inequalities down to the analysis of *distributional* inequalities leads to a methodological restriction, which does not meet the criteria of class analysis (ibid., p.121, translation mine).

Class analysis as the analysis of distributional inequalities is closely connected to the intellectual and theoretical tradition of reformist social-democratism, but it has little to say about class as a *structural relation*. Understanding class as a structural relation is an attempt to grasp the social and historical constellation of Capital. If the focus of class analysis is on the classification of 'classes', the sociological quantification of distinct and demarcated economic strata, it can mislead from the understanding of class as a structural relation. Éber notes, drawing on Bourdieu, that 'the researcher (…) may draw circles on the class-map depicting the social field, but these lines will necessarily be contingent, and the demarcations made this way will only be the demarcating lines of classes existing only on paper' (ibid., p. 127, translation mine). But 'class' is not a thing or a substance, rather it is enacted in contingent socio-historical relations of ownership, production, distribution of means etc., thus any attempt to register it as an essence or a clearly demarcated stratification is doomed to fail. As E. P. Thompson argues in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966), class understood as a structural relation

> is a fluency which evades analysis if we attempt to stop it dead at any given moment and anatomise its structure. The finest-meshed sociological net cannot give us a pure specimen of class, any more than it can give us one of deference or of love. The relationship must always be embodied in real people and in a real context (ibid., p. 9).

Thus, the primary question is not how many classes one can identify and name, but rather how socio-historical relations are enacted and actualized, sedimented or reactivized against the

background of class, which – again – is not simply a category, but rather 'something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships.' (ibidem.) This is not to say that the sociological classification of class is superfluous, but to acknowledge that class is 'in making' and to shift the emphasis from quantifiable stratification toward *ponderable* power relations (cf. Éber, 2015). This shift in the approach is especially important if one considers how a relatively small class fraction can impact social relations on the basis of heavily concentrated power. From this perspective, Laclau is quite right when he argues that the 'working class' has faded out and receded in the past decades, but he is quite wrong when he arrives at the conclusion that *hence* the explanatory potential of class became obsolete. Since class is not a thing, but a relation, it cannot dissolve or disappear. Class relations might be, rather, sedimented or 'dormant' (*Klasse an sich*). Éber notes that there are several cases when 'classes are not made, are not actualized. In most cases, most of the classes are not active, they do not give a signal about themselves, in this sense (…) we could really say they don't exist' (ibid., p. 123, translation mine). Thus, again, class is a question of 'making', of enactment and reactivation, and this is exactly why a class fraction with heavily concentrated power can enact as a class for itself (*Klasse für sich*). As Immanuel Wallerstein argues in *The Modern World System* (1974), '[c]lasses always exist potentially (*an sich*). The issue is under what conditions they become class-conscious (*für sich*). (…) To the extent that class boundaries are not made explicit, to that extent it is more likely, that privileges be maintained' (ibid., p. 351). This means that even if class fractions are apparently silent, class as structural relation has not disappeared at all. Thus, the question is how to grasp this structural relation without losing its dynamic socio-historical dimensions. And the question of typology, or classification of 'classes', is always how one 'cuts through' the historically contingent relations of class in order to depict a section or a fraction of the social and reinsert it into the global logic of Capital – that is, to show how segmented relations are deeply inscribed in the structure of the historical and spatial cycles of capitalism. However, I also find it important to emphasize – in agreement with Thompson and Éber – that (1) even the most accurate, 'finest-meshed net' is insufficient to grasp 'a pure specimen of class' (E. P. Thompson, 1966, p. 9) – i.e., class is historical and contingent – and above all (2) most of the classes exist only 'potentially', and this is the only theoretical horizon where Laclau's standpoint ('there is no class struggle') makes any sense.[39] Žižek elaborates his

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[39] It is important to mention that, even if most of the classes exist *in potentia* and thus there is no class struggle in the traditional sense (between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie), some 'für sich' classes are internally divided and hence there *is* class struggle, e.g., between the national and international bourgeoisie.

special framework for class analysis and class politics precisely along these two dimensions, which he encompasses in the transliteration of Lacan's '*il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel*' ('there is no sexual relationship') into 'there is no class relationship' (1989, p. 141). Žižek tries to capture both the above-mentioned dimensions with this phrase: first, any attempt to grasp class structure (Thompson's pure specimen) is doomed to fail – the very existence of class 'undermines every universal form which attempts to capture it' (Žižek, 2000c, p. 309); second, the very existence of class indicates hegemonic domination, there is no proper way of translating or reconciling a relation that is based on domination – class as structural relation 'is already the index of the victory of one side in the struggle' (ibid., p. 320). Thus, again, class is the 'product' of hegemonic domination (capitalist modes of production), and while Laclau is right, that there is no 'class struggle', class as a structural relation 'none the less functions, *in its very absence* (…) – what we have here is the typical structural-dialectical paradox of *an effect which exists only in order to efface the causes of its existence…*' (Žižek, 1991, p. 100).

For Žižek, class as structural relation is the 'outcome', the 'result' of the capitalist modes of production, but the existence of antagonistic classes is not only inscribed within the very material process of production: classes are also understandable as constituted by the subjects' relation to the logic of Capital. Žižek here risks an Althusserian standpoint (imaginary relation to the relations of production) for the sake of bringing back young Marx's understanding of *class as an epistemological institution* in the first instance. But even taking this risk into account, I fully embrace Žižek's class analysis, since it seems useful for a project that's main thrust is the critique of ideology and nevertheless to reclaim class politics. Žižek's ideologico-critical concept of class draws on the Lacanian triad. He constructs a class-typology along the Lacanian orders, and argues that in postmodern global capitalism, class antagonism in not constituted between two, but across the horizon of three classes according to the three Lacanian orders: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real.

For Žižek there are two types of relation to the logic of Capital, which he compares to Claude Lévi-Strauss's analysis of the division in the Winnebago tribe: on the one hand, the 'conservative-corporatist' (*Imaginary*) relation to the logic of Capital consists of fantasies and images which display the social as a Whole (a Body) that is threatened by particular problems, e.g., 'as the organic unity of a Community disturbed only by foreign intruders' (Žižek, 2000a, p. 113); on the other hand, the 'revolutionary-antagonistic' (*Symbolic*) relation to the logic of Capital consists of the displacement of this relation to some other fundamental split inherent in the social (racism, exclusion, climate change, animal liberation, etc.). 'To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class,

organizers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind' (Marx & Engels, 1848/1969). Kiss (2017) argues that while the 'conservative-corporatist' answer is apparently reactionary and the 'revolutionary-antagonistic' is supposedly transformative, both of them are in fact conservative. While the Imaginary class's relation to Capital consists of the identification with the fantasies that are produced by Capital (the fantasy-scenarios of strong identities, love, money, family, nation, tradition, cultural heritage etc.), the Symbolic class

> attempts to map the rules of society, the expectations of authorities (…) and – according to these – formulates its own social ideal, in order to shape and enjoy reality in the name of this ideal. (…) So it must formulate itself as part of the symbolic order, it must identify with its own 'social mask'. (2017, p. 45, translation mine)

In Žižek's class typology,[40] the Symbolic class consists of 'not only managers and bankers, but also academics, journalists, lawyers, and so on', the Real class encompasses 'the excluded in all their variations (the permanently unemployed, the homeless, underprivileged ethnic and religious minorities, and so on)', while the Imaginary class is positioned in-between the two 'passionately attached to the traditional modes of production and ideology (say, a qualified manual worker whose job is threatened), and attacking both extremes, big business and academics as well as the excluded, as "un-patriotic", "rootless" deviations' (Žižek, 2000c, pp. 322–323). Class antagonism is constituted across the Lacanian triad 'with shifting strategic alliances,' for instance 'the "politically correct" symbolic classes defending the excluded against the "fundamentalist" middle class…' (ibidem.) And while both the Imaginary and the Symbolic class are conservative, they are also antagonistic, constituted *Inside* the field of representation. Žižek points to three important shifts characteristic at least to 'Western' societies: first, the revolutionary potential is not any more concentrated within the 'lower' classes, but change is primarily promoted by the 'revolutionary-antagonistic' upper classes, i.e., the Symbolic class, which continuously restructures the ideologico-hegemonic field of discourse, and thus, paradoxically, perpetually loses control out of hand; second, the 'conservative-corporatist', fundamentalist answers of the Imaginary class are apparently becoming far more attractive today; and third, the antagonistic relation between the Imaginary and Symbolic classes *inside* the field of representation thrive against the background of the Real

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[40] It is of utmost importance to note that, while for Žižek classes are constituted by the logic of Capital, he does not understand them as pre-given social entities. Žižek emphasises – in line with Thompson, Éber and others – that the subjects' relation to Capital is constituted through ideologico-political processes, which in certain circumstances *might* construct classes *für sich*.

class, the constitutive *Outside* of the field of representation (floating and lurking in Lacanian *extimité*, or cf., Laclau's *heterogeneity*). This triad maps quite accurately Laclau's understanding of the construction of antagonisms – with the antagonistic forces (Imaginary and Symbolic class) and the constitutive outside (Real class in *extimacy*).

The class in *extimité* is *Real* in the sense that it is perpetually excluded from any structural locations within antagonisms, thus functions as a traumatic 'kernel which resists social integration' (Žižek, 2000c, p. 323) and hence it is present in its absence, as a constitutive outside of the symbolic order of the social,[ii] and *Symptomatic* in the Marxist sense that it directly embodies the contradictions of Capital as a 'paradoxical element which, without ceasing to be its internal constituent, functions as its symptom – subverts the very universal rational principle of this totality' (Žižek, 1989, p. 18). It is precisely along this *double entendre* – the Real and the Symptomatic dimensions of the class in *extimité* – that I called in the beginning of this chapter the 'spectre': as lurking beyond and within the symbolic order as its constitutive part, and threatening its order *via* the return of the repressed (as symptom). The Real class starts to function as a Symptomatic class precisely 'at the moment when it "intrudes" into the "symbolic order" of the Imaginary and Symbolic classes – it immediately disrupts the harmony and the integrity of the social, which harmony was sustained as an appearance precisely by the exclusion of the Real' (Kiss, 2017, p. 47, translation mine). Thus, again, the existence of the Real class as an absence is a positive condition of global capitalism – it functions as a constitutive lack, which is representable through the intrusion into and the subversion of the field of representation *per se*. And the logic of Capital relies – in order to survive – on the 'shadowy existence of those who are condemned to lead a *spectral life* outside the domain of the global order, blurred in the background, unmentionable, submerged in the formless mass of "population", without even a proper particular place of their own' (Žižek, 2000c, pp. 313–314 italics added). This displaced entity of the social, the uncounted element, that lacks its own place within the social – or more precisely whose proper place is that of exclusion – and which nonetheless is a constitutive part of the social exactly in the Foucauldian manner of '*inclusion through exclusion*' (Foucault, 1976/2002, p. 78), appears already in Marx's early works as the 'reserve army of labour,' 'redundant people' or 'surplus-population.' For Marx, the potential accumulation of capital is proportional to the extent of overpopulation on the one hand, but on the other, the increased accumulation of capital produces 'a reserve army of unemployed workers for times of overproduction,' (Marx, 1847b) since the inner logic of capitalist modes of production is 'to extort a given quantity of labour out of a smaller rather than a greater number of workers, if the cost is about the same' (Marx, 1867/1992, p. 788). In this sense, the

surplus population of workers is not only the product of capitalist accumulation, but also its *conditio sine qua non*:

> [I]n fact it is capitalist accumulation itself that constantly produces, and produces indeed in direct relation with its own energy and extent, a relatively redundant working population, i.e. a population which is superfluous to capital's average requirements for its own valorization, and is therefore a surplus population. But (…) this surplus population also becomes (…) a condition for the existence of the capitalist mode of production. [I]t creates a mass of human material always ready for exploitation by capital in the interests of capital's own changing valorization requirements (ibid., p. 782-784).

This redundant population, which is superfluous and necessary at the same time, has been approached in manifold ways since Marx's *Capital*. Among those I find especially helpful – at least for the conceptualization of the Real class – is Jacques Rancière's understanding of politics, what is for him 'the struggle between the poor and the rich' (1999a, p. 11). More precisely, a struggle between those who have no part with regards to the commons and those who control them. 'There is politics when there is a part of those who have no part, a part or party of the poor… when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part' (ibidem.). Rancière's 'part of no part' beautifully captures the paradoxical entity of the redundant-but-necessary population of the social. Just as Maria Mendel – drawing both on Stefan Czarnowski's understanding of social margin, and on Zygmunt Bauman's 'wasted lives' – with the notion of 'indispensable redundant.' It refers to 'the ambivalent nature of marginality as being outside the centre – *outside of all places* – but at the very same time also needed by the centre. (…) [The redundant people are] at the same time necessary for the creation and maintenance of institutionalized social practices.' (Mendel, 2011, p. 164) Characteristic to the explications of the 'reserve army of labour,' the 'part of no part,' the 'indispensable redundant,' the 'human waste' and so on – or what I prefer to call the Real class or the class in *extimité* – is that it encapsulates a *heterogeneity* instead of a homogeneity. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852), Marx lists, for instance, 'vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *maquereaus* [procurers], brothel keepers, porters, *literati*, organ grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars…' (ibid., p. 63). Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961/1963), refers to 'rural masses, (…) horde[s] of starving men, (…) the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed, and the petty criminals…' (ibid., pp. 129-130). Mendel also elaborates a heterogeneous list regarding the 'indispensable redundant,' which for her consists of 'the unemployed, homeless, freelancers, criminals, youngsters…' (Mendel, 2011, p. 163). The attempt to capture the heterogeneity of the Real

class is also characteristic to postmodern and post-Marxist literature. For instance, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari deploy the notion of 'multiplicity' in the *Thousand Plateaus* (1987, p. 33), which becomes one of the inspirations for Hardt and Negri for the elaboration of the concept of the 'multitude' in the *Empire*. The multitude represents a theoretical shift from rigid categories, such as working class and proletariat, and designates a fluidity of heterogeneous entities which form a counterpart to global capitalism. Later, in *Commonwealth,* they turn to a more general concept of the 'poor,' by which they refer to the 'people of poverty' as opposed to the 'people of property.' They implicitly invoke Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's approach of property as an entity, which in itself encircles a state of domination – 'property *is* theft.' For Hardt and Negri, the 'poor' is not a passive category – on the one hand its exclusion is an inherent function of global capitalism, on the other the tension between the 'republic of property' and the 'multitude of poverty' is a site of production of subjectivities.

> Private property creates subjectivities that are at once individual (…) and unified as a class to preserve their property. (…) The poverty of the multitude, then, seen from this perspective, does not refer to its misery or deprivation or even its lack, but instead names a production of social subjectivity that results in a radically plural and open body politic, opposed to both the (…) unified social body of property (Hardt & Negri, 2009, pp. 39–40).

Hardt and Negri thus also emphasize both the constitutive role of the 'outside' and its heterogeneous character, with which they elaborate a radically inclusive concept of exclusion: the multitude of the poor is 'not limited to the lowest in society but open to all regardless of rank and property' (ibid., p. 43). Another characteristic of the conceptualizations of the Real class as a heterogeneous, constitutive outside is that it is *subversive in potentia*. Even Laclau, for whom there is no privileged point of rupture in the social, emphasizes that the 'excess' of the social occupies a special position in the construction of antagonisms. '[I]t is impossible to determine a priori who the hegemonic actors in this [global anti-capitalist] struggle will be. (…) All we know is that they will be the outsiders of the system, the underdogs – those we have called the heterogeneous…' (Laclau, 2005, p. 150).

For Žižek (in tacit agreement with Laclau), the 'outsiders of the system,' the Real class is decisive in constructing antagonisms. While he shares Laclau's analysis that 'globalized capitalism creates myriad points of rupture and antagonisms' (ibidem.), he argues that these ruptures (such as ecological crisis, the commodification of intellectual property, the ethical implications of biogenetics, etc.) are all inherently split and 'colored' by the rupture between the Inside and the Outside of the social, between the *Included* and the *Excluded* (Žižek, 2008). Because without reference to the 'part of no part,' the rupture between the Included and the

Excluded, all other ruptures 'lose their subversive edge: ecology turns into a "problem of sustainable development," intellectual property into a "complex legal challenge," biogenetics into an "ethical" issue' (ibid., p. 430). The danger is that by constructing antagonisms without encircling the constitutive Outside of global capitalism, struggles become perpetually absorbed and integrated in the logic of Capital: one can be sincerely committed to hybrid cars, waste segregation, the public use of reason, the politics of recognition, and so on. The problem is that still 'we may well find ourselves in a world in which Bill Gates is the greatest humanitarian fighting against poverty and disease, and Rupert Murdoch the greatest environmentalist mobilizing hundreds of millions through his media' (ibidem.). And furthermore, this radical class division that separates the Inside from the Outside is not merely a symbolic, ideologico-political process – it is also materialized, most significantly and most visibly by the condensation of the redundant population. The Real class is not only continuously displaced around the globe; it is also (temporarily or permanently) *emplaced* and condensed with high density into slums, shantytowns, settlements, ghettos. Moreover, in late capitalism the condensation of the heterogeneous Real class not only takes place at the spatial margins of the social but also, and increasingly, closer and closer to the manifold centers of capitalist production. Or as Hardt and Negri put it, '[t]he poor, whether they receive wages or not, are located no longer only at the (…) geographical borders of capitalist production but increasingly at its heart' (2009, p. 55).

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According to the United Nations' Human Development Report '[m]ore than 1 billion people live in housing that is below minimum standards of comfort and sanitation, (…) 880 million people live in slums, and nearly 40 percent of the world's future urban expansion may occur in slums' (2016, p. 33). And even if the dispersion of the condensations of the Real class is uneven around the globe, globalization, urbanization, gentrification, peripherization, global warming and migration are already conducive to the emergence of new, or the extension of, already 'really-existing' ghettos and slums. As the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2003) reported, the centers of global poverty are tendentiously decentering from the countryside toward cities and from peripheral to semiperipheral and core countries. Current estimations show that by 2030, two-thirds of the world's population will live in cities and megacities, and slum dwellers will definitely be (at least quantitatively) a significant part of it. And again, slums, settlements, ghettos are not exclusively characteristic problems to peripheral countries: even across the EU-28 countries, where average housing deprivation is considered to be low, still – according to Eurostat 2017 – an increasing 4.9% suffer from severe housing

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deprivation: that is over 25 million people. Thus, while Europe is often associated with better living standards, its landscape is sprinkled like chicken pox with slums, settlements and ghettos from Madrid to Sofia: from *Cañada Real Galiana* near Madrid, and *La Courneuve* in Paris, throughout *Berlin-Neukölln* in Germany and *Westlijke Tuinsteden* in Amsterdam, all the way to *Cambodia* in Sofia (cf. Davis, 2006) – although these slums are small, as compared to *Kibera* in Nairobi with approximately 1 million dwellers or the *Rohingya* camps in Myanmar. One must immediately add to the list the proliferation of (detention) camps, shantytowns, and ghettos of migrants fleeing from Africa, Asia and the Middle East to Europe. Of course, global capitalism has produced an unprecedented standard of living and freedom in Western countries, but one has to emphasize this other face of capitalism precisely because the '*new forms of apartheid*, new walls and slums' (Žižek, 2008, p. 423) acquire their proper place against this background of apparent prosperity:

> the result of the breathtaking growth of productivity in the last few decades is rising unemployment; (…) the result of decolonization is that multinationals treat even their own country of origin as just another colony; (…) the result of globalization and the rise of the 'global village' is the ghettoization of whole strata of the population; the result of the much-praised 'disappearance of the working class' is the emergence of millions of manual workers labouring in the Third World sweatshops, out of our delicate Western sight… (Žižek, 2000c, p. 322)

These mechanisms and results are not challenges to legal or humanitarian interventions, are not the problem of 'failed states;' these are the *symptoms* of the much-praised empty signifiers of modernization, globalization, liberal democracy and so on – these are the products of the logic of global capitalism. And the Outside, as the materialization of the dispersion and condensation of the Real class into spaces of advanced marginality, consists not only of the unemployed, but more generally of 'massive populations around the world who have, as it were, "dropped out of history," who have been deliberately excluded from the modernizing projects of First World capitalism and written off as hopeless or terminal cases' (Jameson, 2011, p. 149).

This rupture between the Inside and the Outside is becoming more and more visible, since the 'part of no part,' the Real class is not only *redundant-but-necessary*, *heterogeneous*, and *subversive in potentia*, but also *tendentiously condensed at the heart of production* (both spatially and economically). The 'indispensable redundant' is thus not only an economic category (as the working class for instance), but also a socio-political one: 'it concerns their (non-)integration into the legal space of citizenship with (most of) its incumbent rights – (…) a slum-dweller is a *homo sacer*, the systemically generated "living dead" of global capitalism (…) pushed into a space beyond control' (Žižek, 2008, p. 425).

It would be an exaggeration – and one should resist the temptation – to conclude that hence shantytowns, settlements, slums and ghettos are the hatcheries of revolutionary subjects. These spaces of advanced marginality are ruthless and traumatic, with unimaginable living conditions. But at the same time these spaces are still subversive *in potentia* (what Badiou calls *evental sites*), as the materialized *symptoms* of the innermost logics of Capital. And I totally agree with Žižek, when he claims, drawing on the Hegelian distinction between abstract and concrete universality, where concrete universality stands for the universal exception (Singularity) *per se*, that just as 'Christ, the miserable outcast, is man as such (*ecce homo*) (…) the "part of no-part," those with no proper place within the social edifice, are directly the universality of "people"' (2006c, p. 29). As long as capitalist modes of production thrive, this *irreducible rem*[*a*]*inder*, the universal exception will be lurking behind as a constitutive outside: the spectre of poverty – haunting the Empire.

6 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

'It's Darkest Under the Candle'

> All the real liveliness has gone and taken up residence in the ghetto areas. The paradox is that those places that look the least inhabitable are the only ones to still be truly lived in. An old squatted shack will always feel more populated than these 'social standing' apartment blocks where all you can really do is insert your furniture and perfect the decoration while waiting to pick up and move to the next place. In many mega-cities, the shantytowns are indeed the last truly living, livable, and unsurprisingly the most mortal, places to live. They're the other side of the electronic decor of the global metropolis. The dormitory towns of the Northern suburbs of Paris, abandoned by a petty bourgeoisie that'd gone pheasant-hunting out at their villas, but brought back to life by mass unemployment, now shine even more intensely than the Latin Quarter – with language as much as with fire.
>
> <div align="right">The Invisible Committee: The Coming Insurrection</div>

There are things we see that we see (known knowns), there are things that we see we don't see (known unknowns) and there are things we don't see that we don't see (unknown unknowns)[41]. But there are also things we don't see that we see (unknown knowns) – that is precisely the obscure realm of ideology cutting through its various resemblances: it is precisely young Marx's central thrust from the *Debates on The Law on Thefts of Wood* onwards, wherein one of his main questions was whether people see effectively what they see, whether through the criminalization of gathering fallen wood people could see the punishment and not the crime, whether people '[see] punishment where there is no crime' (Marx, 1842a); it is precisely one of the central moments of *Ideologiekritik* in the *Capital* as well – if 'the social relations between their [the workers'] private labours appear as what they are, i.e. (…) as material [*dinglich*] relations between persons and social relations between things,' do they (the workers) see that which appears as what it is, or do they see it 'without being aware of it' (Marx, 1867/1992, pp. 166–167)?; it is precisely the Wittgensteinian concept of aspect blindness, where the picture holds us captive, hence we do not see what we are actually seeing (i.e., the picture as a picture); and it is the Freudian unconscious as well, 'the knowledge that doesn't know itself, as Lacan used to say, the core of which is fantasy' (Žižek, 2006a, p. 52), and so on…

In the next part I would like to map the discursive landscapes of advanced marginality with a specific focus on ideology criticism – that is under the light, or more precisely, under the *shadow* of the 'unknown knowns,' the mystification of domination, the exclusion of subversive signifiers, traversing ideological fantasies and so on – namely: How do we not see what we

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[41] This typology became popular in 2002, when United States Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld elaborated it regarding the lack of evidence that the Iraqi government supplied terrorist groups with weapons. The phrase was later elaborated further by Žižek, who referred to Rumsfeld's incomplete typology as a 'brief bout of amateur philosophizing' (2006a, p. 52). Fair enough, it is quite symptomatic that Rumsfeld did not include the category of 'unknown knowns' in his explication.

effectively see? Contrary to the all-too-common expectations regarding research in the margins, my intention in the first instance is not only to 'illuminate' the dark spots, the invisible processes, the half-light of slums, ghettos and places of advanced marginality in general. My intention is also to discuss *how lucidity, visibility and perspiciousness could cast a shadow on the discursive landscapes of poverty*, with the aim to locate advanced marginality in its totality (i.e., to inscribe all its antagonisms, dislocations, heterogeneities and inconsistencies, symptoms and dispersions as integral parts within a structure).

I was on a research trip to Romania with a group of Polish social workers and activists during the summer of 2017 when I learned the proverb: *najciemniej jest pod latarnią – it's darkest under the candle (lantern)*. We were visiting Roma families in Brașov County, and one of them invited us to a Divine Liturgy in the local Orthodox church. Our research team was taken aback to see how cordially and neighborly the Roma and non-Roma people greeted each other in front of the church, especially considering that some of the Roma families came to the Liturgy from the poorest, segregated area of the village. We decided to take a walk in the cemetery with one of the Polish colleagues during the Liturgy in order to pay tribute to a member of the parish, who was buried in that cemetery and who we knew from a settlement of migrant Romanian Roma families in Poland. As we walked in the 'divine light' of the congregational singing of the mass that echoed throughout the cemetery (which in Eastern Orthodox tradition illuminates the Light of the World, i.e., Christ), we were suddenly confronted with a specific instance of institutional exclusion. The graves of the Roma people were distributed in a distant parcel, with a clear demarcating line from the majority of the non-Roma graves. While during the Liturgy brothers and sisters rejoiced under the Light of the World (cf. all men are equal before God in salvation regardless of class and race), in the graveyard, under the shadow of the church choir, the principle of 'equality and fraternity under His eyes' had been terminated. *Najciemniej zawsze pod latarnią – it's darkest always under the candle* – as my Polish colleague reflected on this sublime parallax. The ideological constellation of this discursive field was inscribed in the very heart of this totality – the parallax shift between the light of the Liturgy and the graveyard in the shadow that this light cast on it: 'the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not' (John, 1:4-5). It doesn't only mean that the ritual of the Liturgy overshadowed the hidden social relations of domination and exclusion, but that the exclusion materialized in the cemetery functioned as an equally-inherent part of the meaningful totality that constituted this parallax between inclusion and exclusion

within the structure of – what Foucault called – the *dispositif*.[42] Simply speaking, it was not the mocked inclusion which was ideological in the first instance, but the totality *per se* as inscribed in this constitutive parallax between the Liturgy (inclusion) and the cemetery (exclusion).

Hence I assert that the ideologico-critical moment couldn't consist any more of making the strange familiar (or the familiar strange) – as in Clifford Geertz's (2005) Balinese cockfights – but of making visible how what appears as strange is *already* familiar in a given context and *vice versa*: how the marginalized *are* included *as* excluded, indispensable *and* redundant, part *and* not part, human *and* waste, etc. at the very same time. Thus, again, I assume that the ideologico-critical task in postmodern global capitalism consists not only of bringing light to darkness (making domination visible), but also showing how the darkness functions positively in the light - especially when it comes to places of advanced marginality.

I recently attended an ethnography conference during which a debate unfolded after my presentation on the questionable importance of doing research at the margins. As one of the participants of the debate summarized: we already have a huge amount of research data on the poor, maybe it is time to shift focus to the rich. What this comment encapsulates is precisely the ontological and epistemological status of places of advanced marginality in postmodern global capitalism. These places today are more visible than ever before, due to the large amount of accessible research data, the expansion of the institutional networks which enmesh these places – which places are again *tendentiously condensed at the heart of production*. So apparently, places of advanced marginality are not any more lurking in a shadowy existence – although, I argue, precisely this new 'grid (or *grille*) of light'[43] that interweaves advanced marginality could make these places even darker. As Carol Becker (2002) correctly put it, '[i]n such a distorted situation, the more important that social issues become, the more they are hidden' (ibid., p. 2).

6.1 The Crisis of Reality

My argument for this inverted logic is based on the problematization of Marx's concept of inversion. As Marx already noted in *Capital* (viz. the example of the automaton in the previous chapter), appearance seems to become more and more real, more and more

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[42] I will return to the concept of the *dispositif* and *assemblage* later in this section of the chapter.

[43] In his famous debate with Noam Chomsky in 1971, Foucault argued that a new, emerging knowledge not only illuminates dark points and overcomes certain obstacles, but also masks existing knowledge: 'it represents the application of an entirely new *grille* [grid], with its choices and exclusions; a new play with its own rules, decisions, and limitations, with its own inner logic, its parameters, and its blind alleys, all of which lead to the modification of the point of origin' (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006, p. 18).

materialized in capitalism, thus ideology is not only a matter of reality inverted in consciousness (as in the camera obscura), but more and more an inversion *within* reality itself. As Viktor Kiss (2016) summarizes, in postmodern global capitalism it is not ideology in the first instance, but reality that is in crisis, which becomes a problem for practico-theoretical critique of ideology. One of the components of 'reality in crisis' from the point of view of ideology criticism

> is that the demystifying and unmasking potential which was earlier attributed to the objectively given reality – that supposedly could undermine appearances and ground radical politics – has become problematic. The heart of the problem is neither in knowing and describing reality, nor in the changing nature of ideology, but in that 'something has gone wrong' with reality itself (Kiss, 2016, p. 10, translation mine).

From this perspective, Žižek's cynical account of ideology (ideology as an illusion on the side of *doing* and not of *knowing*) is a part of attempts in the field ideology criticism to capture how illusions are more and more materialized today. In my opinion, the work of Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard are also of utmost importance for the repositioning of the Marxian concept of *manifest reality* (reality that appears) in postmodern global capitalism, especially in relation to places of advanced marginality. On the one hand, Guy Debord's concept of the *spectacle*, which he developed in his famous program *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967/1983), is completely compatible with the discursive account of ideology in terms of its focus on how ideology structures reality through its materialization (e.g., how trash, for instance, becomes a spectacle in the form of an object of fetishism). Debord's point of departure is the reformulation of Marx's commodity fetishism. Debord states that in the conditions of capitalism in the 1960s, the accumulation of capital and commodities reached such a degree that what was considered before as appearance, dramatically condensed into material reality, so that 'the social relation between people' are 'mediated by images' (ibid., §4). In the society of the spectacular order, appearance is not any more a mask on the real state of things, but reality becomes the manifestation, the materialization of appearances – as *manifest reality*.

> Ideological expressions have never been pure fictions; (…) they have been real factors that have in turn produced real distorting effects. This interconnection is intensified with the advent of the spectacle the *materialization* of ideology brought about by the concrete success of an autonomised system of economic production – which virtually identifies social reality with an ideology that has remoulded all reality in its own image (ibid., §212).

Debord reconceptualizes the traditional account of ideology as appearance. He doesn't deny that ideological distortions are illusions, but he argues that in late capitalism these distortions are more materialized – since the everyday practices are built upon them. Just as the

accumulation of profit condensed in the form of commodities, the accumulation of commodities condensed in the form of the *spectacle*. I assume that this is one of the main reasons behind Debord's choice to start *The Society of the Spectac*le with rewriting the very first paragraph of Marx's *Capital*. While for Marx the 'wealth of societies (…) appears as an "immense collection of commodities"; the individual commodity appears as its elementary form' (Marx, 1867/1992, p. 125), for Debord, '[in] societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*' (Debord, 1967/1983, §1). And hence, in spectacular capitalism, Debord argues, appearance is not a cover for reality anymore, but appearance itself becomes palpable reality. Kiss (2016) compares Debord's inversion to the Lukácsian concept of reification, where '*life appeared to be a commodity*,' while in the society of the spectacle

> *the commodities appear as life*. In the age of the spectacle the omnipresence of images, advertisements and television shows make the impression that human life takes place in the world of commodities, as if nothing else existed: the reality of the commodities is thus held together [cemented] by the illusion of life based on the images of the spectacle (ibid., p. 11, translation mine).

The consequence of this inversion is that radical politics in the age of the spectacle has to engage with the contestation of material reality in the first instance.[44] One of the best examples of the spectacle functioning as a materialized form of illusion is Peter Weir's satirical fiction film, *The Truman Show* (1998). In the movie, Truman Burbank, the unsuspecting celebrity of a reality television show, lives his entire life under a giant cupola in an imaginary town, where all its residents are actors, following the written script of the show, often including product advertising slogans. Truman's life is broadcast live with a myriad of hidden cameras in the town. For the audience, Truman's spectacular reality appears as real life, cemented by the images of Western ideals – the ideal family, the ideal job, the ideal problems and the ideal commodities. Thus, for the audience of the show, this illusion becomes more real than ever. Truman is awakened at the end of the film, and his dialogue with the show's creator and executive producer, Christof, is exemplary in this regard. When Truman asks, whether nothing was real in his life, Christof answers with the innermost logic of the spectacle: 'You were real. That's what made you so good to watch.'

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[44] While for classical Marxism the center of radicalism was the fight on the level on consciousness against ideology, for Debord, in the 1950s and 1960s, the revolution is a practical struggle against ideology. Hence, Debord conceptualized radical practices that had a focus on material reality. *Détournement* meant the contestation of the images (slogans, logos) of the capitalist system by reconceptualizing them, and *dérive* meant the unplanned, critical journey through the landscape of the city.

As Žižek (2002b) summarizes the underlying experience of the movie: the innermost logic of the spectacle is rooted in late capitalist societies' hyperreality, that is

> in a way irreal, substanceless, deprived of material inertia. So it's not only that Hollywood stages a semblance of real life deprived of the weight and inertia of materiality: in late-capitalist consumerist society, 'real social life' itself somehow acquires the features of a staged fake, with our neighbors behaving in 'real' life as stage actors and extras. The ultimate truth of the capitalist utilitarian despiritualized universe is the dematerialization of 'real life' itself, its reversal into a spectral show (ibid., p. 242-243).

This means that as illusions become more and more real, 'real life' *per se* dematerializes into an illusion. So it is not simply that Truman's life as a show is an illusion, which mystifies the 'real life' outside the cupola; it is more that the TV show conceals that 'real life' is the reality show itself, where social relations are recorded, observed, controlled and analyzed, where social circumstances and environments are fashioned in accordance with the images of the spectacle and where our friends and neighbors include commercial slogans within their daily conversations. It is in this sense quite symptomatic that the creators of one of the most bizarre animated satire cartoons, *South Park,* had to back off recently when they tried to mock Donald Trump. As the show's creator Matt Stone summarizes it, and almost gives an adequate definition to manifest reality in an ABC 7.30 Report:

> It's tricky now because satire has become reality. It's really hard to make fun of and (…) we were really trying to make fun of what was going on but we couldn't keep up and what was actually happening was much funnier than anything we could come up with (2017).

From this perspective, not only Althusser's *Thesis II* on ideology seems appropriate, 'ideology has a material existence' (1971/2014, p. 184), but also his central concept that we more and more *live* ideology – 'it is in (…) ideology, that we "live, move and have our being"' (ibid., pp. 188-189). Jean Baudrillard shared this same experience regarding 'reality is in crisis' in the 70s and 80s, and he further elaborated Debord's concept of the spectacle. *The Truman Show* can be compared to one of his most famous examples: Disneyland. According to Baudrillard (1976/2001), Disneyland is not the illusory image, that mystifies its surrounding reality – as classical account of ideology would have it – but is a *hyperreality* with the function to make Western life appear as real:

> Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the 'real' country, all of 'real' America, which *is* Disneyland (just as prisons are there to conceal the fact that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is carceral). Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation (ibid., p. 172).

Baudrillard's concepts of *simulation* and *hyperreality* focus on how an ideological representation of a reality as its duplicate can become more realistic than the original. In the late-1970s, concerned with the virtualization of capitalism, Baudrillard radically rejects the duality of reality and appearance. He argues that in postmodern capitalism reality becomes its own duplicate, the copy of the copy, the representation of representation, which flows into the boundlessly multiplying elements of reality. Baudrillard argues that the reality that is captivated by these simulations becomes less real than the simulations themselves, to a certain point, from where the 'original' reality seems unreal and represents only a '*hallucinatory resemblance to itself*' (Baudrillard, 1976/2001, p. 145). Since simulation and duplicates occupy the place of the original, in such a way that the simulation becomes indistinguishable from the original and, moreover, seems more real than it, the reality of simulations emerges as a *hyperreality*. For Baudrillard the

> [a]bstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal (1981/2001, p. 166).

This means that for Baudrillard, the 'crisis of reality' means an inversion in reality itself. According to his example of the map – it is not the territory anymore which precedes the map, but the map which precedes the territory. As Steven Best and Douglas Kellner (1997) put it, Baudrillard's hyperreal 'is a condition whereby models replace the real, as exemplified in such phenomena as the ideal home in women's or lifestyle magazines, ideal sex as portrayed in sex manuals or relationship books, ideal fashion as exemplified in ads…' (ibid., p. 119). Baudrillard's *simulacra* is hence the immense collection of these simulations – it is not the illusion of reality that is offered any more, but the map to design our own reality according to the simulations.[iii] Thus, in the world of hyperreality, the real of the individual is cobbled, assembled and edited by a concerted stimuli of simulations, which are indistinguishably floating on the boundaries of reality and illusion. In sum, something has gone wrong with reality itself in late capitalism, and here I agree with Douglas Kellner and Viktor Kiss that it is not the demystifying potential of reality that has been lost, but the distance between semblance and reality. In postmodern global capitalism, ideology is lived through the 'real' images of reality, which reality is continuously reimagined, redesigned and simulated in order to create a particular map which generates a 'reality that appears' as acceptable (similarly to the fetishistic mode of ideology).

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One of the best examples, in my opinion, which captures how, in such a generated manifest reality, it's the darkest under the candle is the genre called '*poverty porn*,' which refers to such articulations of poverty where hard-hitting images of the 'real' conditions of the poor are distributed in order to raise sympathy, increase donations and hype charity campaigns. In Renzo Martens documentary movie, *Enjoy Poverty* (2008), directed in the former Belgian Congo, it is revealed how poverty becomes a commodity in Africa that generates more money than the country's total income from mining gold, diamonds, copper and coltan. Martens shows that a lot of money is involved in the articulation of the spectacles of poverty by aid organizations, through which 70-90 percent of some donations are transferred back to the country that gave the aid. The United Nations, UNICEF and many other international organizations *play an important role in the commodification of poverty* in Congo. While UNICEF and the UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) provides plastic tarpaulins, for which refugees 'pay' by making the organizations' logo visible, UN soldiers are protecting Western mining companies' extraction areas from the local 'rebels.' A huge amount of money is earned by Western media corporations as well. An Agence France-Presse employee, for instance, gets a full reimbursement and $50 for each photo – but if it has news value, it can be worth as much as $300. As one of the Italian photographers, who works for AFP explains in the movie:

> Unfortunately, the only time they [the press] are interested in stories, is if there's something negative. So usually it has to be a disaster or a humanitarian crisis or dead people. Or something alike. (…) It's supply and demand. It's a market out there.

These 'real' images create the hyperreality of poverty, with the function to make us believe – just like Disneyland does – that the rest of the world is real, while poverty is only a bad dream, a temporary nightmare of capitalism, from which societies will soon be awakened. Just as Disneyland 'is meant to be an infantile world, in order to make us believe that the adults are elsewhere, in the "real" world' (Baudrillard, 1981/2001, p. 172), the pornographic imaginary of poverty is meant to create a cracked and derailed world of disorder, in order to make us believe that the sutured fullness of the society is elsewhere – in 'our' world. And just like Disneyland's hyperreality conceals 'that real childishness is everywhere, particularly among those adults who go there to act the child in order to foster illusions of their real childishness' (ibidem.), *the spectacular images of poverty porn conceal that the barbaric logic of Capital is everywhere, especially among those articulatory practices which try to represent poverty as barbaric in order to foster illusions of their real barbarism.* '[E]conomists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of

charity…' (Marx & Engels, 1848/1969, p. 31), proudly accept the postmodern role of the white, middle-class savior with the given (paid) privilege of rescuing the downtrodden of any kind. But, as Teju Cole notes, the 'white savior supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening. (…) The White Savior Industrial Complex is not about justice. It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege' (2012). This form of post-colonialism effectively blows the 'triton horns' of the Western world's conscience in order to bring about the diligence and enthusiasm of the savior's 'complex.' The role of the middle-class superhero is the most recent privilege of the humanitarian catastrophe that provides more and more space to the overflowing projections of the spectacles of poverty. Eventually, charity and aid organizations, donating citizens, benevolent R&D groups often contribute to the phenomena where the fight against poverty could easily become a source of income for the economies instead of a source for solving the problem it addresses. This economic boost is realized not only through the influx from national and international budgets and donations, but also through the potential of these social initiatives to create jobs. A group of people make a living directly from poverty and other means of structural injustice.

According to Herbert Gans (1972), Gyula Hegyi (2001), Renzo Martens (2008) and László Tütő (2013), there are a number of positive functions of the production and commodification of poverty. In his enumeration, Herbert Gans lists the fifteen positive functions of poverty, and argues that poverty does not only 'help to guarantee the status of those who are not poor,' but 'poverty creates jobs for a number of occupations and professions which serve the poor, or shield the rest of the population from them' (Gans, 1972, pp. 279–281). Poverty is thus a source of income for the economy in many ways. The poor help not only to guarantee 'the status of those who are not poor' (ibidem.), but also that the 'dirty work' is done. The poor are also consumers of the low-quality products that are hard to sell, and which are not of high-competitive advantage. At the same time, large amounts of donations are made available to aid organizations, who are eventually interested in the production of poverty. Poverty also functions both as a negative example and a gift – the example of the poor is a deterrent to the middle class, and a motivating force as well to participate in production without questioning it. Nevertheless, helping the poor, making donations, distributing aid is a source of enjoyment (*jouissance*) for many people. The fundamental question, hence, according to Martens (2008) and Tütő (2013) is: *Who owns poverty?*

> If poverty can be sold, then it is important to know who is the boss, who is the owner of poverty. (...)
> Who can benefit from it? Certainly, the poor themselves are not the owners of poverty. They do not possess

it, and it does not serve their own interests. The benefit of (...) poverty appears primarily in the Western countries. (...) They however do not acquire this profit from poverty only by an accident, since poverty is primarily produced by them: it is the result of their own historical corporate activity. Eventually they possess poverty, they are the owners (Tütő, 2013, p. 199, translation mine).

Thus, just as in Marx's example of the 'coming of machinery,' it is not the poor who own poverty, but rather the *reverse* – poverty owns the poor. And in postmodern global capitalism this inversion acquires *a palpable reality*. Instead of eradicating poverty, the industry of poverty porn deprives the poor of struggle itself, not by concealing the predicament of the poor in the first instance, but *by illuminating the mystification that is inscribed in reality itself* (cf., it's the darkest under the candle) – from the image of the poor sleeping in tents with the logo of UNICEF, up to the one-click donation campaigns for local education strategies. Apropos education – if there is another exemplary phenomenon which brilliantly captures how in a manifest reality it's the darkest under the candle, then it is what I've recently called '*education porn*' (Tóth, 2017b, p. 87).

The spectacle of education tendentiously appears in postmodern global capitalism as an ultimate remedy for all the problems of the social. This messianic imaginary of education is quite close to what Douglas Kellner (2003) referred to as 'megaspectacle.' Kellner emphasizes a new relationship between reality and representation, where one particular element of reality escapes from the other elements and becomes an enlarged, refashioned and reimagined representation of reality *per se*, which due to its enlarged gravity re-fashions and re-imagines its own discursive environment as well: The Gulf War, 9/11, the O. J. Simpson trials, scandals of any kind, the refugee crisis, etc.

> Megaspectacles fixate attention on events that distract people from the pressing issues of their everyday lives with endless hype. (…) [M]egaspectacles come to define entire periods of culture and politics. (…) We are now at a stage of the spectacle at which it dominates the mediascape, politics, and more and more domains of everyday life as computers bring a proliferating rush of information and images into the house by means of the Internet, competing with television as the dominant medium of our time (Kellner, 2003, pp. 93–94).

Education is undoubtedly one of the omnipresent and omnipotent megaspectacles of our time. Grubb and Lazerson (2006) were among the first authors who also drew our attention to the phenomena *that education has taken an almost religious character during the past*

decades.[45] While within the present historical conditions education and qualifications are less and less conducive to social mobility and equity, it seems as if it has simply been ignored. Grubb and Lazerson (2006) call the phenomena, wherein the hope in the promise of education functions, merely a religious belief – *the education gospel*. And it is not hard at all to recall memorable contemporary instances of the megaspectacle or the gospel of education: the campaign with the face of Malala Yousafzai saying, 'The best way to fight terrorism is to invest in education. Instead of sending weapons, send teachers'; a pencil (symbolizing education against war) in the *Charlie Hebdo* campaign after the ISIS attack; the tons of educational books from the climate literacy industry against global warming; the educational campaigns conducted by UNICEF to abolish poverty saying, 'If you want to break the cycle of poverty, educate a girl'; the GBC's (Global Business Coalition for Education) major project together with Western Union, Gucci and Intel, titled, 'The world needs more education'; Nelson Mandela's often-quoted statement after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize: 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world'; or Juan Manuel Santos, and the Marxist rebel leader Timochenko, signing a peace deal after 52 years of fighting with *a pen made from a bullet*, symbolizing that the future of Colombia is education.

In the emerging era, which I prefer to refer to as *education porn*, a huge diversity of social groups and discursive formations (neoliberalism, law enforcement, information-technology, etc.) promotes more education as a remedy. Since Western societies' interdiscourse is thrilled with education, it became a widespread possibility to connect any kind of problems with the various forms of education of human beings. As Tomasz Szkudlarek put it brilliantly,

> [l]earning has become the solution to nearly anything. Joblessness, inadequate retirement provisions, environmental pollution, or poor health services are no longer seen 'simply' in terms of public arrangements, but as problems demanding individual awareness, knowledge, proper attitudes, skills of rational choice, and self-management. To us as educators, it may sound nice and smell like money; but it inflates the responsibilities of education far beyond their conceivable limits and, in fact, turns pedagogy

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[45] Due to the mid-19th century expansion of institutionalized education, not only the number of institutions and the number of students multiplied, but also the curriculum, knowledge, education science(s), the number of compulsory hours at school, the number of years of compulsory education, the number of intersecting disciplinary institutions and social groups, etc. After the Second World War, this multifaceted expansion accelerated in an unprecedented way, since for the reconstruction of economic and social stability, and the availability of a large, qualified labour force was a key issue (Halsey, Lauder, Brown, & Stuart Wells, 1997). Despite the fact that government support started to decline from the 1970s, public education was still in the process of expansion. While the number of students doubled or quadrupled in some European countries by the new millennium, government expenditure on schooling still approximated the level in the 1970s. Soon, emerging social problems, widening and deepening inequalities, wide-spread discrimination, the drastic decline in the number of jobs, the inflation of qualifications, global auction of labour force, deskilling of the professions, etc. put all the hopes and promises of institutionalized education into question (Vajda, 2013).

into a regime of dispersed power, to a form of governmentality (…) exercised in ever-changing, short-term, project-based 'emergency' campaigns (2013b, p. 1).

Moreover, education also has a hyperreal characteristic in the same sense of how Baudrillard refers to prisons as the concealment of the 'carceral archipelago' – education porn conceals the fact that the social in its entirety is *already excessively schooled*. As French anarchists argue, we live in 'an excessively schooled society, where one remembers passing the college entrance exams as being a defining moment in one's life' (Comité Invisible, 2008, p. 9). Education porn is the era of *the fetishism of learning* – the era which offers in-service development for packing workers at meat processing firms, customer service training for gas station attendants, antenatal classes for pregnant women, blended learning courses in learning, home schooling for discriminated children, after-school coding lessons for girls or elder education in safe sex and so on. The almost religious belief in education became also conducive to the overestimated importance and potential of it, so that the problems of the social are addressed with the promotion of more education. Moreover, in the era of education porn, 'the standard response to educational failure is to provide more education, such that education has become the remedy for its own ills' (Deacon & Parker, 1995, p. 116).

The third volume of the series *Educational Research*, *The Educationalization of Social Problems* (Smeyers & Depaepe, 2008) discusses this same issue: on the one hand the 'schooling of social problems,' i.e., how social issues are transferred to the responsibility of the School; and on the other hand the 'pedagogization of the society,' i.e., how the Western state is primarily pedagogical. The state not only relocates (thus de-politicizes socio-political problems) to the Schools making teachers responsible for them, but at the same time pedagogizes social issues themselves (e.g., presenting homelessness as 'learned helplessness'). As Marc Depaepe, Frederik Herman, Melanie Surmont, Angelo Van Gorp and Frank Simon (2008) argue, 'pedagogization looks like a concept that is not dissimilar to "medicalization". A greater supply on the medical market does not necessarily lead to a more healthy society but can significantly increase the consumption of and dependence on health care' (ibid., p. 15-16). So, what has been regarded as social progress (educationalization) becomes a tool of control, of governmentality.

> [P]edagogization does not lead to emancipation but to the subjection of the spirit. Instead of adapting the society to people, the process of pedagogization (…) leads to (…) the domestication of thinking and not emancipation. Pedagogization (…) is the art of making people ever more 'stupid' via learning. (ibidem.)

In sum, from the point of view of ideology criticism, the megaspectacle of education functions as an enlarged element of reality that is capable of overdetermining and mystifying

the structural complexity of the problems that it addresses. This way, the hyperreality of poverty and the megaspectacle of education 'shineth' for the darkness that its light conceals.

6.2 The Concept of Advanced Marginality

In sum, both the hyperreality of poverty and the megaspectacle of education are two outstanding and increasingly interconnected instances of the ideologico-critical problem of manifest reality, where reality itself can function as an escape from the real. It also holds in a Lacanian sense, namely that, surrounded with the increasingly materialized illusions of postmodern global capitalism, '*reality itself can function as an escape from encountering the Real*' (Žižek, 2006a, p. 57). Thus, for Lacan, 'the ultimate ethical task is that of the true awakening: not only from sleep, but from the spell of fantasy that controls us even more when we are awake' (ibid., p. 60). Hence, I assert that the ideologico-critical problem of manifest reality – that is also the Lacanian 'waking dream,' where it is the darkest under the candle – is of utmost importance for the problematization of advanced marginality and critical education. I understand critical education, and more precisely critical pedagogy as the critique of ideology (as I will argue in detail later) – and following Lotar Rasiński – as

> *critical practice* per se, something which we could call, using Marx's expression (…) a "reform of consciousness" (…). Moreover, education in my understanding is the only possible revolution today, (…) the practice of exposing traces of ideology in our thinking, a practice of revealing all domination and subjugation in society' (Rasiński, 2018, pp. 140–141).

I consider the places of advanced marginality as *educationally meaningful in* this sense – for exposing traces of ideology in our thinking. These places *are meaningful for critical education and for teacher education* because they stand in direct contrast, as materialized inversions to other emplacements. These places, again, are not only excluded, marginalized and deprived, but at the same time *reversed – included, integrated and enmeshed places of a given totality*. My understanding of the places of advanced marginality, which while 'often particularly exclusive, (…) belong to the inclusive character of the polis' (Dehaene & Cauter, 2008, p. 4), is close to Foucault's concept of *heterotopias*[46], as introduced in one of his lectures

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[46] Foucault never referred to it, but the term heterotopia was primarily used in medical and biological terminology from the 1920s 'to describe a phenomenon occurring in an unusual place, or to indicate "a spatial displacement of normal tissue", but which does not influence the overall functioning and development of the organism. (…) The city in this context is related to (…) the orthotopographic orders that render organisms (…) as either healthy, sick or anomalous. It is this latter aspect, the anomalous (…) which seems a pertinent point of departure to engage in an exploration of the meaning of the term heterotopia.' (Sohn, 2008, p. 41-43)

for architects in 1967, titled 'Of Other Spaces'.[47] Foucault argues that, while the medieval space was characterized by localization, from the 17th century the logic of extension (and movement) replaced localization (especially from Galileo) and today extension is replaced by (and opposed with) *emplacement* – where space emerges as a form of relations and as relations of proximity between emplacements. Within the heterogeneous space of emplacements (which resonates with Foucault's later concept of *dispositif*), Foucault develops his concept of heterotopia as a site that is simultaneously *linked with* and *in contradiction to* other emplacements,

> that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to *suspend, neutralize, or invert the set of relations designated, mirrored, or reflected by them*. (…) [P]laces that are written into the institution of society itself, and that are a sort of counter-emplacements, (…) in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within culture, are *simultaneously represented, contested and inverted*; a kind of places that are outside all places, even though they are actually localizable. Since these places are absolutely other than all the emplacements that they reflect, and of which they speak, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias' (Foucault, 1967/2008, pp. 16–17).

Heterotopias thus are '*aporetique places*' (Faubion, 2008) – characterized by an irreducible internal contradiction – so that they stand in direct contrast to emplacements in the specific discursive landscape, which they represent and reveal, contradict and contest, invert and mirror at the same time.[48] And the concept of heterotopia becomes precisely, in this sense, a device for critical education. Maria Mendel (2011) discusses the heterotopias of homelessness precisely in this transformative sense, understanding homelessness as a visibly included exclusion in public spaces – from the placeless places of sleeping on the street, through the emplacement of legal procedures of institutional practices, to the ineffective actions of people outside of the heterotopias of homelessness. I assume that understanding advanced marginality as heterotopia, as included exclusion, could also lay the foundation for a transformative,

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[47] The lecture was translated into English first by Jay Miskowiec, which appeared in *Diacritics* in 1986, and then by Robert Hurley in James Faubion's (ed.) *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology: Essential Writing of Foucault 1954–1984, Volume II*. The translation of the French title, *'Des Espaces Autres,'* is still a subject of debate and disagreement. Jay Miskowiec translated it as 'Of Other Spaces', while Robert Hurley found 'Different Spaces' more appropriate. The undecidability of these two different aspects outline precisely the complexity of Foucault's concept of *heterotopia*, that is in-between radically other sites and merely different spaces. I will use the most recent translation by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, published in their book, *'Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society'* in 2008.

[48] In this sense, Foucault's 'geohistory of otherness' (Soja, 1996, p. 154) resonates with Arnold Van Gennep's (2004) thesis of the *rites of passage*, Victor Turner's (2008) *liminality*, Henri Lefebvre's (2000) *thirdings* and trialectic conceptualization of the *production of space* (spatial practice, representation of space, spaces of representation) and Edward Soja's (1996) site geography of *thirdspace*.

educational praxis which consequently is not only engaged to make the sites of exclusion visible, but also, if heterotopias 'are interpreted in educational work, it seems most important to reformulate the social role of redundant people and, (…) to cease obscuring their indispensability' (Mendel, 2011, p. 166). Hence, it is of utmost importance for education 'to cease obscuring' how discursive practices, ideological articulations and illusions are engaged in the active construction and reconstruction of these places in a given totality.

> Heterotopias (…) represent, contest and invert these practices. They are educationally meaningful by showing the 'other places' for inclusion (…) [and for] developing forms of educational action that aim at building critical distance towards ritualized social practices (…) of which we are both producers and products (Mendel, 2011, pp. 166–167).

In the same sense, places of advanced marginality – those dense centers of domination – are educationally meaningful as places that directly 'represent, contest and invert' discursive practices of a historical bloc – as heterotopias of deviation and precariousness, as sites in the 'desert' of suburbs, emplaced behind the brushwood, as territories without borders, as localizations without address, and as excluded places included in the *variété* of institutional, organizational and legal practice: from the police to the anarchist federations, all deeply involved in the production of the discursive terrain of these places.

But the educationally meaningful character of places of advanced marginality does not simply refer to the all-too-common crypto-liberal sentiment and romanticism of being astounded or shocked by poverty, hunger and extreme deprivation. There is an old humanist quote from Edward Bond, the English theatre director, that 'if you can't face Hiroshima in the theatre, you'll eventually end up in Hiroshima itself.' And of course, we have to confront the contemporary horrors of poverty in the most brutal way, we must be hurt by that suffering in the most profound sense. But again, the real tragedy of advanced marginality is not that of exclusion, marginalization and extreme deprivation in the first instance, but – from the point of view of ideology criticism – *the real tragedy is the inversion they manifest in their palpable reality*: that of inclusion *par* exclusion, patronization *by* punishment, (mega)spectacularization *through* stigmatization etc. – the 'light,' that makes these places and their respective *dispositifs* even darker.

The educational – hence, ideologico-critical – moment is at the heart of these innermost contradictions, the 'mixed, joint experience' of how heterotopias of advanced marginality represent, contest and invert 'reality' (Foucault, 1967/2008, p. 17). This 'joint experience' is exemplified by Foucault with the *mirror*.

In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal space (…) where I am absent. Utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does really exist, and as it exerts on the place I occupy a sort of return effect; (…) it renders this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the looking glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since, in order to be perceived, it has to pass through this virtual point, which is over there. (ibidem.)

In this sense, it is not that simple that the spectre of poverty appears as a torso, a distorted image in the mirror of the logic of Capital – advanced marginality as heterotopia *is itself* a mirror of global capitalism that frames the images of our ideological fantasies through which we confront both 'reality' and the raw Real. In sum, if there is a basic lesson of the theoretical attempts that aimed to resolve the late capitalist ideologico-critical phenomenon of 'reality in crisis,' then it is the advancing merger of reality and fantasy – the dialectic process wherein ideological fantasy becomes more and more real, while 'real life' dematerializes into an illusion. In terms of the Lacanian 'waking dream,' the difference between dream and reality is that 'fantasy is on the side of reality, and it is in dreams that we encounter the traumatic Real – it is not that dreams are for those who cannot endure reality, reality itself is for those who cannot endure (the Real that announces itself in) their dreams' (Žižek, 2006a, p. 57).

In the confrontation with the specular heterotopias of advanced marginality, reality is directly contested and inverted, representing a variety of spectacular images according to the various modalities of advanced marginality. There is however a common thread that I find particularly important for seeing through the looking glass of poverty: *Is it our past, our present predicament or is it ahead of us?* For Tupac Shakur – one of the most influential West Coast hip hop rappers, who was born in East Harlem and revealed the social issues of ghettos in his lyrics – the mirror of marginality shows his dreams coming true: 'I'm seeing nothin' but my dreams coming true / While I'm staring at the world through my rearview.' But these dreams are the unbearable nightmares of the realities of 1980's American ghettos ('I wonder when the world stopped caring / I will never understand this society (…) Product of a dying breed'), which appear as an ever-distancing world as in a rearview mirror, without the slightest hope of getting ahead in life: '*The world, the world is behind us.*' Moreover, for Tupac there is no trick in the waking nightmare of reality – on the contrary, he sees his hopeless predicament ('Go on, baby, scream to God, he can't hear you') as part of the innermost logic of the distancing world of nightmares:

Once a motherfucker get an understanding on the game / And what the levels and the rules of the game is / Then the world ain't no trick no more, the world is a game to be played / So now we looking at the world, from like, behind us (…) It's all about the papers, money rule the world.

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So, the implicit answer behind the unresolved line of the song, *Starin' Through My Rearview* – 'Now I know the answers to the question / "Do dreams come true?"' – is both yes and no. Dreams of hope cherished in the realities of advanced marginality rarely come true, while nightmares have invaded reality so that in the hopeless predicament of the present it seems like *tomorrow is cancelled*.

'Demain est annulé' – as it states on a 1968 anti-capitalist graffiti in Paris, and as recently re-stated for the French ultra-leftist, insurrectionary, anarcho-communist federation, the Invisible Committee's subtitle of their third book, *Now* (2017). Looking out from the marginalized *banlieues* in France to the already-present glocal catastrophes of postmodern global capitalism, such as the 'shipwreck of politics, the arrogance of the powerful, the reign of falsehood, the vulgarity of the wealthy, the cataclysms of industry, galloping misery, naked exploitation, ecological apocalypse' (2017, p. 5), the Committee claims that, under the present predicament of global capitalism, the hope for a better future is not only doomed, but hope itself becomes the gravedigger of the 'coming insurrection.' They argue, almost according to Žižek's fetishistic account of ideology, that we all know the catastrophies of global capitalism and 'we are spared nothing, not even being informed about it all,' hence '[a]ll the reasons for making a revolution are there,' (ibidem.) but still, we act as if there were 'mature' and 'realistic' solutions that manifest the illusory hopes in a better future prefabricated by the system. 'The current disaster is like a monstrous accumulation of all the deferrals of the past, to which are added those of each day and each moment, in a continuous time slide. But life is always decided now, and now, and now' (ibid., p. 11). The Committee argues that a shift of the focus from the hopeful future to the hopelessness of the present, where tomorrow is already cancelled – *demain est annulé* – is the first step of radicalizing critique, that has been so sneakily and insidiously absorbed and incorporated by the system.[49] There are, however, insurrectionary instances or revolutionary sites for the Committee – riots, liberated zones (e.g., the *Zone to Defend* in France), and ghetto areas as well. For the Committee, the specular heterotopias of advanced marginality embody the Committee's own program with the inversion of the utopia of hopefulness (which is eventually inhabitable) to the heterotopia of hopelessness: the ghetto is the straightforward and crude billboard which yells 'tomorrow is cancelled.'

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[49] 'This world no longer needs explaining, critiquing, denouncing. We live enveloped in a fog of commentaries and commentaries on commentaries, of critiques and critiques of critiques of critiques. (…) Leftists who think they can make something happen by lifting the lever of bad conscience are sadly mistaken. They can go and scratch their scabs in public and air their grievances hoping to arouse sympathy as much as they like; they'll only give rise to contempt and the desire to destroy them' (Comité Invisible, 2017, p. 5).

> All the real liveliness has gone and taken up residence in the ghetto areas. The paradox is that those places that look the least inhabitable are the only ones to still be truly lived in. (…) [T]he shantytowns are indeed the last truly living, livable, and unsurprisingly the most mortal, places to live. They're the other side of the electronic decor of the global metropolis. The dormitory towns of the Northern suburbs of Paris, abandoned by a petty bourgeoisie (…) now shine even more intensely than the Latin Quarter – with language as much as with fire (Comité Invisible, 2008).

This hypothetic revolutionary potential of places of advanced marginality is quite optimistic, overestimated and a bit short-sighted as well, especially if compared to Tupac Shakur's fatalistic approach. But nevertheless, I agree – as I've already argued – that these places are subversive *in potentia*. Žižek (2008, pp. 423–429), while cautiously warning us not to idealize places of advanced marginality, also argues that these places are 'evental sites,'[50] in Badiou's terms, for at least three reasons. First of all, the dwellers of these places – as the indispensable redundant, the part of no part, the Real class – stand in reverse, in direct contrast as a counter-class to the Imaginary and Symbolic classes. Second, these places have a specific 'territorial character,' with regard to their respective dispositif. While in global capitalism the governmentality in the Inside of the social (the Included) is based on an insidious arrangement of state control, so that the subject is forced to believe to be 'free,' in the Outside of the social (which is of course also within state frontiers) it is the inverse: governmentality is based on spectacular, overt and brutal projections of control and power, but with the consequence that slum-dwellers, the 'hoodies,' are forced to invent 'free' practices – often in order to survive – that are paradoxically excluded from the regime of state control, but usually also outside the rule of law at the same time. This way, 'state power renounces its right to exert full control and discipline, finding it more appropriate to let them [the slum-dwellers] vegetate in the twilight zone' (ibid., p. 425). What is in general characteristic to the dispositif of advanced marginality is the extensive arrangement of institutional practices, on the one hand – the churches, the police, the press, the schools, the counseling services, a multitude of NGOs, start-ups, artists, international human rights organizations, embassies, researchers, politicians and many others are present there on a daily basis, largely overdetermining the discursive landscape of poverty. On the other hand, one also finds a variety of extra-institutional, 'improvised' practices from community kitchens and illegal electricity-sharing to voluntary babysitting. And third,

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[50] 'It was Badiou who elaborated the notion of the "evental site" as the crack in the existing situation, the opening of the possibility of the intervention of an act. The link between the situation and the act is therefore clear; far from being determined by the situation (or from intervening in it from a mysterious outside), acts are possible on account of the ontological nonclosure, inconsistency, or gaps in a situation' (Žižek, 2006b, p. 187).

advanced marginality as a globalizing and expanding phenomenon will necessarily confront and determine political agendas across the globe in the future. As Žižek puts it:

> We should be looking for signs of the new forms of social awareness that will emerge from the slum collectives: they will be the germs of the future. (…) [T]he 'destructured' masses, poor and deprived of everything, situated in a non-proletarianized urban environment, constitute one of the principal horizons of the politics to come. (…) [T]he principal task of the emancipatory politics (…) of the twenty-first century is to politicize – organize and discipline – the 'destructured masses' of slum-dwellers. (2008, pp. 426–427)

Maybe it is not an exaggeration to claim that French sociologist and social anthropologist Loïc Wacquant develops the concept of advanced marginality in his book, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (2008), with sort of the same *glance to the future*. In his comparative studies between the American ghetto and the French *banlieue,* Wacquant draws attention to the diverse forms of marginal emplacements of the 'wretched of the cities,' bringing into focus the economic and political processes (from deproletarization and racial segregation to precarization and stigmatization), which structure the discursive landscape and micro-capillary power of these places. Wacquant understands advanced marginality as 'the novel regime of sociospatial relegation and exclusionary closure (…) that has crystallized in the post-Fordist city as a result of the uneven development of the capitalist economies and the recoiling of welfare states' (2008, pp. 2–3). These new forms of exclusionary logic in post-Fordist gloomy, urban peripheries, where repressed realities of hunger, deprivation, ethnic segregation, violence, drug abuse etc. return in a spatially condensed, visible and ever closer setting, are not temporary failures of First World economies, but the intensifying, expanding and multiplying symptoms of the innermost logic of Capital. So just as Žižek argues that slums are the 'germs of the future,' Wacquant also stresses that the notion of *advanced* in concept of advanced marginality is meant

> to indicate that these forms of marginality are not behind us: they are not residual, cyclical or transitional; and they are not being gradually resorbed by the expansion of the 'free market', i.e., by the further commodification of social life. (…) Rather, they stand *ahead of us*: they are etched on the horizon of the becoming of contemporary societies (ibid., p. 232).

Hence, it is of utmost importance to map the social, economic and political (and especially, as I will argue later, the ideological) processes of the production and reproduction of advanced marginality. From a sociological perspective, Wacquant outlines six distinctive properties of advanced marginality and four structural logics that fuel its intensification (ibid., pp. 234-277). The distinctive properties of advanced marginality are:

1) While wage-labour promised social stability and security during the Fordist economic expansion, in the post-Fordist uneven development *wage-labour is characterized by fragmentation and precarization, the erosion of income and employment security and social instability*. As Guy Standing (2012) argues, the extremely growing social class of the global precariat consists of 'millions of people (…) living and working in insecure jobs and conditions of life' (ibid., p. 589) without any social stability or at least predictability, without 'a career in front of them, they have no social memory on which to draw, no shadow of the future hanging over their relationships, and have a limited and precarious range of rights. This combination conjures up an image of a lonely crowd' (ibid., p. 591). The consequences of the fragmentation, erosion and degradation of wage-labour have apparently condensed and 'accumulated in the urban zones where the unstable fractions of the new postindustrial proletariat are concentrated' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 236);

2) Advanced marginality is not only a constitutive outside of the social, but also of the economy. It is *tendentiously detached both from glocal macroeconomic trend*s, and regional redistributions, so that the cold breezes of international capital influx maybe slightly ripple the curtains of urban peripheries, but do not contribute to any profound change – neither in the United States nor in Europe;

3) Even if places of advanced marginality are condensed at the heart of First World cities and also at the heart of production, their territories are increasingly isolated and demarcated from their immediate environment. Thus, usually the local macro-economy of *discursive practices often intensifies spatial marginalization with territorial stigmatization*, where the spatial isolation is associated both by outsiders and insiders 'as social purgatories, leprous badlands at the heart of the postindustrial metropolis where only the refuse of society would agree to dwell. (…) A taint of place is thus superimposed on the already existing stigmata traditionally associated with poverty and ethnic origin or postcolonial immigrant status' (ibid., pp. 237-238). Such a stigmatized, isolated territory can be found in every European metropolis and bigger cities. People who inhabit these territories are trying to escape from both its spatial limits and the stigmas associated with it – they deny belonging there, they hide or fake their address and translate spatial degradation and territorial stigmatization into horizontal violence. Once the stigmas are constituted and cemented in the public discourse, 'it is easy for the authorities to justify special measures, (…) to destabilize and further marginalize their occupants, and to

submit them to the dictates of the deregulated labour market, render them invisible, or drive them out of a coveted space' (ibid., p. 240);

4) While the process of territorial stigmatization constitutes the ideological closure of the places of advanced marginality (homogeneity, fullness, etc.), *these places are deeply characterized by dissolution of social bonds, the disappearance of spatial binding and identity*. Places of advanced marginality 'have been gradually reduced from communal "places" bathed in shared emotions and joint meanings, supported by practices and institutions of mutuality, to indifferent "spaces" of mere survival and relentless contest' (ibid., p. 241). Wacquant argues that, while the American ghettos of the 1970s were places with strong identities, rich in mutual aid, and cultural heritage, today these areas are more and more deserts of mere spaces, characterized by persistent fear, inherent isolation from the community, and the dream of escape;

5) As a consequence of the above-listed four properties, there is an increasing weakening and *disappearance of a supportive hinterland*, to which people can fall back in the midst of the gaps of their precarious employment. While during the Fordist economic expansion the internal economy of the ghetto, the rural family roots or the most immediate social environment of the dweller could provide a protective web, today the precariat and the unemployed are often exposed to an alienated and solitary survival. 'To survive, they must resort to individual strategies of "self-provisioning", "shadow work" and unreported employment, underground commerce, criminal activities and quasi-institutionalized "hustling" (…) which do little to reduce precariousness' (ibid., p. 243);

6) The processes of precarization, de-proletarianization, stigmatization and the disappearance of a hinterland *prevent any attempts for organization and symbolic representation* – it deprives ghetto communities from a common language, strategies for unification and the imagination of a viable alternative. The expanding polysemy of the social became also an obstacle for organizing the urban poor – the 'proliferation of labels used to designate the dispersed and disparate populations caught in the pincer of social and spatial marginalization (…) speaks volumes on the state of *symbolic derangement* afflicting the fringes and fissures of the recomposed social and urban structure (ibid., p. 245).

These distinctive properties and tendencies of advanced marginality are mirrored by their complementary operations at the other end of the class structure: the polarization, fragmentation, precarization of the urban poor are accompanied by the unification, condensation and organization of the global, transnational ruling elites, owners of big

corporations, managers, experts – a huge fraction of the contemporary Symbolic class. Looking at this gruesome parallax from below, from the hopeless present of the neighborhoods of relegation, it seems that, despite 'all the talk of urban rebirth and renewed prosperity that accompanied the millenarist celebration of 2000, for those trapped in the lower reaches of the dualizing class structure (…) the prosperity of the 'new economy' (…) remains a bitter fairy tale' (ibid., p. 260). The perennial modernization of the global logic of Capital goes hand-in-hand with what Wacquant calls 'the modernization of misery,' that is the advancement of new forms of the governmentality of urban marginality. And while all around the globe 'state elites, public policy experts and city managers have become acutely concerned with and eager to prevent or contain the 'disorders' brewing within and around expanding enclaves of urban perdition' (ibid., p. 262), all their efforts apparently sink into the dusk of oblivion and misery. Not by coincidence, however, since the new forms of advanced marginality in the First World cities are not general tasks to be solved by (inter)national policy-making, public administration or private investments – they are structural, systemic and historical products of postmodern global capitalism. Wacquant identifies four structural logics that fuel advanced marginality:

1) Advanced marginality, again, is not a temporary failure of economic calculations and fiscal politics, it is *the product of the innermost of global capitalism*. It is quite symptomatic, that urban poverty has intensified and multiplied 'in an era of capricious but sturdy growth that has brought about a generalized upgrading of standards of living and spectacular material betterment for the more privileged members of First World societies' (ibid., p. 263). If there is an emerging European context in the 21st century, then it is *how abundance and starvation, prosperity and vulnerability blossom alongside each other*. According to the data of Eurostat, while in 2008, 17% of the population in the EU-27 countries were at risk of poverty and social exclusion[51], *that is 81 million people*, in 2015, 23.7 % of the population in the EU-28 were at risk of poverty and social exclusion, that is *118.7 million people*. It sounds nice that the Europe 2020 strategy has set the 'reduction' (sic!) of people living at the risk of poverty and social exclusion as a key target, the problem however is 'rooted deep in the very structure of the new capitalism,' that is the innermost reality of Europe, which reality – instead of the reduction of urban poverty – 'promises to produce more urban dislocation and demoralization among those thrust and trapped at the bottom of the emerging urban order' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 265);

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[51] This means that these people met one of the following criteria of condition: at risk of poverty after social transfers (income poverty); severely materially deprived; or living in households with very low work intensity.

2) The new regime of advanced marginality is also fueled by the continuous transformation of wage-labour, that is both *the perennial disappearance of low-skilled jobs and the desocialization of work* – the flourishing insecurity, instability and precariousness of employment and working conditions. Already a large fraction of the urban poor constitutes a massive 'reserve army of labour,' whose future employment is not guaranteed at all, especially in the age of automation and virtualization. Due to the disconnection of urban poverty from macroeconomic trends, it is not at all surprising that Wacquant arrives at the conclusion that even 'miraculous rates of growth would not suffice to absorb back into the workforce all those who have been deproletarianized – that is, durably and forcibly expelled from the wage-labour market to be replaced by a mix of machines, cheap part-time labour, or immigrant and foreign workers' (ibid., p. 266).

3) Alongside the exclusionary logic of global capitalism, *the production of advanced marginality also belongs to national states*, since they set the local conditions for the regime of urban poverty which determines its respective dispositif and governmentality – provides or denies access to the job market and education, defines the rules of redistribution, supports or harasses people according to its own administrative logic and biopolitics. It is the state that determines 'who gets relegated, how, where and for how long. States are major engines of stratification in their own (…), and nowhere more so than at the bottom of the sociospatial order' (ibid., pp. 267-268). So national states and their respective institutional extensions are both the producers and the vanguard designers of the national-contextual face of urban poverty.

4) The fourth structural logic that fuels advanced marginality is that urban poverty concentrates in and infiltrates into 'brutal' areas, public infernos which appear as lethal and infectious in the public discourse. This further intensifies and fuels the processes of territorial stigmatization of 'these entrenched quarters of misery [which] have "made a name" for themselves as repositories for all the urban ills of the age, places to be avoided, feared and deprecated' (ibid., p. 272).

But Wacquant's intention with a comparative sociology of advanced marginality is not only to outline the general tendencies and structural logics that are characteristic to contemporary urban poverty, but also to draw attention to the differential character between the American ghetto and the peripheral neighborhoods of relegation in Paris. While advanced marginality is characterized by similar trends and structural logics on both sides of the Atlantic, Wacquant makes a distinction between the new regimes of advanced marginality, which he calls (American) 'hyperghetto' and (European) 'anti-ghetto.' While the postwar American

black ghetto was – despite all its brutal deprivations and radical exclusion – a communal, protective place with strong social bonds, the post-Fordist 'hyperghetto' is a 'denuded space' (Wacquant, 2007, p. 70) characterized by the disappearance of shared language, protective functions (both economically and socially) and by 'conjugated segregation on the basis of race *and* class in the context of the double retrenchment of the labour market *and* the welfare state from the urban core, necessitating and eliciting the corresponding development of an intrusive and omnipresent police-and-penal apparatus' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 3). The hyperghetto is the territorial consequence of the withdrawal of public institutions from its areas, the intensifying control of disciplinary apparatuses, the general loss of the hinterland of the hoodies, and the impoverishment of its immanent organizational infrastructure and network. It is one instance of the urban infernos, from which everyone tries to escape. The process of *hyperghettoization* is thus the 'intensification of exclusionary social closure, since it now combines racial division with class segmentation against the backdrop of deproletarianization without the compensating action of a canvas of strong homespun organizations' (ibid., p. 102). The inhabitants of the hyperghetto are not only vulnerable to the economic elite and the managers of state control, but also have no impact on public institutions.

On the other hand, what Wacquant calls the European 'anti-ghetto,' is structured through different immanent logics. While the hyperghetto is 'determined by ethnicity, modulated by class position after the 1960s, and aggravated by the state; in France and its neighboring countries, it is rooted in class inequality, inflected by ethnicity (…) and partially deflected by public action' (Wacquant, 2014, p. 1692). For Wacquant, it is the direct opposite of ghettoization, which is characterized by the dominant exclusionary logic of race and the withdrawal of public institutions, hence the socio-spatial form of the deindustrialized neighborhoods of relegation is the anti-ghetto. So, again, while the hyperghetto 'is an ethnically and socially *homogeneous* universe characterized by low organizational density and weak penetration by the state,' the anti-ghetto is characterized 'by [a] fundamentally *heterogeneous* population according to ethnonational provenance (and, secondarily, class position) whose isolation is mitigated by the strong presence of public institutions catering to social needs' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 5). Although Wacquant's distinction between the new forms of advanced marginality is adequate, I think it is an oversimplification to depict the territorial character of European advanced marginality as the 'anti-ghetto.' What Wacquant misses from his conceptual elaboration, in my opinion (drawing on Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis to which I will refer later in detail), is a distinction between core, peripheral and semiperipheral countries in the world-system of global capitalism. As I will argue in the next

part, the territorial character of advanced marginality in semiperipheral, post-socialist Central-Eastern European countries is sort of a 'hybrid-ghetto' – conceptually in-between the urban poverty of core and peripheral countries, and in-between the American hyperghetto, French suburbs and Third World *favelas*, shantytowns.

6.3 The Dispositif of Advanced Marginality

But Wacquant's most important contribution, in my opinion, is that with the conceptualization of the new regime of advanced marginality he also drew particular attention to the generative role of the neoliberal state and its institutional extensions – especially in his later works, *Deadly Symbiosis: Race and the Rise of Neoliberal Penality* (2009a) and *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (2009b). Wacquant correctly identifies that the neoliberalization of nation states (on which I will elaborate later in the next part) entails not the withdrawal, the dismantling or the entrenchment of the state – rather, neoliberal capitalism relies on strong but completely 'reengineered' nation states (cf. Wacquant, 2012, p. 71). Wacquant compares this reengineered neoliberal state to the figure of the *Centaur* – it is humane and rewarding upwards and disciplinary downwards, 'liberal at the top and punitive at the bottom, which flouts democratic ideals by its very anatomy as by its modus operandi' (Wacquant, 2014, p. 1690) The Centaur state provides the institutional background for the uninterrupted free robbery of neoliberal economy with its two punitive hands: its left hand symbolizes *workfare* 'disciplinary social policy' and its right hand symbolizes *prisonfare* 'the diligent expansion of the penal system, (…) without forgetting the trope of individual responsibility that acts as the cultural glue binding these three aforementioned components together' (ibid., p. 1691). The Centaur state encompasses 'restrictive social policy (…) and expansive penal policy (…) centred on declining and derelict urban areas (…) delivered to public vituperation by the discourse of territorial stigmatization in the dualizing metropolis' (ibid., p. 1692). This way Wacquant depicts the contemporary marriage between penal policy and social policy, which is partly a consequence in that the penalization of the neoliberal state is not a response for the criminal insecurity in the first instance, but to social insecurity for which the state itself is responsible. The penalizing neoliberal Centaur state extended and hardened its

> policing, judicial and carceral apparatus to stem the disorders caused by the diffusion of social insecurity at the bottom of the ladder of classes and places, and staged the garish spectacle of *law-and-order pornography* to reaffirm the authority of a government wanting in legitimacy due to having forsaken its established duties of social and economic protection. (ibid., pp. 1694-1695)

While the left hand of the Centaur state embodies the shift from welfare to discipline and workfare, the right hand stretches between 'ethnic division, (…) centred on the "national/postcolonial foreigner" schism in Western Europe (with certain categories, such as the Roma, treated as quasi-foreigners even in their home countries) (…) and state-crafting.' (ibidem.) The right hand is embodied in the criminalization and 'over-incarceration' (which Wacquant later calls 'hyper-incarceration') of the urban precariat based on racial profiling in the first instance. The aggressive policies of criminalization – just as the restrictive social policies – are designed to materialize the imaginary issue of criminal insecurity, thus elevating the material reality of social insecurity into an illusion. These measures present the neoliberal state as responsible and strong, and

> aim to trumpet the fortitude of the authorities and to reaffirm the boundary between 'them' and a European 'us' that is painfully crystallizing. *The penalization, racialization and depoliticization of urban turbulences* (…) thus proceed apace and reinforce one another in a circular nexus on the European continent as in the USA (Wacquant, 2014, pp. 1696–1697).

Racially-based penal profiling and criminalization turns the urban precariat against each other (especially in those ghettos which are racially heterogeneous), it makes the legitimation of restrictive penal policies easier, and facilitates and intensifies the efficiency of the left hand of the Centaur state. Wacquant illustrates 'the "fatal triangle" of the urban precariat' (ibid., p. 1692) as follows:
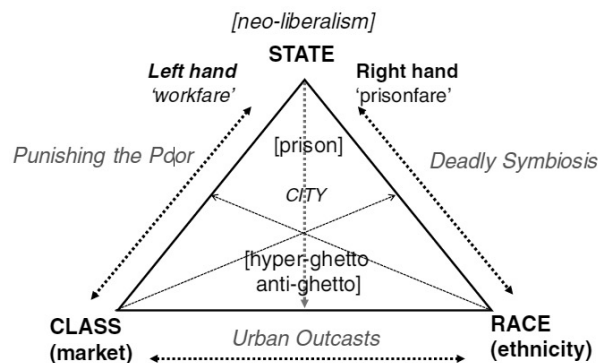
What Wacquant tries to capture – quite successfully – with this framework is how the hegemonic economic conceptualization of the neoliberal market rule and a Foucauldian approach to neoliberalism as governmentality do not exclude one another, but can contribute to each other. Wacquant correctly captures – but also underemphasizes – the importance of the hegemonic logic of Capital in the context of advanced marginality, and also stresses that 'it nonetheless has an *institutional core* that makes it distinct and recognisable. This core consists of an *articulation of state, market, and citizenship* that harnesses the first to impose the stamp

of the second onto the third' (Wacquant, 2012, p. 71). Wacquant elaborates an 'institutionalist conception' of urban poverty, whose main focus is how the arrangement of different apparatuses as extensions of the state are concerted as an inherent element of the new forms of advanced marginality. This labyrinthine web of relations consists of 'different public officials and agencies, schools and hospitals, housing and social welfare, firefighting and transportation, the courts and the police' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 11), but also local traders of the economic enclave, NGOs, grass-root organizations, churches and so on. The basic consideration behind such an institutional approach is that the fissure between 'policies on paper' and the everyday practices of the 'street-level' conduct became so wide, which 'we can bridge only by empirical analysis of specific and prosaic cases' (ibid., p. 12).

And especially for a practico-theoretical endeavor of ideology criticism based on the theory of hegemony, the role of institutions is of utmost importance. As Laclau argues, if people engage in a 'purely anti-institutional struggle, they do not advance hegemonically in society at all' (1999, p. 24). And here I am tempted to stretch Wacquant's institutional conceptualization of advanced marginality with the assertion that, for the ideologico-critical mapping of the discursive landscapes of urban poverty, one should pay particular attention to the *dispositifs of advanced marginality*. Foucault defines the term *dispositif* (dispositive) with clarity in an interview, *The Confession of the Flesh* (1977/1980):

> What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the [dispositif]. The [dispositif] itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements (ibid., p. 194).

For Foucault, thus, the dispositif is a 'heterogeneous ensemble,' a 'system of relations,' which means that it is not a simplistic enumeration of the above-listed entities, but their systematic arrangement, the 'interplay of shifts of position and modifications of function,' since a dispositif always 'has a dominant strategic function' (ibid., p. 195). And such a heterogeneous arrangement is not fixed, but modifiable, so that the elements can form differently concerted arrangements in the same dispositif. Foucault's basic intention with the concept of dispositif is to shift the focus from the analysis of closed institutional technologies and practices, in order to '[juxtapose] this "institutionalocentrism" with the endeavour to move "beyond or outside the institution"' (Raffnsøe, Gudmand-Høyer, & Thaning, 2014, p. 13), bringing games of power, strategies of confrontation and states of domination into focus. Gilles Deleuze in his article, *What is a Dispositif?* (1989/1992), depicts Foucault's concept of dispositif as a 'tangle, a

multilinear ensamble' (ibid., p. 159), interwoven with heterogeneous lines and their particular directions that stretch out, arrange and hold the respective elements of a dispositif together:

> Untangling these lines within a [dispositif] is, in each case, like drawing up a map, doing cartography, surveying unknown landscapes, and this is what he [Foucault] calls 'working on the ground'. One has to position oneself on these lines themselves, these lines which do not just make up the social apparatus but run through it and pull at it… (ibidem.)

The dispositif, according to Deleuze, has no core, origin or specific strategy. It has a structuring function in terms of what can be seen and what is hidden, what can be said and what is unsaid, and not because the dispositif is a technology on its own, but because it acquires its multilinear pattern according to the geometry of arrangement of its elements. However, as Deleuze further elaborates Foucault's concept, each historical bloc has its own characteristic modality of dispositifs, and while it may seem that our present is dominated by the *dispositifs of discipline* which replaced the *dispositifs of sovereignty*, 'this is by no means the case: the disciplines which Foucault describes are the history of what we gradually cease to be, and our present-day reality takes on the form of dispositions of overt and continuous *control*' (ibid., p. 164). Foucault, on the other hand, suggests that there is a slight linearity in the changing modalities of dispositifs, and it is more probable that different modalities co-exist in a given epoch. While Foucault shares a similar line of thought with Deleuze and puts the emphasis on the *dispositifs of security*, he also argues that it is hard to draw a line of demarcation between the different modalities. 'It is absolutely clear that in the juridico-legal system, (…) the disciplinary side was far from being absent. (…) We could [say] the same with regard to the disciplinary system, which includes a whole series of dimensions that absolutely belong to the domain of security' (2009, pp. 6–7). In his book, *What is and Apparatus?* (2009),[52] Giorgio Agamben also locates the dominant shift in the present-day modality of dispositifs by referring to an extended and intensified technology of security and control:

> While a new European norm imposes biometric apparatuses on all its citizens by developing and perfecting anthropometric technologies (…) in order to identify recidivist criminals (…), surveillance by means of video cameras transforms the public space of the city into the interior of an immense prison. In the eyes of authority (…) nothing looks more like a terrorist than the ordinary man (ibid., p. 14)

And certainly, regarding the dispositifs of advanced marginality, in the eyes of the Centaur state nothing looks more like a greater danger than the urban precariat. In global

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[52] Agamben uses the word 'apparatus' as equivalent to dispositif. There is still an ongoing debate how to translate the French word dispositif into English, but as I will argue later, apparatus is a distinctive concept from dispositif.

capitalism, the totalizing forms of security and control that is so visible at the places of urban poverty has grown monstrous dispositifs, characterized by the 'aimless motion of this machine, which, in a sort of colossal parody of theological *oikonomia* [disposition], has assumed the legacy of the providential governance of the world; yet instead of redeeming our world, this machine (…) is leading us to catastrophe' (ibid., pp. 23-24). Hence, it is of utmost importance how societies are going to respond to this emerging – and already present – catastrophe in the future, and whether we will be 'capable of resisting this new form of domination' (Deleuze, 1992, p. 164), that is the colossal dispositif of control overdetermining the new regime of advanced marginality. Which political response will become 'the dominant path followed by the members of the European Union will largely determine the kind of supranational society they are to become' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 276). It seems that there are two dominant trends today: the first dominant route is the strengthening of the Centaur state by further extending and intensifying the criminalization, penalization, precarization and stigmatization of urban poverty; and the second is the liberal democratic imaginary of strengthening the social arm of the welfare state, supporting and redeploying local interventions carried out by NGOs and the non-profit sector – namely programs of 'slum integration.' It is clear, however, that neither of the two is going to get the 'job done,' since these responses to the perennial and intensifying problems of urban poverty 'contribute to perpetuating them in so far as they increase the bureaucratic cacophony and inefficiency of the state, which cannot but sap the legitimacy of the social treatment of poverty in the long run' (ibid., p. 276-277). This problem has become one the most divisive issues in recent debates among leftist scholars, social workers, researchers and so on. While liberal campaigns respond to the basic needs of the urban precariat and support human rights, these measurements also contribute to what Wacquant calls the 'increasing bureaucratic cacophony' of the Centaur state. If there is a basic lesson that we should learn from the critique of the radical emancipatory Left, it is that *the road to hell is paved with good intentions* (L'enfer est plein de bonnes volontés ou désirs'), and *even the most benign liberal and social-democrat attempts of supporting the urban precariat are tendentiously reproducing and maintaining the historico-structural roots and logics of the hegemonic states of domination in the places of advanced marginality.* As Tucker Landesman, researcher of the Brazilian *favelas*, recently argued regarding the contemporary debate among the academic Left, while

> few would argue against interventions providing roads, sanitation, healthcare and education, which are rights demanded by residents themselves, (…) these improvements are often predicated on the extension of a state monopoly of violence that is achieved through a dramatic intensification of militarized policing (Landesman, 2017, p. 42).

But still, it can't be denied that, due to the growing number of interventions, campaigns and preventive actions, the dispositifs of advanced marginality have become incredibly and unprecedentedly visible, diverse, extensive, and dynamic nowadays, and thus it has to be brought into central focus of analysis if the radical emancipatory Left wants to formulate its own feasible practico-theoretical critique regarding urban poverty: a viable critique of theory and practice, which could provide the most basic needs of the residents without reproducing the hegemonic states of domination. By bringing the dispositifs of advanced marginality into focus of analysis, I mean *studying the discursive totality of the extended landscapes of urban poverty, overdetermined by the hegemonic ideological articulations that emerge from the particular arrangement of apparatuses, that form the particular geometry of their respective dispositif.* In this way, I differentiate apparatuses from dispositifs, understanding the latter in a Foucauldian manner as particular sets of discursive practices (from institutions, urban planning, traffic management, scientific statements up to everyday rituals and street-level rumors). The interdiscourse between these apparatuses forms the lines that constitute the tangle of the dispositif. And I am tempted to call the directions, strategies and functions of these lines – following Foucault – the various *governmentalities of a dispositif.* Foucault understood the concept of governmentality in a broad sense, as the 'conduct of conduct,' (Foucault, 1982, p. 341) in which he exploits the double meaning of the French word '*conduire,*' which is 'at the same time to "lead" others (according to mechanisms of coercion that are, to varying degrees, strict) and a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities.' (ibidem.)

In this sense, governmentality refers to a broad range of discursive practices and power relations that stem from the macro-political level to the microphysics of the self-conducting subject. As Thomas Lemke (2001) argues, the concept of governmentality is of utmost importance in the era of the neoliberal state, since it helps to capture how its failures, gaps, catastrophes and malfunctions are part of their innermost logic. In neoliberal capitalism, 'the analysis of governmentality' can reveal that the practices of the neoliberal state 'are not necessarily instable or in crisis. (…) Neoliberalism might work not instead of social exclusion and marginalisation processes or political "deficiencies"; on the contrary, relinquishing social securities and political rights might well prove to be its *raison d'étre*' (ibid., pp. 8-9). And what is particularly characteristic to the new forms of the 'conduct of conduct' in the neoliberal state is not the dismantling of the state, but – as Wacquant also argues – a specific reengineering of the state, that is the reengineering of the formal and informal techniques of governmentality, which process is at the heart of the extending dispositifs of advanced marginality. That is, the reengineered relations of power between the police and the citizens' vigilance committees,'

between the Church and local cults, between non-profit organizations and criminal gangs, between teachers and self-appointed white saviors, and so on. For Lemke, the analysis of governmentality

> enables us to shed sharper light on the effects neoliberal governmentality has in terms of (self)regulation and domination. These effects entail not just the simple reproduction of existing social asymmetries or their ideological obfuscation, but are the product of a re-coding of social mechanisms of exploitation and domination on the basis of a new topography of the social (ibid., pp. 13-14).

Thus, again, I propose that it is of utmost importance to study the dispositifs of advanced marginality, with the focus on their inherent 'conduct of conduct,' which is 'nothing more than the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentality' (Foucault, 1984a, p. 21).

6.4 The Privileged Apparatus of the School

For Foucault, the governmentality of modernity became what it is on the basis of old seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pastoral and military techniques, but in the first instance 'thanks to a series of specific instruments, whose formation is exactly contemporaneous with that of the art of government and which are known (…) *as police*' (1978a, p. 104). And while Foucault refers to the eighteenth-century meaning of the word 'police,' I assume, that the police of late capitalism also has a decisive role when it comes to the problem of urban poverty. Wacquant also argues that special focus has to be put on the police in the analysis of advanced marginality, because of the dominant phenomenon of 'police fetishism,' which refers to the assumption that it is the ultimate solution for bringing order to 'no-go zones.' What makes the apparatus of police privileged among the others, for Wacquant, is that the police as the '"frontline" agency and frowning face of the state directly turned down towards precarious and marginal categories, (…) *are everywhere* (…) [and] have again been entrusted, not only with maintaining public order, but also, (…) with buttressing the new social order' (2008, p. 12 italics added).

However, contrary to Foucault's and Wacquant's preferred privileged point of the analysis of governmentality, I propose that today it is *the School* which deserves the privileged position among the other apparatuses. First, I cautiously embrace, for the sake of argument, Althusser's critique of the School. He argues that, with the dawn of the Enlightment, the dominant Ideological State Apparatus of the Church has been replaced by the School, and has become the most dominant apparatus for the reproduction of the capitalist relations of production for three reasons: first, the School, as compared to other apparatuses, is spatially and temporally one of the most extensive apparatuses, which 'takes children from all social

classes (…) *for years* thereafter, the years when children are most "vulnerable", (…) pumps them full, with (…) certain kinds of "know-how" (…) *packaged* in the dominant ideology' (Althusser, 1971, p. 145); second, since the School maintains and reproduces the relations of production *via* the reproduction of the bourgeoisie ideology, it also has to obfuscate and mystify this role, for which it has its own ideology – 'an ideology which depicts the school as a neutral environment free of ideology (…) where teachers respectful of the "conscience" and "freedom" of the children entrusted to them (…) set them on the path to adult freedom, morality and responsibility…' (ibid., p. 146); and third, the apparatus of the School is extremely special in the sense that it not only takes children from the widest audience of the class society, but also that this audience is 'a *captive* audience *of all the children of the capitalist social formation* at its beck and call (…) for as *many years* as the schools do, eight hours a day, [five] days out of seven.' (ibidem.) In sum, Althusser notes, that the School 'certainly has the dominant role, although hardly anyone lends an ear to its music: it is so silent!' (Althusser, 1971, p. 251)[53]

While I hesitantly embrace Althusser's arguments, I disagree with him in his conceptualization of apparatuses as ideological *per se*, and consequently I think that his functionalist approach of institutions leaves a relatively narrow space for resistance. As Eagleton put it, it is not at all that obvious that schools 'are sheerly ideological structures. (…) Schools may teach civic responsibility and saluting the flag; but they also teach children to read and write, and sometimes how to fasten their shoelaces, which would presumably be necessary in a socialist order too' (1991, p. 147). In a sense, however, Althusser was aware of this problem, and addressed very accurately the innermost challenge for contemporary critical, transformative teacher education:

> I beg the pardon of those teachers who, in impossible or appalling conditions, are striving to turn the scientific and political weapons (…) back against the ideology and the system and practices in which they are trapped. They are heroes of a kind. But they are very rare. How many others (*the immense majority!*) do not even begin to suspect the 'work' that the system (which overwhelms and crushes them) forces them to do, or, worse, put their whole heart and all their ingenuity into performing it with extreme conscientiousness (the celebrated new methods!) … (Althusser, 1971, pp. 146–147).

With his pessimistic approach to the School and his apologies for critical educators Althusser provides a – since then – traditional Marxist argument for conceiving the School as dominant among other apparatuses. But still I argue that such an argument is insufficient in

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[53] Today, hundreds of thousands of scholars lend their ears to its music, so maybe it is harder than ever to listen to its silence. It is quite shocking and also symptomatic that the *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, which is merely a summary of the educational research, moreover only the first volume, is *3.481 pages long.*

order to claim that the School is the dominant apparatus of the contemporary dispositifs of advanced marginality, especially if one considers the extreme extension of the police-and-penal apparatuses in the European Centaur states.

Besides the Marxist, Althusserian argument, there is another, historical reason for privileging the apparatus of the School, which I tried to capture with a Foucauldian genealogy of institutionalized education in my article, *The Deadlock of Schooling* (Tóth, 2017b). What I intended to show with the genealogy of schooling are the historical conditions that made it possible for the School to acquire a significant position among other apparatuses as part of the development of the 'carceral archipelago' (Foucault, 1975, p. 297) and its disciplinary technologies. Drawing on the historical studies of Roger Deacon (2002, 2004, 2005, 2006; 1995), I locate the development of institutionalizing education in the context of seventeenth-century Europe. As Deacon argues, along with Foucault, because of the decline of feudalism and the emergence of a new social order, a new concept of social control was needed, and thus '[a]mongst the various responses by the local authorities one common and unoriginal theme emerged: the re-imposition of order through the confinement of disorder' (Deacon, 2006, p. 126). The need for institutionalized mass education was more than ever emphasized by the spreading idea that childhood should be the time for learning and by the realization of necessity of not only treating the more and more visible and urgent problems of criminality, diseases and pauperism, but also *preventing* them on a moral basis of discipline[54], rather than one of simple fierce instruction (K. Jones & Williamson, 1979; Milewski, 2010). Hence, the disciplinary techniques of the *Great Confinement* (cf. Foucault, 1965) were neither sufficient nor acceptable in the new rationalism. Even early forms of schools could not retain those methods of brute confinement and violence that had been so characteristic since the early Reformation and even before. Moreover, the increasing number of intersecting disciplinary apparatuses (the prison, the hospital, the clinic, the police, etc.), reaching out for an increasing number of people in already increasing populations made those apparatuses' inner problems more and more visible: 'insufficiency, poorly regulated, arbitrarily managed, abusive, ineffective, generating resistance, depriving parents of income, exacerbating labour shortages and producing delinquents' (Deacon, 2004, p. 179). Because of these inherent problems, and therefore of the lack of guarantee for social control, new forms and modes of disciplinary mechanisms became necessary in all disciplinary apparatuses. Deacon argues that, to draw the new 'humane' face

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[54] Jeffrey Roth (1992) reminds us of the Latin origins of the word 'discipline' discussed earlier by Keith Hoskins: *disci* (to instruct) and *p[u]lina* (children).

of discipline on the pale canvas of brute force, several shifts had to occur to enrich the 'poor economy of coercion' (2006, p. 125). The School was just one of those apparatuses that had to 'train' and 'civilize' its disciplinary techniques, and it was not at all evident that institutionalized education would acquire an important position among the apparatuses of discipline. Among the various shifts, which were so characteristic in bridling and molding the discipline machinery – e.g., the shift from group-centered to individual-centered processes, from the control of 'place' to the post-feudal control of time, from the localization to the centralization of power in the state, but also from the ecclesiastical pastoral power to the individualization and localization of control in the new forms of pastoral power connected to the state – three major shifts took place, which put the School in an interesting position.

1) *The shift from confinement to attachment* meant the attachment of the individual to power/knowledge relations and processes of production[55] starting in the late 18th century. While confinement was based on exclusion, the moment of attachment since the Protestant Reformation aimed to fasten the individual to a particular varieté of correction.

2) *The shift from brute force to* 'humane' *disciplinary techniques* was based on the introduction of 'humane' modes of correction – a change from the obsolete, brutal and violent techniques of discipline to corrective and positive processes in the 19th century. The body, which had previously been the scarred landscape of torture and punishment, became the embodied potential for development and progress.[iv]

3) *The shift from* 'misery' *to* 'remedy' refers to the ideological motive of the movement from the imaginary of 'the School as an isolated apparatus of brutal force' to the imaginary of the 'School as the remedy for all sorts of social problems.' Popkewitz and Brennan argue that *the School was so successful and influential in the development of techniques of attachment and the new positive forms and techniques of discipline* that, 'the institutions of formal education, schools, and universities have become central to the "disciplining" in most, if not all, other fields' (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1997, p. 308). As Foucault has already noted in *Discipline and Punish*, the disciplinary apparatuses have a historically transversal character, so that it is not at all 'surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons' (1975, p. 228). However, as Deacon argues, it is likely that in this transversal constellation the School, what Foucault

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[55] In the Foucauldian sense, production means 'not only "production" in the strict sense, but also the production of knowledge and skills in the school, the production of health in the hospitals, the production of destructive force in the army' (Foucault, 1975, p. 219).

calls the 'pedagogical machine' (ibid., p. 172), also affected other apparatuses. '[W]hether or not the prison or the Panopticon became the model for disciplinary institutions, it was a school, the "pedagogical machine" of the École Militaire, which may have provided the inspiration for the Panopticon' (Deacon, 2004, p. 181).

Thus, the multifaceted development of the School's disciplinary technologies had resemblances among other apparatuses, which led to the expansion of the educational horizon and also to the educationalization of social problems. The shift from 'misery' to 'remedy' can be apprehended as constitutive of an constituted by both the 'schooling' of social problems and the 'pedagogization of the society.'[56] Charting a *via media* between the Marxist critiques and the Foucauldian critiques of the School – just as Wacquant was trying, in his conceptualization of the Centaur state to take both the Marxist critique of political economy and the Foucauldian critique of the political rationality of governmentality into account (Wacquant, 2012, p. 71) – leads to an interesting paradox. Both approaches hold, that the apparatus of the School is 'cut through' by and 'attached' to the socio-political structure (of the logic of Capital or of the micro-fibers of power relations).

On the one hand the School is exposed to the logic of Capital, so that, in neoliberal capitalism, cooperative learning becomes a preparation for corporate teamwork; the development of motivational bases becomes a means of producing internal and personal motivation and desire for surplus labour; differentiation becomes a training strategy for the production of a skilled workforce of the widest scope; and personalized learning and individual learning paths become the tools for learning how to cope with future alienation. This way, the School provides the foundations for the development of the competences required for the neoliberal 'multi-tasking' labour market; for the operationalization of the exploitation and commodification of children (as well as the motivation of self-commodification and self-exploitation); and for the supervision and mentoring of the early-childhood internalization of commodity fetishism. On the other hand as the techniques of discipline and control infiltrate the School, they 'construct invisible power, silently (although sometimes violently) creating individuals as bodies to be controlled' (Cannella, 2000, p. 40). This power is not only silent but also more effective, since its strategy is 'not to punish less, but to punish better (…) to insert the power to punish more deeply into the social body' (Foucault, 1975, p. 82).

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[56] As Lingard and Gale (2010) argue, the case is not only – as Gayatri Spivak noted in her book *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (1993) – that politics became pedagogical *per se*, but that what we are witnessing today is a 'totally pedagogised society' (ibid., p. 41).

Take the example of Foucault's critique of pedagogical power relations in comparison between lecture and seminar:

> [d]on't you think that a professor who takes charge of students at the beginning of the year, makes them work in small groups, invites them to enter his own work shares with them his own problem and methods – don't you think that students coming out of this seminar will be even more twisted than if they had simply attended a series of lectures? (…) Isn't there the risk that the professor feeds them with ideas much more insidiously? I don't wish to defend the lecture at all costs but I wonder whether it does not indeed have a kind of crude honesty, provided it states what it is (…) and which therefore can appeal for criticism and objections: the student is free to uncover its blunders (Foucault, 1971, p. 199).

However, at the same time, both the Marxist and the Foucauldian critiques of the School attribute a transformative potentiality to education: either as a place of resistance through challenging the logic of capital and unmasking oppressive mechanisms (Hill, McLaren, & Cole, 1999); or as a place for acquiring 'the rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the ethos, the practice of the self, that will allow us to play [the] games of power with as little domination as possible' (Foucault, 1997, p. 298). I assert, that it is the transformative potentiality of the School, which posits it in a privileged position among the other apparatuses. But where does this *potentia* come from? I assume that it is inscribed in an interesting paradox. While the critiques of the School apparatus point to its *attachment* to structures of power and domination, at the same time, one of the most frequent charges is levelled against its *detachment* from the social and the political. As Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons argue in *In Defence of the School: A Public Issue* (2013):

> [a]lienation is a recurring accusation levelled against the school. (…) Subjects taught in the school are not 'worldly' enough. Subject matter is 'artificial'. The school does not prepare its pupils for real life. (…) The school thus not only closes itself off to society, but it also closes itself off to the needs of young people. Trapped in its own sense of self-righteousness, the school is accused of being an island that does nothing (and can do nothing) but alienate young people from themselves or from their social surroundings. While moderates believe that the school itself is capable of change and thus call for more openness and pragmatism, radical voices insist that this alienation and disconnectedness is characteristic of every form of school education. (…) In any case, all of these critics start from the premise that education and learning must have clear and visible connections with the world as experienced by young people and with society as a whole (ibid., p. 15).

The School 'sticks out' from the social in a certain sense, unlike other apparatuses – especially in the dispositifs of advanced marginality, as I will show in the next part in the case of a Hungarian ghetto school – isolated and detached to a certain degree from its most immediate environment and its respective dispositif. At the same time, however, the School is

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emplaced in the social that is more and more pedagogical: more and more apparatuses and institutional practices are 'pedagogizing the society' – supervisors, healthcare experts, researchers, non-profit and for-profit program organizers, NGOs, the police, the press, politicians, parents, universities, social workers and so on. The paradox emerges between the attachments and the detachments of the School apparatus, against which critical voices promote different (reflective, critical or conscious) but further attachment of the apparatus. I argue, however, in agreement with Masschelein and Simons, that the apparent paradox between the attachments and the detachments of the School is not that paradoxical at all. Of course, I agree with the Marxist and Foucauldian critiques of how the School is insidiously attached to structures of power and domination and at the same time detached to a certain degree from the socio-political field. But it is hard to extract from these critiques a kernel of potentiality of the School, since they show precisely how the School is deeply constrained and isolated by prevailing structures, which leave us with an extremely limited margin of freedom and potentiality. I assert, that in order to be able to hold on the transformative potentiality of the School, one has to look beyond the paradox between attachment and detachment. As Masschelein and Simons argue, it is precisely the 'detachment' that makes a school a school – detachment is its positive condition that opens a space for its transformative potentiality. Drawing on the most common translation of Greek *scholè* as *free time* they argue, that what differentiates the school from other apparatuses, is that it establishes time and space *detached* from the time and space of the society.

> [T]he school must suspend or decouple certain ties with students' family and social environment on the one hand and with society on the other in order to present the world to students in an interesting and engaging way. (…) It is precisely the scholastic form that allows young people to disconnect from the busy time of the household or of the *oikos* (the oiko-nomy) and the city/state or *polis* (poli-tics). The school provides the format (i.e. the particular composition of time, space and matter that makes up the scholastic) for time-made-free, and those who dwell within it literally transcend the social (economic and political) order and its associated (unequal) positions (Masschelein & Simons, 2013, pp. 15–29).

The 'matter of suspension' is what differentiates the School according to Masschelein and Simons, which releases and liberates certain ties and allows for a non-productive *free* time for thought and study.

> Society is in some way kept outside. (…) But secondly, something is allowed inside. (…) Students are drawn from their world and made to enter a new one. Thus, on one side of the coin there is a suspension, that is, a rendering inoperable, a liberation. On the other, there is a positive movement: the school as present tense and middle ground, a place and time for possibilities and freedom (ibid., p. 38).

Thus, it is precisely *via* this *separation* where I locate the transformative potentiality of the School, with which I also assume its privileged position among other apparatuses. The separation is a positive condition, as it was for Lacan, who elaborated the concept of 'separation' (as opposed to alienation), as referring to the subject's act of detachment from the signifying chain, 'wanting to know' what is beyond the structure of language and fantasy:

> It means not only to dress oneself; but also to defend oneself; to provide oneself with what one needs to be on one's guard, and I will go further still, (…) to the *se parere*, the *s'engendrer*, the *to be engendered*, which is involved here. How, at this level, has the subject to procure himself? For that is the origin of the word that designates (…) *to put into the world* (Lacan, 1964/1998a, p. 214).

Paradoxically it is separation and suspension what 'puts the subject into the world' (that is into an abyss as I will argue in the last chapter). Separation *unlocks* and *opens up* the world relieved from the signifying chains, it is an act or event of 'de-familiarisation, desocialisation, de-appropriation or de-privatization' (Masschelein, 2011, p. 531), and it is this liberating event, 'this *freeing* that makes things *public*' (Masschelein & Simons, 2013, p. 62). Separation allows for being free, to be engendered without clinging to a prefabricated destiny or ideal. As Masschelein and Simons argue, the School is 'means without an end and a vehicle without a determined destination' (ibid., p. 36), and this is the second modality of the School apparatus which makes it distinct from other apparatuses, deserving a privileged position. 'The psychologist, the therapist, the pastor, the facilitator of learning assume no free time. Their time is destined or has a predefined sense or aim. (…) Scholè, however, is the time without destination and without aim or end' (Masschelein, 2011, p. 531). The School is the only pedagogical form that 'starts with assumption that human beings do not have a destination' (Simons in Bernardo & Karwoski, 2017, p. 714). And when it incarnates the fantasy of certain ends, it immediately corrupts this very assumption, that could open the space for a transformative potentiality. Because the 'very possibility of education is sustained by its impossibility' (Biesta, 1998, p. 504), which means simply that education cannot be 'predicted', it always involves a risk – that is also the risk 'that society is not reproduced' (Simons in Bernardo & Karwoski, 2017, p. 707).

It is certainly a 'weak' conception of education, but still a conception from which it is possible to extract the transformative potentiality of the School, that is its separation which unlocks the world in order to expose it to the risk of education. One shouldn't understand such a position either as a resignation from the Marxist, Foucauldian and other useful critiques of the School or as a naïve conceptualization of the School. It doesn't claim that the schools *are already* like that. But it is an affirmative position – one, which attempts to rediscover and

reclaim the transformative potentiality of the School. It is extremely important especially regarding the places of advanced marginality, which are 'truly "no place to be a child", [y]oungsters raised in this environment of pandemic violence suffer serious emotional damage and display post-traumatic stress disorders similar to those endured by veterans' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 56). As I will argue in the next part, it is the School which most often functions as *a place to be a child* in the traumatic deserts of the reality.

Reclaiming the transformative potentiality of the School is also an attempt to extend the horizon of the extremely limited margin of freedom teachers are exposed to. It starts with the assumption, that the School not only cannot fulfil the complex and impossible demands that are imposed on it, but that it's not its task, because these demands corrupt the possibility of education which is, again, its *impossibility*. Hence, reclaiming the transformative potentiality of the School also has a liberating modality for the teachers.

> Free time as the time of study, thought and exercise is time which is separated from productive life, it is time where labour or work as economic activities are put at a distance. (…) Education as a *form* of suspension is not destroying or denying anything, e.g. the past or the institutions, but is disorientating the institutions, interrupting the past. The necessities and obligations of professions, the imperatives of knowledge, the demands of society, the burden of the family, the projects for the future; everything is there or can be there, but in a condition of floating (Masschelein, 2011, p. 531).

In sum, I don't resign at all from the critique of how the School is attached and exposed to prevailing social structures – in fact my basic intentions with the ideologico-critical hegemony analyses of the dispositifs of advanced marginality is to illuminate how the meaningful field – to which the School is attached – is structured. It is too obvious, *hence* extremely important, to highlight that schools do not exist in a virtual vacuum, but always in a specific historico-political and spatial context, as parts of their respective dispositif, especially regarding the places of advanced marginality. But I also intend to take its detachment, separation and isolation into account not necessarily as a charge against the School, but as which makes it privileged among other apparatuses with its transformative potentiality.

6.5 The Ethnography of a Discursive Landscape

My basic motivation is to show – through the ideologico-critical hegemony analyses of advanced marginality, with a privileged focus on the apparatus of the School – how places of urban poverty are educationally meaningful for teacher education. I found ethnographic work indispensable not only for mapping the discursive landscapes of urban poverty, but also for the construction of the theoretical anatomy of my work *in situ*. All that has been written so far did

not precede my ethnographic mapping work, on the contrary, all the conceptual developments from the discursive account of ideology up to the complex dispositifs of advanced marginality are rooted in my fieldwork – in the most traumatic encounters with urban poverty and with teachers. Wacquant, who conceptualized advanced marginality also through ethnographic work, advocates ethnography as an indispensable methodology for a discursive cartography of urban poverty. Ethnography is the pledge to

> pierce the screen of discourses whirling around these territories of urban perdition which lock inquiry within the biased perimeter of the pre-constructed object, and secondly to capture the lived relations and meanings that are constitutive of the everyday reality of the marginal city-dweller. But, lest one condemn oneself to monographic myopia, fieldwork cannot for a single moment do without institutional analysis, and vice versa (Wacquant, 2008, p. 9)

Although ethnographic work is of utmost importance in the analysis of advanced marginality, it is hard to outline a general definition of ethnography as methodology. It is more common among ethnographers to refer to ethnographic traditions or schools in order to put their specific approach into a framework. This framing is a consequence of the historical transformation of ethnography as a methodology and practice, and the parallel existence of different schools of it. Until the 1950s, ethnography was close to the positivist paradigm both epistemologically and methodologically. The ethnographer's authority as the detached observer was the fundamental condition for objective reporting. Its colonialist, imperialist, positivist character became a central theme of the internal and external critique of ethnography during the 1960s, which drew attention to political and ethical questions of the post-war period, but remained faithful to the scientific rigor of the great predecessors (Hymes, 1972). This contributed to the attempt to turn ethnography into a critical discipline – cultural critique – with the redefined aim of researching other cultures in order to critically reflect its own – the Western enterprise. During the 1970s, ethnography was characterized by detaching itself from its positivist, functionalist heritage, while turning to literary and social studies dominated by post-structuralism and the emerging dispersion of postmodernism. While this 'interpretive turn' (Geertz, 1973) was an emblematic attempt in rethinking the limits and boundaries of ethnography and in shifting its focus to the construction of meaning and subjectivities, the emerging new antagonisms (post-colonialism, feminism, and the acknowledgment that ethnographic studies are largely vulnerable to hegemonic power and the reproduction of domination) led to a crisis called the 'experimental moment' in the 1980s. This crisis consisted of the problematization of the relation between ontological questions (What is the ethnographic experience? What is the reality that ethnography approaches?) and writing (e.g., producing

texts); the rejection of anthropological norms; and bringing the questions of gender, race, and class into focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Mészáros, 2015). This crisis also contributed to turning a critical eye on the way ethnography *interprets*, *engages with* and *represents* reality (Marcus & Fischer, 1986). The movement's foundational (and since then often contested) text, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Clifford & Marcus, 1986), connected the challenges of post-structuralism and postmodernity with ethnography. Whilst interpretive anthropology highlighted the importance of meaning and organized its practice around 'social description of the other, however modified by new conceptions of discourse, author, or text' (Rabinow, 1986, p. 245), the experimental movement drew attention to the (privileged) status and subject position of the ethnographer. The critique of subjectivity highly contributed to the rethinking of the relationship between researcher, subject and audience, placing the representation of the oppressed (the production of ethnographic text written from the margins) and the self-reflection of the ethnographers a central question. The deconstruction of the authority of the researcher also put the power-relation between *doing* ethnography and *writing* ethnography under critical gaze (Marcus, 1986, 1995), which contributed to a 'progression toward dialogical and polyphonic textuality.' (Rabinow, 1986, p. 245) Two decades after *Writing Culture,* George Marcus expressed his concerns that, while the experimental movement contributed to new forms of representation (which he calls rather messy and baroque, rather than experimental), it also put the pedagogical importance of fieldwork away. 'What I am advocating is to return this source of entanglement with material to fieldwork itself more so than to historical sources' (Marcus, 2007, p. 1131). The resurgence of the importance of fieldwork was a part of the progression toward more dialogic and collaborative ethnographic approaches from the mid-80s, which brought the question of engagement into focus. It was already inscribed in Sol Tax's (1958) endeavor towards an 'action anthropology' (avoiding paternalism of applied anthropology and promoting voluntary support of the oppressed). In his *Fox Project,* '[t]he human subjects were to be treated as equal participants, and the goal was to help them articulate their grievances and then conduct discussions in which the various parties tried to find ways of meeting needs or solving problems' (Bennett, 2009, p. 34)

Among these traditions, I place my ethnographic research in the branch of critical, engaged ethnography – a practico-theoretical, social and pedagogical work, which emphasizes the need for political and moral engagement in doing ethnography (Scheper-Hughes, 2009). Setha Low and Sally Engle Merry outline the constitutive elements of such practice as '(1) sharing and support, (2) teaching and public education, (3) social critique, (4) collaboration, (5)

advocacy, and (6) activism' (Low and Merry as cited in Červinková, 2012, p. 25) where '[t]he ethical is the guiding value. This is an oppositional position, one suspicious of sovereign powers, universal truths, overly relativized preciousness, local authenticity, moralisms high and low' (Rabinow, 1986, p. 258). I frame my ethnographic research within a specific branch of critical ethnographies, one which not only emphasizes the importance of focusing on social structures, and the engagement with the oppressed, but also

> that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness); that certain groups in any society are privileged over others (...); and, finally, that mainstream research practices are generally, although most often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race, and gender oppression (Mclaren & Kincheloe, 1998, p. 263).

Peter McLaren and Joe Kincheloe attempt to outline an approach to critical ethnography which is embedded in, based on and led by critical theory – more precisely, they are advocating a 'Marxian-inspired critical ethnography deepened by a critical engagement with new currents of postmodern social theory' (ibid., p. 268), which I find largely influential for framing my ethnographic work. Within this framework, the critical ethnographer is both a social worker and an activist, an urban ethnographer and Marxist social theorist, who walks the streets of the metropolis. This ethnographic *stance* has its roots in Marxist theory with a critical openness and suspiciousness to post-Marxist and postmodern theory. It is a contradictory practice and position by nature constituted in the bottomless fracture between the academic reality of compliance and the decaying realities of urban poverty 'out-of-law.' McLaren encapsulates this position as that of the *flâneur/flâneuse:*

> From a Marxist standpoint, the critical ethnographer as *flâneur/flâneuse* must seek to do more than de-fetishize, displace and unsettle oppressive reading and writing practices by challenging their frameworks and presuppositions in terms of their links to patriarchal practices and capitalist social relations. Rather, the critically self-reflexive *flâneur/flâneuse* needs to transform the very social relations and cultural and institutional practices out of which oppressive reading and writing practices (ideologies) develop (1997, p. 167).

Maintaining this framework, I position my research in four intersecting modalities of ethnographic work: as a *historico-discursive analysis of hegemony*; as *mapping the dispositif*; as *pedagogical practice*; and as *therapeutic practice*.

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First, considering the general theoretical framework of my research, that is the post-Marxist theory of hegemony, my ethnographic work is framed by the *discursive analysis of hegemony*.[57] It is a contribution to recent methodological attempts, which try to combine ethnography and discourse analysis by promoting long-term engagement with a specific micro-social context (discursive landscape) in order to 'map' how meaning is constructed through articulatory practices (Dean, 2004). In these attempts the ethnography of micro-social contexts is 'tied with a thorough examination of discourses which form those contexts from everyday practices as well as contribute to transformation and circulation of meanings across different institutional spaces, scales and genres' (Krzyżanowski, 2011, p. 232). As Martyn Hammersley argues (2005), ethnographers apparently tend to pay closer attention to the interdiscourse of the meaningful field and its discursive practices through the engagement with a wide range of discourse theories. Less attention has been payed however to combining ethnography with the discursive theory of hegemony, through which 'ethnographic field work can indicate the ways in which hegemonic formations are iteratively produced or challenged in what can seem to be the most banal everyday (discursive) practices' (Macgilchrist & Hout, 2011, p. 5). Drawing on Lasse Thomassen (2005), a hegemony analysis examines: (1) why specific articulatory practices dominate in a hegemonic formation and why other alternatives have been excluded; (2) how specific sedimentations/reactivations of the discursive field (states of domination, antagonisms, heterogeneity, etc.) emerged as a response to the dislocated character of the symbolic field and whether and how these forms of 'mastering dislocation' overdetermine others; (3) how discursive closures can be dislocated and how precarious fixities can become possible – thus hegemony analysis 'cannot stop at the identification of a successful hegemony, but must also examine which alternatives have been excluded for the present hegemony to be possible' (ibid., p. 291); (4) what is behind and beyond hegemonic articulations, 'something only possible through a careful analysis of the historical context' (ibid., p. 299). For such a 'careful analysis of the historical context,' as proposed by Thomassen, my ethnographic work is also framed by Foucault's method of genealogy. Although the scope of this dissertation

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[57] Whilst there are various ethnographies of hegemony (Coulter, 2002; Doran, 2015; Sue, 2015), these researches understand hegemony in Gramscian terms. Thus, they focus on the historical emergence and processes of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic formations and how domination is characterized by consent, rather than coercion, and how 'common sense' could be interpreted from a cultural aspect of power-relations. Albeit these researches stick to a reductionist, essentialist approach, they also show the potential of ethnography to reveal the hegemonic processes 'that not only produce systemic inequality but also blur its contours' and 'permits communicative practices to be linked to the conditions of their emergence, unfolding, and decline, and it allows communicative practices to be conceptualised as inherently embedded in and dependent on institutional ones' (Blommaert et al., 2003, p. 4).

doesn't allow the elaboration of a full-fledged genealogy of the particular dispositifs of advanced marginality, still I consider my ethnographic work *as genealogic in approach*. In *Madness and Civilisation* (1961)*, The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), and in *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault uses the method of archaeology as a break with the traditional historical analyses of knowledge. He understands archaeology as an analysis of the archives of society, the history of discursive formations, which constructed the possibilities and the limits of specific knowledges, rationalities and truth-claims, i.e., what can be said and done. Later, in *Discipline and Punish* (1978) and *The History of Sexuality* (1979), Foucault refined his method, and started to emphasize the particular role of power/knowledge relations in shaping the boundaries of discursive formations 'in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history' (Foucault, 1984b, p. 76). What Foucault found interesting in Nietzsche's reflections on history[58] was the historico-critical attitude of the investigation, characterized not only by the search for the conditions of possibility of constituting ourselves as subjects, but also by the analysis of complex power relations (through which Nietzsche investigated the development of morals, for instance). For Foucault, genealogy, just like archaeology, rejects universalizing accounts of historical investigation, but its specific focus is on how power operates, that is, how power interweaves with the construction of knowledge, how power/knowledge relations operate through discourses and how we are 'constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations' (Foucault, 1984c, p. 49). Foucault draws on Nietzsche's concept of *Herkunft* (descent), the way genealogical method subverts and deconstructs what seemed immobile, universal, united or original, and *Entstehung* (emergence), as an attempt to investigate the historical events of the 'hazardous play of dominations', which 'establishes marks of its power and engraves memories on things and even within bodies' (Foucault, 1984b, p. 83). The genealogical approach of the ethnographic work not only contributes to the analysis of hegemony, but also to the critique of ideology, since it (1) records the perpetual fixations and the reversals of power relations, (2) reveals the contingency and contestability of power relations that appear universal (Owen, 1995), and thus (3) 'disturbs what was considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself' (Foucault, 1984b, p. 82).

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[58] We can find the first traces of genealogy as a method in Friedrich Nietzsche's work, for instance in his work On the Genealogy of Morals (1887), where Nietzsche's critique addresses the historicist understanding of the development of modern morality and proposes a methodology where the aim of investigation is not to search for the origins, but to investigate the succession of different meanings and the ways they are imposed through contingent power relations (the will to power).

Second, the idea of *mapping the dispositif* is rooted in anarchist approaches to ethnography (Graeber, 2004; Walker, 2012), which are concerned with the critique of all forms of domination, and the power structure of *dispositifs* – or what Rancière calls *the police*: 'the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution' (Rancière, 1999b, p. 28). Thus, I understand my ethnographic work as mapping the geometry of dispositifs through the long-term engagement with (and immersion in) their discursive landscapes. This 'immersion' involves an ethnographic *stance* against the boundaries in engagement, it 'leaves researchers appropriately vulnerable to the emotions and experiences of others,' wherein rather than '"objectivity" guaranteeing accurate research results, it is emotional subjectivity that makes for good research; without it, researchers may observe an event or elicit information, but will have little sense of its meaning or consequences' (Routledge, 2009, p. 81). Pauline Lipman (2005) also argues for an ethnographic approach that is combined with strong-minded political engagement, activism and the broadening of the scope of the research field from the school to its environment, and from the local context to the global dynamics of political economy, since 'we cannot fully analyze what is happening in schools and other educational sites without examining relationships to this broader context (…) with reference to global economic and political processes' (ibid., p. 319). The frame of mapping the dispositif, is also indirectly linked both to *institutional ethnography*, which seeks to connect everyday life with the institutional and political context (cf. D. E. Smith, 2005), and to *multi-sited*, comparative ethnography, which (drawing on Wallerstein's world-systems theory) advocates the extension of the national terrain to transnational ethnographic work, which is capable of enriching the analysis for contesting the capitalist world-system (cf. Marcus, 1995).

Third, the concept of ethnography as a *pedagogical praxis*, as developed recently by György Mészáros in his habilitation thesis (2015) and his book *Pedagogical Ethnography* (2017), is part of the attempts to broaden the field of educational ethnographies and establish a specific genre within it. While the traditional concept of educational ethnographies refers either to the specific field of research (the mapping of the empirical reality of schools, educational institutions, pedagogical practices, etc.), or to the research interest in the evaluation and development of pedagogical processes, Mészáros advocates the understanding of *pedagogical* as that which refers to the very nature of the research,

> that the research itself is a pedagogical process (pedagogical in both an epistemological and methodological sense), which means that the researcher is confronted with the inevitably pedagogical character of her presence, and that the research intentionally has developmental or transformative nature

during the ethnographic study on the field, and beyond the field, e.g., by publishing the ethnographic research (social impact) (Mészáros, 2015, p. 30, translation mine).

Mészáros places this ethnographic stance in the context of critical ethnography, critical pedagogy and Marxist theory, where the image of the ethnographer as a transformative *pedagogue* emerges, who is not only the chronicler of the analyzed realities, but stands in direct, reciprocal and dialogical contact with people in a Freirean sense. I assume that pedagogical ethnography is not necessarily a break with the school ethnographies of Spindler and Spindler (2000), or with the critical ethnographies of education by Paul Willis (1977) or Peter McLaren (1999), but a contribution to them with the aim to deepen the pedagogical character of ethnographic research. This pedagogical character is critical in the sense that it always looks for structural mechanisms of domination and for the ideological processes that mystify them. I frame my ethnographic research within this genre of critico-pedagogical ethnographies, understanding the research itself to be pedagogical by nature.

And fourth, since I understand critical pedagogy as the praxis of ideology criticism *par excellence* (what I will explain in detail later), which is a critique based on the discursive account of ideology, I place my ethnographic research in a specific – although not coherent or well-elaborated – field, best encapsulated by the notion of *therapeutic ethnography*. The first traces of this notion date back to George Spindler's concept of *cultural therapy* (drawing on his earlier experiences with Roger Harker). Norman Denzin (1997) also mentions, though marginally, that ethnography is more than capturing and recording lived relations and experience: 'ethnography is a moral, allegorical, and therapeutic project' (ibid., p. xiv). For him, however, this therapeutic character is closer to the recovery from a trauma. In this sense, ethnographic 'tales about personal loss, recovery, and the self writing its way out of a painful past, sharing experience so others can also move forward' (ibid., p. 202). Spindler, on the other hand, defines therapy as a cultural practice of bringing 'one's own culture in its manifold forms to a level of awareness that permits one to perceive it as a potential bias in social interaction and in the acquisition or transmission of skills and knowledge' (Spindler, 1999, p. 466). Spindler argues that cultural therapy helps us understand the relation of cultural positions by bringing them into active and reflective interaction. This practice becomes therapy, since 'immersion in one's own culture in the world we live in is a kind of illness' (Spindler, 1999, p. 466). While '[c]ulture simultaneously anchors and blinds us (…) leading us to assume that our own ways of being and behaving are the only right way' (Gay, 2002, p. 617), cultural therapy has the potential to show that 'cultural identity (for example) is not the finish line where all

inquiry stops, as if people were locked into fixed patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving determined by their identities, without the possibility of envisioning alternatives' (Hoffman, 1998, p. 331), and thus to save us from 'cultural blindness.' Educational ethnographies, based on the concept of cultural therapy, emphasize the importance of collaboration between teachers, researchers, students and other stakeholders, draw attention to the cultural biases of teachers and their impact on education, and propose ways to unravel these processes (Labatiuk, 2012). Francisco Silva Cavalcante used cultural therapy in his work with elementary school teachers in Brazil, who formed Circles of Literacies (Cavalcante, 2000), drawing on Freire's concept of culture circles. The purpose of Circles of Literacies was to create a safe environment for the participants of the research, which would encourage them to become 'conscious of their own cultural and historical conditioning. This consciousness leads to liberation from oppressive, dominating experiences, making them aware of their own cultural values and their tolerance for different lifestyles in others' (ibid., p. 1). Cavalcante argues that becoming aware of multiple possible ways to read the world (multiple literacies) is the precondition for changing how we write it; thus, it is an empowering tool for teachers to transform their practice and agency. Cavalcante understands the practice of cultural therapy as a contribution to 'the cure of mankind. (…) The *sine qua non* for the cure of wounds caused by racism, prejudice and intolerance is an understanding of the way language and culture exert a strong influence on the formation of the individual which we become' (ibid., p. 6). Another example for cultural therapy (although they don't refer to the research as therapy) is the ethnographic research of Norma Gonzalez et al. (1995), and their conceptualization of Latino households as rich in 'funds of knowledge,' which 'refers to those historically developed and accumulated strategies (skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household's functioning and well-being' (ibid., p. 446). Their basic motivation is to illuminate how working-class households are rich in resources that are meaningful for education, and to foster teachers' engagement in 'mining' these resources and organizing their teaching practice around them. Gonzalez et al. encouraged the teachers to form a community of learners, and to engage in household visits for 'identifying and documenting knowledge that exists in students' homes' (ibid., p. 444). These research visits were then discussed during 'after-school labs' in order to foster 'collaborative ethnographic reflection, [which] can engender pivotal and transformative shifts in teacher attitudes and behaviors and in relations between households and schools and between parents and teachers.' (ibidem.) Educational ethnographies, which draw on Spindler's concept of cultural therapy, are often participatory, look for indigenous knowledge, are contextual and consider research as a long-term, reciprocal and transformative praxis of co-

researchers, co-investigators. However, from an ideologico-critical perspective, the concept of cultural therapy is quite feeble. On the one hand, it is quite simplifying to reduce the therapeutic moment of ethnography to culture, as if it were the ultimate cure for the society's illness of 'cultural blindness.' Moreover, cultural therapy is at its very implicit core a liberal concept, since it emphasizes the 'rejoicing multiplicity of cultures' (multiculturalism), is unable to take any normative standpoint within this 'diversity of the ways of live,' besides the concept of 'blindness,' and forgets that the dominant hegemonic state of domination today (i.e., postmodern global capitalism) *is multicultural per se*. The very concept of cultural blindness (and cultural therapy) bypasses the innermost question of ideology criticism, namely whether seeing (knowing) something is sufficient for healing from blindness. What Spindler offers seems all too simplistic in this sense: '[t]he job of the cultural therapist is to discover what the subject does not know and what many or all of the people in a collegial or superior relationship do not know, (…) and then to help the subject to understand and reflect on these discoveries' (Spindler, 1999, p. 470). And although the ethnographic therapies of Cavalcante and Gonzalez have both been highly influential in framing my research, I attempt to release the concept of therapy from the captivity of culture and the comfort of ideologico-critical under-theorization, drawing on Wittgenstein and Lacan.

Since the thread of my research is the discursive account of ideology, I also understand therapy as a discursive concept in the first instance. And for this I find it reasonable to connect Spindler's concept of cultural blindness to Wittgenstein's concept of 'aspect-blindness,' especially because Wittgenstein in his later works started to understand his philosophy as *therapy*. While Wittgenstein kept a distance from psychoanalysis and Freudian theory, 'he was sufficiently intrigued by the analytic practice to speak of his own work later on as therapeutic in character (…) he even called himself "a disciple" and "a follower of Freud"' (Sluga, 2011, p. 7). And just as Freud, Wittgenstein was also approaching 'diseases' from a linguistic point of view (Guillot, 2001). Wittgenstein understood illness as a linguistic disease, referring to the capacity of language to enable the formation of illusions and perplexity. The general form of such linguistic disease is the lack of clarity. As Rasiński argues, such a linguistic disease 'occurs when a human being using language is not able to achieve what he or she would like to achieve. If language becomes alien to us, we are not able to express with it what we would like to express and, first of all, we are not able to express ourselves' (2014, pp. 428–429). Thus, for Wittgenstein, the therapeutic potential of philosophy is the clarification of language: releasing what has become puzzling in one's thought. As Peterman notes, 'in philosophical therapy, one engages in conversation with another person' with the goal of 'clarification, the presentation of

what [Wittgenstein] calls "perspicuous representations"' (1992, pp. 6–16), that is conducive to such an 'understanding which consists in "seeing connexions." (…) It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things' (Wittgenstein, 1986, §122). Thus, Wittgenstein has a positive notion of health that is connected to the clarity of thought and coming to terms with the world. And in this sense philosophy as a therapeutic practice is understood 'as a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' (Wittgenstein, 1986, §109), and what philosophers do 'is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' (ibid., §116). Philosophy can make us aware of the perplexity of our thought through discovering the constraining character of certain arrangement of words (puzzles of a picture), which can help us change the way we see pictures and recognize that there is not only one inevitable way to see things (Rasiński, 2018; Sparti, n.d.). And this is – as has already been mentioned in the previous chapter – what Wittgenstein calls the 'lighting up' of an aspect or 'aspect dawning' as opposed to 'aspect-blindness,' that is being captivated by one aspect of a picture, which 'is an inability to perceive a certain aspect, so that meaning is overlooked; while "continuous-seeing" can detect the stable element of a certain picture, along with an aspect that can be seen differently by the "lighting up" of the aspect' (Lemberger, 2017, p. 201). So the therapeutic goal for Wittgenstein is puzzling and re-arranging a picture – because 'problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known' (Wittgenstein, 1986, §109) – in order to lighten up its aspects. Consequently, in philosophical therapy 'one finds the right way to clarify what has become puzzling and thereby bring peace to one's thoughts,' that is a therapeutic way to 'confront a multiplicity of problems and attempt to resolve them by finding perspicuous representations of the problematic facts that bring philosophy peace and allow us to stop doing philosophy when we want' (Peterman, 1992, p. 24). And for such an enterprise, one doesn't need to provide new information or 'to hunt out *new* facts. (…) We want to *understand* something that is already in plain view. For *this* is what we seem in some sense not to understand' (Wittgenstein, 1986, §89). Take the example of the everyday use of language and grammar: 'Grammatical examples convey no information because they are (…) things which we "already know," but of which we cannot give an account. (…) [So that] a speaker of language knows many facts of language which, *in another sense*, that speaker does not know' (Aidun, 1982, p. 108). It is evident from Wittgenstein's style of reasoning, that Freud's unconscious is lurking behind these lines of thought, especially when he writes that '[s]omething that we know when no one asks us, but no longer know when we are supposed to give an account of it, is something that we need to *remind* ourselves of. (And it is obviously something of which for some reason it is difficult to remind oneself)'

(Wittgenstein, 1986, §89). And this Wittgensteinian scratch on the surface of the 'unknown knowns' is the innermost core of the Lacanian approach to therapy. Lacan, just like Wittgenstein, develops an anti-psychological, anti-cognitivist view to therapy, and they both argue that the primordial structuring principle of 'reality' is language, through which one not only experiences the world, but also 'alienates and represses this primal experience, the event (*tuche*) of which the psychic processes are at once the repetition and the loss' (Benvenuto, 2006, p. 99). But while Wittgenstein understands therapy as clarification, and as bringing one 'into agreement with the world' (Peterman, 1992, p. 12), Lacan is more radical, since therapy for him is a drastic confrontation with the constitutive void around which reality is structured by fantasy. It is as if it were Wittgenstein who is on the side of Zeuxis's all too realistic and captive painting of the grapes, whose intention is to show the picture as a picture, as a particular arrangement of its elements that appear for us as reality; while Lacan is closer to Parrhasios's illusory picture of the veil, since his intention is to traverse fantasy scenarios, which mask that the veil conceals a constitutive lack, a void (the Real). One could say, therefore, that for Lacan the therapeutic goal is not being cured by clarification and perspicuous representations, but confronting and coming to terms with that there is none, in order *to become ill with the raw Real*. What by Wittgenstein is considered as something we know, but which is quite difficult to remind ourselves of, is for Lacan the realm of the unknown knowns, or as Bruce Fink noted, 'the unsubjectified knowledge, the knowledge without a subject, that is found in the unconscious. (…) As Lacan (…) stated, "What is not known is organized like the framework of knowledge." (…) Interpretation aims to hit that gap in (…) knowledge' (2007, p. 77). For Lacan, therapy is dialogic and interpretive, but his aim is not simply to bring out what has been repressed, or to show the picture as a picture as Wittgenstein would have it. Rather, the therapeutic moment consists of 'hitting on' the Real, which leads to the *destitution* of the subject, which occurs because the Real itself, which resists any attempts for symbolization

> has been transformed: What was unconscious has not simply become conscious – it has been radically transmogrified. The analysand need not be able to consciously formulate exactly what it was that had been unconscious, or precisely what was said that made things change, but he knows that he is no longer the same as before (ibid., p. 78).

Thus, encountering the traumatic Real – 'the umbilical cord of the Symbolic' – has nothing to do with revealing a secret, or 'to hunt out new facts.' For Lacan, the goal of therapy is rather an act of 'hitting on' the inconsistencies, antagonisms, and fissures of the symbolic field, which is capable of radically restructuring the very coordinates of the subject. In this particular sense, Lacanian therapy is a praxis of intruding into fantasy that structures and holds

together – projects a fullness on – reality. So, the aim of Lacanian therapy 'is to deprive the subject of the very fundamental fantasy that regulates the universe of his (self-)experience' (Žižek, 2006a, pp. 53–54). The only possibility to 'encircle' the Real – to use Stavrakakis' notion – is through 'touching on' its presence as it subverts the symbolic field, and thus the therapeutic act itself becomes subversive and 'redefines the very contours of what is possible, (…) accomplishes what, within the given symbolic universe, appears to be "impossible", yet it changes its conditions so that it creates retroactively the conditions of its own possibility' (Žižek, 2000a, p. 121). In pedagogical terms, the therapeutic moment starts with confronting the Real as impossible, that the hegemonic symbolic field is inherently split and dislocated. Hence, the therapeutic intrusion or intervention into the symbolic field is a direct encounter with its constitutive impossibility – so that this 'act disturbs the underlying fantasy [i.e., traversing the fantasy],' which brings consistency to this field. In other words, a direct confrontation with that in every symbolic constellation the

> social edifice is an ultimately failed attempt to displace / obfuscate its constitutive antagonism (…); and an act disturbs the symbolic field into which it intervenes not out of nowhere, but precisely *from the standpoint of this inherent impossibility, stumbling block, which is its hidden, disavowed structuring principle*' (ibid., p. 125).

To translate it into pedagogical ethnographic work: the therapeutic act lies in the confrontation with the Real, *with the pedagogical aim to deprive the subject from ideological fantasies of fullness or of an ideal* (that structures reality in advance), by demystifying the fullness of this totality, pointing to the very fissures, cleavages, inconsistencies, contradictions and parallaxes inscribed in it, which all narrate its contingent and historical character, i.e., that the social edifice is inherently 'out of joint,' structured around an impenetrable lack. I assume that the dispositifs of advanced marginality are of prime interest for such a therapeutic ethnography, since they are oversaturated with ideological discourses, social symptoms, and also the murmur of the inconsistencies and fissures in their discursive landscapes is louder than anywhere else. This is partly a consequence of the hyperreal character of advanced marginality: it is a multi-sited copy and simulation of the hegemonic constellation of postmodern global capitalism, where both a copy of the Third World's vast shantytowns and a copy of the First World's shameful wealth are simultaneously present, often spatially next to each other. Hence the mapping of the meaningful totality, the discursive landscape of such a field is of utmost importance for a pedagogical ethnography that draws on the linguistic concept of therapy as developed by Lacanians. And, moreover, a pedagogical ethnography that draws on the Lacanian concept of therapy and directs its praxis toward such places of advanced marginality requires

also a redefined ethnographer position as well – *a subject, who is unashamed, brazen, annoying and meddlesome – a tickling object.* It doesn't mean that the Lacanian ethnographer is disrespectful and takes no ethical considerations into account. On the contrary, this standpoint is derivative precisely from the ethics of the Real. As Bruce Fink put it, in therapy 'what is considered to be of genuine importance is a secure, well-structured, protective relationship' (2007, p. 51) is radically transformed in Lacanian praxis, where 'the therapist sidesteps the patient's demands, frustrates them, and ultimately tries to direct the patient to something he or she never asked for' (Fink, 1997, p. 9). This ethnographer position should be infiltrated with extreme caution and thoughtfulness not to hurt anyone, but I argue that it is possible to be respectful and frustrating at the same time – *a precious stone in the shoe.*

6.6 Crossing the Threshold in the Margins

My ethnographic research is an attempt to map the discursive landscape of the dispositifs of advanced marginality (which is understood very broadly from utterances to material reality), which landscape inherently and immanently engulfs the Lacanian therapeutic motif. My engagement in the daily life of urban poverty and in the complex web of its apparatuses allowed me to capture how the meaningful field of advanced marginality is structured through its interdiscursive constellations. In the next part I'm going to discuss the ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted between 2016 and 2018 in Hungary, Poland and Romania. The problem, however, is that what I've discussed so far is *already* a part of the fieldwork. A few pages ago I argued, that what has been written so far is rooted deeply in my fieldwork, and there is an irreducible merger between the conceptual developments I tried to outline before and the actual fieldwork. Nonetheless, I installed (almost unintentionally) an abyss with the dissertation itself (and its two-dimensional form in an abstract sense) to the 'object' of the research, so that it assumes a certain linearity (also in terms of the 'order' of the pages) – from the epistemological, ontological and methodological considerations toward the analysis and discussion of the research material. The way the *form* of the dissertation cuts through the 'object' of the research reminds me Edwin A. Abbott's novel *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884). The story is placed in a two-dimensional world occupied by geometric figures: circles, triangles, squares, and polygons. These geometric figures have width and length, but no height, so what they effectively see is always a line, i.e., the side of other two-dimensional objects. The narrator is a two-dimensional square, called A Square. One day a three-dimensional object, A Sphere visits Flatland. As it hovers above it, A Square is unable to make sense of its existence. The only way A Sphere can 'appear' to A Square is floating through Flatland (ibid., p. 71):
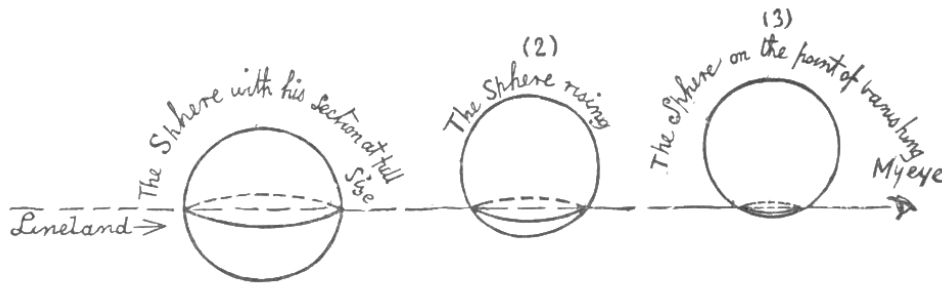
As A Sphere levitates up and down, the line that the Square sees extends, then shortens, then finally disappears in a dot. This is the only sense A Square can make of A Sphere, but it cannot make sense of the 'object' as such, since it cannot imagine 'height' (the third-dimension, which is also forbidden in the novel). In the same way, the 'object' of my research levitates through the pages of the dissertation, but it only leaves traces for us in the form of slices and lines, which doesn't make up the whole, it doesn't provide height. Introducing a linearity into the dissertation at least allows for comprehending that it is the same object, that is floated through it, but it doesn't allow for sensing the non-linearity of this object itself.

Speaking more practically: before considering seriously the possibility of a discursive account of ideology I was standing perplexed on a road that led to a Gypsy settlement in Poland, listening to an angry man from the neighborhood yelling at me: 'Air pollution!' Or, similarly, the concept of the 'dispositif of advanced marginality' didn't precede fieldwork, in fact it emerged initially from a late-night discussion with social workers, as we tried to sketch the map of institutional relations of the settlement.
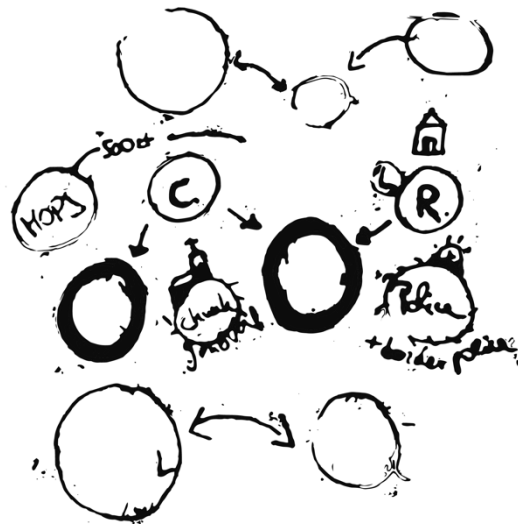
Of course, the dissertation is the space, where someone develops and elaborates such concepts, but it is not the *form* – at least as I understand it – which would allow for a continuous cross-referencing between conceptual developments and the fieldwork. The form of the dissertation allows for cutting through the 'object' and showing its slices as in Flatland. And,

moreover, even if the concepts I tried to elaborate previously are in a certain sense the 'outcomes' of the fieldwork, they were not intended to become the ends of the fieldwork at all, but the *means*, the analytical tools for revisiting and analyzing the fieldwork itself as it is captured and mapped in material data.

<p align="center">* * *</p>

The main title of the dissertation – 'Crossing the Threshold in the Margins' – refers simultaneously to multiple levels of its possible denotations and connotations. In its figurative meaning it addresses my attempt to arrive at the margins of the meaningful field, at certain limits, ideological parallaxes, and deadlocks of the discursive landscape. One could understand 'crossing the threshold' as overcoming or releasing certain limits of the meaningful field, but I understand it rather as continuously circulating around the impossibilities and irreducible parallaxes of the Symbolic order, penetrating into the fantasy scenarios of the Imaginary, and confronting the Lacanian Real, that is *inherent* to the Symbolic order as its 'umbilical cord.' However, there is also a literary meaning of 'Crossing the Threshold in the Margins,' that refers to the practical, material experience of doing the fieldwork: entering ghettos, slums, bungalows and institutions in the semiperipheral margins of the 'West,' in the margins of the society.

PART III

THE EMERGING EUROPEAN COMPLEX

This following, last part is the discussion and analysis of the ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted between 2016 and 2018 in Hungary, Poland and Romania. The basic thrust of the ethnographic research was to map the discursive landscapes of advanced marginality through hegemony analysis, focusing on the School as a privileged apparatus of the research, while taking the dominant modalities and strategies of the dispositifs into account. The research consisted of 7 months of fieldwork in Poland, 6 months of fieldwork in Hungary, 3 weeks of fieldwork in Romania; the research involved 22 institutions, including 4 schools; I organized a total of 20 working group meetings with the teachers in Hungary and Poland; and I produced approximately 700 pages of transcriptions of audio recordings and field notes, and approximately 300 photos. My daily practice consisted of working in places of urban poverty, talking to locals in the neighborhood, visiting nearby institutions (police stations, hospitals, churches, NGOs, social centers, etc.) and meeting with the teachers in the schools – in sum, listening closely to the interdiscourse. Since the research was a traumatic experience for me (in a therapeutic sense), the following part is often characterized by the intrusion of the affectual, that is always a representation of my anger, disillusionment, fury, and so on. The affectual doesn't appear directly, but evolves from time to time through minor analytical exaggerations and overstatements. It comes from reliving the 'doing' of ethnography in 'writing' the ethnography. Thus, considering certain themes it could seem like, that I'm taking the analysis to the extreme instead of insisting on a critical, but moderate tone that would illuminate the picture more comprehensively. I admit it, but I also assert, that it can be also a positive condition of the dissertation, as it 'moderately' incorporates the affectual aspect of the research in the analysis itself. Still, I want to emphasize, that the way I criticize the European predicament, the projects of the EU, the state institutions, the schools, the institutional actors and the teachers shouldn't be read as direct accusations levelled against concrete subjects, especially considering that I myself am an EU funded researcher. The critique of ideology always addresses structures, and structural relations without pointing to a particular actor or institution, that could be held responsible in itself. If there is a lesson of the discursive account of domination, then it is that the structures of domination have no exact source or origin, and I tried to take it very seriously in the analysis. Finally, this last part can be understood as a solid background of or a long 'prelude' to the concluding section of the dissertation (Tuché), which is the explication of a possible trajectory for the theorization of education and the educational. It will be an initial elaboration of a theoretical account of critical pedagogy, that I started to develop and come to terms with during the research, and which flows back to the conceptualization of ideology and to the critique of ideology.

7 THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

'Welcome to the Desert of the Real'

Words of consolation and humaneness are a remote murmur for the poor, who belong to a caste, just like four thousand years ago, although this is not mandatory today. Only general. Try – I was trying so naïvely during the transition – to tell the poor in Eastern Europe that it is 'democracy'. If you survive the beating, you will know what you deserve for rudely insulting the wretched. Our society tells the poor man such things: (…) If you want to do something, follow the rules of the game! Break the rules, stupid! If you break the rules, we'll lock you up. If you do not break them, you will starve to death. If you starve to death, then you were stupid. (…) Have fun! Do not have fun, work hard! Save your money! Do not save it, enjoy! If you want to break out of this shit, then learn! You are not allowed to learn, get money first! (…) Ask for help: you are a parasite! Do not ask for help: you cannot live with your opportunities! Migrate: you are homeless! Do not migrate: you are helpless! (…) Fill out the forms! Get the information on the Internet, stoop and nictitate around the clock, maybe something comes out! Fill the application form! Go to the office! Register! Rewrite it! Ask for a more favorable offer! Ask for a longer deadline! Ask for installment discount! Ask for equity! (…) Go to a course where you can learn how to make a good impression on the cadre, that is the HR-manager! Attend a course on tender writing! Go to the 'successful-job-interview' course! (…) But do not do one thing: never raise your voice!

<div align="right">Gáspár Miklós Tamás</div>

According to the European Commission's *Annual Accident Report* (2017), Romania had one of the highest road fatality rates in the European Union in 2017 (95 deaths per one million

inhabitants). In 2017, 21% of all inhabitants killed on roads were pedestrians and 55% of the accidents occurred on rural roads. During the summer of 2017, I was travelling with Polish social workers, driving on one of the most dangerous Romanian roads (DN1 – *Drumul Naţional 1*), which links Bucharest with the northeastern part of Romania and the southeastern part of Hungary. Since the road was upgraded at the end of 2005, the wider road and better-quality asphalt started to attract heavier (mostly truck) traffic, which became a new modality for transregional *biopolitics*. The road cuts through several small villages from Sibiu to Braşov, where despite the brand-new road signs and CCTV road-control system, the speed limit (50 km/h) has been arbitrarily exceeded by an average of 70 km/h all around the clock. During the busiest hours of the day, pedestrians very often have to queue up before crossing, trapped on a 1-meter-wide section of the road without any level of protection. When I asked Sabina, our host, about how this road affects her life, she told me that it is literally a 'road to hell' (*drumul spre iad*) – there are accidents almost every week and children are very often among the victims. As Irene, the headmaster of the local school told me: 'sometimes it takes five teachers to get the children to the other side safely.' But it is not only the biopolitics of the asphalt in the

Făgăraș region, in Brașov County, which bisects the village and Sabina's everyday life. A few years ago, she managed to buy a lot with her family close to the 'center' of the village and move out from the local, marginalized Gypsy area (*Ţigănie*), where approximately a hundred Romanian Roma (*Ţigani*) live in extreme poverty. Sabina has Romanian neighbors nowadays – whom she already knew, due to the size of the village (ca. 800 inhabitants) – but it makes a difference whether to try to live in the 'center' of the village or to try to survive in the marginalized area, even if the distance is only 1 km. One of Sabina's two closest neighbors is a multigenerational Romanian family, who invited our research team multiple times for dinner. They called me *gadjo dilo* (referring to the title of Tony Gatlif's 1997 movie, which means 'crazy non-Roma man' in the Romani language), because it was very strange for them that we stayed at Sabina's place. Bogdan, who married into the family from the neighboring village, asked me several times: 'You crazy? Do you want your kidney to be stolen?' Bogdan has been working in the UK as a dishwasher in a restaurant for several years, and he was pleased to spend time with our research team. He also became our interpreter from Romanian to English. Bogdan

and his family have a contradictory relation to both Sabina and the local marginalized Gypsy area. On the one hand, they call *Ţigani* people 'crows' (the archetype of the trickster, as opposed to *ţiganii de mătase*, or 'silk gypsies', who are more assimilated), but on the other hand they are very friendly and neighborly in their everyday encounters with Sabina's family. As they say, they believe, as Orthodox Christians, that every human being is equal to God. This ideological constellation is very similar to the parallax that I described earlier as the light of the Church and the shadow of the institutional exclusion in the cemetery. As Bogdan's mother in-law argued:

> [Gabriela]: We already knew Sabina before they moved here, they lived in the gypsy-land before. Incredible poverty there… and people has a fear. You never know when Gypsies are going to steal something from you… for hundred years they are stealing horses, and chicken, and money. They like to live like that… but we can't talk about these things when they are here, so please don't tell them, it could ruin our relation. You know, we are believers in God, we are modest people, we don't think that we are superior to anybody… Even if they do bad things, they don't do it to us. They [Sabina's family] are almost like relatives, if they need something they come here, if we need something, they can help.

Bogdan took my notebook at this point and started to explain the situation by drawing a map of the village (see the picture above, where I have projected Bogdan's drawing in red onto a simplified map of the village in black).

> [Bogdan]: When you enter the village, at the end of the village you will find brick houses of the Gypsies. So, they have like another village inside the village. But not in the middle. So, it's like this, let's say this is the village [starts drawing], and the street goes like this. And here, but this is the same village, you have the houses of gypsies. And you have a separation here [points to the dividing line]. But you can find Gypsies in the village as well, because if they have money, they can move in. The problem is that they don't have jobs, they say working is a disease. They have a saying: 'who works has no time to earn.' Because the salary is small, so if you don't work, you can do more. And they are very united as a minority.

It is interesting that Bogdan refers to *Ţigănie*, the Gypsy area, as a village within the village, while on his drawing it is clearly divided and forms a separate circle. Bogdan and his family are aware of the division, the ethnic segregation, and they also talk about racism in Romania and how big companies discriminate against minority groups. They think that Gypsies are the best labor force in the region ('If you want the work to be done, ask a Gypsy!') and they

are also angry that the local mayor doesn't provide work for the Gypsies, despite the fact that it would be his duty according to the labor code. Bogdan's father in-law, Nicolae, is a stove builder, and he told me that he actually refined his technique based on what he learned from the Gypsies during the 1980s. But at the very same time, they also think that the basic values of the *Ţigănie* are stealing, cheating, and that all of it is unfortunately 'in their blood.'

> [Bogdan]: They have other values, like how to cheat people, it is important for them to make money illegally. They trick people with selling fake items. I saw it in Sibiu. If they don't steal something they are not satisfied.

> [Nicolae]: This is in their blood unfortunately. You cannot change them. It is their traditional way of living. Maybe 1% of them, the silk gypsies. But we can't talk about these things if she [Sabina] is around…

Sabina, of course, knows these lines of argument, and she thinks that Bogdan and his family are hypocrites, but she doesn't want to ruin her relationship with them. Sabina, just like us, didn't really understand how one can stick to such inherently antagonistic articulations with intersecting discursive moments of hospitality *and* hostility, racism *and* religion, labor market exclusion *and* labor avoidance, etc. Especially considering that Sabina and her family – as a

'counter-example' – has moved almost at the doorstep of Bogdan's family. One would think that such an encounter is supposedly subversive *in potentia*. But this is where – from the ideologico-critical perspective – Spindler's cultural therapy is left without tools, since it cannot account for the positive, constitutive character of the materialized exception within an ideological constellation. The ideologico-critical twist is that racism has nothing to do with the Gypsies. As Žižek argues, regarding anti-Semitism,

> [t]he proper answer to anti-Semitism is (…) not 'Jews are really not like that' but 'the anti-Semitic idea of Jew has nothing to do with Jews; the ideological figure of a Jew is a way to stitch up the inconsistency of our own ideological system.' That is why we are also unable to shake so-called ideological prejudices by taking into account the pre-ideological level of everyday experience. (…) An ideology is really 'holding us' only when we do not feel any opposition between it and reality – that is, when the ideology succeeds in determining the mode of our everyday experience of reality itself. (…) *An ideology really succeeds when even the facts which at first sight contradict it start to function as arguments in its favou*r (1989, pp. 49–50 italics added).

This is then how ideology holds us captive, by incorporating the elements that contradict it into its innermost coordinate-system, in order to suture the inconsistencies of the hegemonic

discursive landscape, crisscrossed with antagonisms. This is how Sabina and her family are discursively constituted as cautiously reliable ('even if they do bad things, they don't do it to us'), distant 'relatives' ('they are not really one of us, but please don't tell them, it will just ruin our good relations') and the lazy, greedy seasonal workers ('they work, whenever there is something, now picking blueberries for instance and gardening, but still they prefer to make big money by cheating and selling fake items'). Of course, such an ideological constellation mystifies the historico-discursive domination of Gypsies, who were enslaved in Romania from the 14th century until the end of the 19th century. They were already slaves from the beginning of Ottoman domination, and at the time they reached Romanian land from medieval Bulgaria and Serbia, slavery was an already existing institution (e.g., Tatar slavery) throughout Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania.

As Viorel Achim (2004) argues, the newcomer Gypsies

> foreign to the local society in every respect and with a nomadic way of life, were assured the same regime as that of the Tatars. The role of the Gypsies in the history of slavery in Romania lies in the fact that due to the relatively large number of Gypsies settled in the Romanian lands in the fourteenth and fifteenth

centuries, slavery became a widespread phenomenon. The Gypsies managed to acquire the monopoly in this social institution, as by the second half of the fifteenth century they were the only slaves in the country (ibid., p. 29).

The laws for the emancipation of the Gypsies started to emerge only in the mid-19th century, which recognized them as Romanian peasants and enabled them to move. But as Achim shows, the 'laws of emancipation' only connected Gypsies to modern forms of exploitation – paying taxes, carrying out *corvee*, attaching them to institutions of control, etc. 'Paradoxically, (…) emancipation made their situation worse. (…) Their refusal to become ploughmen and their flight from the estates where they were settled actually amounted to a flight from the payment of tax and the carrying out of corvee labour' (ibid., p. 114). Five hundred years after their arrival in Romania, with a recent population estimated between 819,446 and 1,000,000 (Zamfir & Zamfir, 1993), their situation regarding their socio-economic condition, living standards, and educational status are still brutal symptoms of the structural and historical domination exercised on Gypsies. In Romania, 80% of the Gypsy population were at the risk of poverty, 48% were unemployed, 25% were illiterate and 93% lived on a

minimum income or less in 2010-11 (Breimo & Baciu, 2016). According to the *Roma Inclusion Index* (2015), the condition of Gypsy families in Romania is even worse in rural areas, where they are generally segregated from the village into a rural slum, disconnected both from social institutions and public utilities – gas networks cover only 17%, public water supply reaches only 28%, and the sewage system functions only in 17% of the Gypsy households. The houses are overcrowded (2-3 families living together) and are either crumbling or built of frames, clay, straw and sometimes also of simple trash. The Gypsy people are forced to improvise techniques of survival: assembling homemade cooking and heating stoves, collecting plastic waste and garbage for heating, organizing transportation into bigger cities amongst themselves and organizing local markets with the neighboring communities to exchange and sell their handcrafted products. Due to the high rate of illiteracy, Gypsy people often don't have identity documents, so they can't apply for social aid or the children's national allowance. Without papers and qualifications, most of the Gypsy people find labor only on the black market (cf. Dincă, 2016). This institutionalized exclusion concerns every social service and apparatus – healthcare, housing and education as well. Approximately 26.3% of the population above 40

and 20.9% under 40 are illiterate, which in some rural regions reaches even 70% (Millea, 2013). Gypsy children – if they gain access to schools – are very often funneled into special or segregated classes (cf. McDonald, 1999) and 40% of them drop out before the 8th grade. In 2014, only 10% of Gypsy children completed secondary education in Romania (Bojadjieva, 2015). The biggest problem that teachers face in such extremely marginalized instances of rural poverty is that Gypsy children do not attend school. In Sabina's village, both the teachers and the police officers visit families in the slum on a weekly basis, to convince parents to take their children to school.

> [Officer]: We go there all the time… we go especially there for control, we don't avoid it, no, no, no! We go there and convince them to take their children to school. So, we go with the teachers to the houses to convince the parents to let the child go to school. In wintertime we check, whether they have fire, whether we see smoke coming out from the chimney. Sometimes we check, whether they have food.
>
> [Me]: And how do the poor people react to the presence of the police? Aren't they afraid?
>
> [Officer]: No, no, come on! If they had problems, they would tell it. Why should you be afraid of the police?! Only those are afraid, who did something wrong!

The officer was right. Whenever I went to the marginalized area in the village, they

usually appeared with their distinctive lights turned on and either just passed through very slowly on the unmarked dirt road or arbitrarily stopped in front of houses, where the children were playing outside. The Gypsies were not afraid of the rural techniques of surveillance and control, it only frustrated them. The very same day I met the police officers, the director of the school, Irene, visited us at Sabina's place. The meeting with Irene was arranged by Bogdan's mother in-law, who worked in the school as a cleaner. Gabriela started to explain how the Gypsy parents should have an interest in sending their children to school and also how the school relies on the children of the Gypsy families:

> [Gabriela]: There is a law in Romania, that if you don't go to school, you don't get the payment from the state… like 42 lei [Romanian currency] or so. The Romanian 'alocație familială' [family allowance], the money that the government gives to each child after the child is born… but only if they go to school. But also, the teachers give them sandwiches and food, just so that they go to school, because if there are not enough children, the school has to be closed…
>
> [Irene, headmaster]: Firstly, we tried with the authorities from here to give them a meal. Second, we planned activities, using non-formal methods. We are 20 teachers, and we were interested to find out how

to use these non-formal methods, and the majority of the teachers are involved, the younger ones. But our salary is very low. I as a headmaster earn 800 euros here. And my teachers earn approximately 450. That's very bad. Bad, but we don't complain.

[Me]: So, you and the other teachers often go to that very poor area?

[Irene]: Yes of course! To bring them to school! Each class has a master teacher and that person goes to the slum for a little more than 50 lei, to ask them to come to school. But I also go, because I'm the bad one [laughs].

[Me]: And does it work?

[Irene]: No! [laughs] They say they'll come, but most often they don't. Teachers explain that children should come. But now we have no other tools to deal with it.

As Irene told me later, their aim is not simply to convince the parents that school is good for their children's prosperity, *since this is not true as such*. Their aim, rather, is to show how education can be 'meaningful' at least for the whole community. As Achim (2004) noted, the disinterest regarding education is not only based on the exclusive, segregating and often humiliating character of the School, but it is also connected to how the School appears as a

purposeless enterprise, at least for the Gypsy families. 'This is understandable in the conditions of Romania in the post-Communist transition (…) as there is no significant connection between the level of education, one's profession and one's income' (ibid., p. 206). As the 1992 study *Țiganii între Ignorare și Îngrijorare* [The Gypsies between Ignorance and Concern] argues, 'a *căldărar*[59] without any education earns more than a lathe operator; the same is true for the (…) huckster (*bișnițar*) in comparison with an engineer' (Zamfir & Zamfir, 1993, p. 120).

But even if such complex and extreme instances of institutional exclusion and marginalization appear to be a '*Gypsy issue*', it has to be emphasized that the '*Gypsification'* of social problems can be misleading and can contribute to reactionary politics. As Kitti Baracsi – who conducted ethnographic research in Hungary and Italy between 2011 and 2016 with the focus on how local actors and policy discourses constitute the 'Roma student' – argues that 'Roma education cannot be seen as the issue of Roma students and families: it is an issue of teachers, non-Roma students, families, NGOs, social services, etc.' (2016, pp. 92–93). What

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[59] *Lovari*, *căldărari*, and *ciurari* are ethnic groups of gypsies, belonging to "Vlach Gypsies" (*oláh cigányok, valasăski Cigáni*) characterized by a strong Romanian influence on their spoken language.

Baracsi outlines here is part of the recent attempt to 'de-ethnitize' social exclusion and domination, which is based on the acknowledgment that 'juxtaposing certain social problems with a certain ethnicity may reinforce the "othering" and patronization of the ethnic group in question' (Breimo & Baciu, 2016, p. 118). The socio-economic indicators of certain ethnic groups and explanatory data that I also presented above are of course important and valuable, especially considering how the exclusion and marginalization of Gypsy people in Romania is embedded in a wider European context, where – according to a report from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2016) – 80% of Roma are at risk of poverty (the EU average is 17%); '30% live in households with no tap water and 46% have no indoor toilet, shower or bathroom'; '30% of Roma children surveyed live in households where someone went to bed hungry at least once in the previous month'; '53% of young Roma children attend early childhood education, often less than half the proportion of children their age from the general population in the same country'; 'only 30% of the Roma surveyed are in paid work, compared with the average EU employment rate for 2015 of 70%' and '82% of Roma are unaware of organizations offering support to victims of discrimination' (ibid., pp. 5-42). As Michael
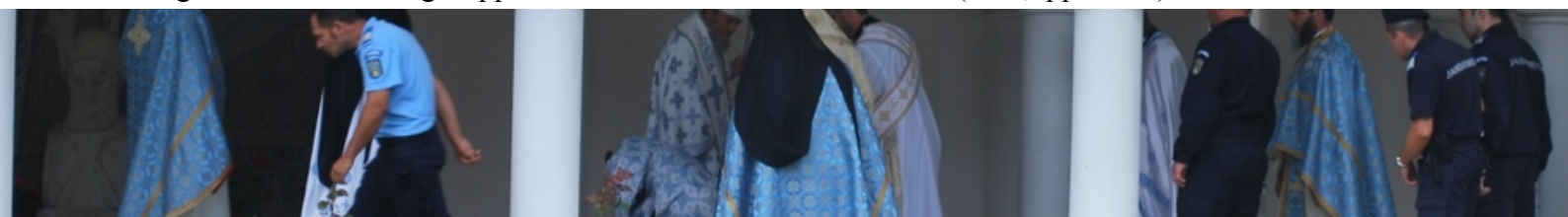
O'Flaherty, the director of the report summarized, '[t]he levels of deprivation, marginalization, and discrimination of Europe's largest minority is a grave failure of law and policy in the EU and its Member States.' Obviously, such detailed insights are largely valuable, however, they are also a part of the growing industry of 'Roma social policy and intervention', which – although it promotes the improvement of living conditions and social integration on the rhetorical level – often fails in practice and, moreover, leads to counterproductive outcomes by reproducing inequality and segregation. As Daniel Škobla and Richard Filčák have recently argued by analyzing the outcomes of EU funded projects in Slovakia, the 'Gypsification' of the socio-economic problems in local projects easily fell prey to ignorance toward structural, asymmetrical power relations, which ignorance is partly an explanation for their failure, that is 'caused by the power asymmetries' (Škobla & Filčák, 2016, p. 566). By analyzing the EU Roma Framework for national Roma integration strategies, Mihai Surdu and Martin Kovats argue in a similar fashion, that

> [t]he paradox of the Roma political project and its inclusion policies is that the more policymakers
> peddle inadequate interventions that target Roma as a particular, distinct and identifiable group, the more

they build up and cut off this group from normal politics and societal relationships. (…) The universally disappointing results of the OCSE Roma Action Plan, Decade of Roma Inclusion, EU Roma Framework, as well as of numerous national and non-governmental initiatives show that separate Roma policy has not improved outcomes for those under the Roma policy umbrella. (…) Without addressing the structural problems that cause poverty and exclusion, racism and discrimination, the politicisation of Roma identity must inevitably provoke political crises (2015, pp. 14–15).

Besides the need for the de-ethnitization of political projects and European policies, Melinda Dincă also addresses researchers and the academic environment as such 'to de-ethnitise the socio-economic issues that to this day have been insufficiently solved by merely defining *Roma identity* attributes' (2016, p. 7). Obviously, it doesn't mean the complete rejection of the category of 'race' as such – but it is an attempt to shift the focus from the particularization and racialization of socio-economic problems toward wider (global) mechanisms of power structures. Since the particularization and racialization of structural relations of domination is both the consequence and the condition of possibility of contemporary reactionary leftist projects, 'de-ethnitization' in this sense is also a critique of the

politics of recognition, and the liberal democratic imaginary in general. And while the discursive terrains of citizenship, human rights, multiculturalism, inclusion, democracy – as I've argued before – leave the very background (global capitalism) against which they thrive intact, they also inject failure into their own fields of struggle *in advance*. Alain Badiou (2005) argues especially in this sense that, 'the enemy today is not called Empire or Capital. It is called Democracy' (ibid., p. xxviii), which – as Žižek interprets it correctly – means that 'what prevents the radical questioning of capitalism itself is precisely [the] *belief in the democratic form of the struggle against capitalism*' (2006c, p. 320). A good example could be the contemporary European trend of 'giving voice' to the Roma people, which is promoted by international policy documents, research proposals and pilot projects. As Surdu and Kovats argue regarding the involvement of Roma representatives in policy-making processes, it is very problematic to

establish token Roma participation with only a few Roma (…) who lack the power to affect strategic political decisions, only to ratify them. (…) Merely replacing non-Roma with Roma in leadership positions in existing policy processes has little chance to substantively change the current situation insofar as the

causes of poverty and exclusion are structural and not related to the personal qualities (or lack of them) of those in management positions. Seen in this light, the advancement of Roma in leadership positions reduces pressure to tackle institutional mechanisms of exclusion and moves responsibility for the eventual failure of inclusion policies onto the Roma themselves (2015, pp. 14–15).

In sum, I assert that a radical emancipatory project on the Left has to reach well beyond the particularization and racialization of social problems and dig deeper than the attempts 'of giving voice to the "marginalized ones" (…) [which] does nothing more than reproduce the same powerful-powerless distinction' (Baracsi, 2016, p. 92). Consequently, from the ideologico-critical perspective one should refuse both the liberal sentimentalism for the 'excluded', and also the liberal contempt for racists, right-wing fundamentalists, etc., which to a large extent overdetermines the dominant interplay between the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real classes. From the point of view of a Žižekian class analysis, this means a strategic constellation nowadays, where 'the "politically correct" symbolic classes [are] defending the excluded [real class] against the "fundamentalist" middle class [imaginary class]' (Žižek, 2000c, p. 323). And although, as argued before, the choice between class politics and

postmodernism is a false choice, and any radical emancipatory project on the Left should embrace both, still it holds that from the ideologico-critical perspective

> while the liberal Left follows the logic of recognition of differences, of defusing antagonisms into coexisting differences (…) the conservative-populist grassroots campaigns took over the old leftist-radical stance of popular mobilization and struggle against upper-class exploitation. (…) [Thus] one should never forget that it is the populist fundamentalist, not the liberal, who is, in the long term, our ally. In all their anger, the populists are *not angry enough,* not radical enough to perceive the link between capitalism and the moral decay they deplore (Žižek, 2006b, p. 194).

Of course, it is not a political program in any sense for allying with right-wing fundamentalists, but a political modality for the practico-theoretical critique of ideology, with the dialectical-analytical thrust to locate a discursive practice, a phenomenon or a symptom in its totality. Returning to the articulations of Bogdan and his family regarding Gypsies and *Țigănie*, and considering how they discursively constitute the image of the 'crow' and of 'gypsy-land' – similar to what Leonardo Piasere (2006, 2008) describes in his recent genealogies as the constitution of the Roma settlements in Italy as imaginary places (*un luogo*

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immaginario) – of course, one can argue that such an ideological constellation mystifies the historical domination of Gypsies. But at the same time, it would be too simplistic to surrender to liberal contempt and analyze how such exemplary racist discourses maintain and reproduce domination (although, they obviously do). Because what if this ideologico-discursive constellation does remind us of something more and different than a particular-exemplary instance of racist articulations in rural areas? Isn't it also and *a fortiori* the transnational big capital, the (inter)national (financial) oligarchy and the opulent managers of global capitalism, *who live separated from the 'village'* but *in the 'village'*, *for whom 'working is a disease'*, *who are 'very united as a minority'*, *who 'have other values, like how to cheat people'*, *who 'make money illegally' and who 'trick people with selling fake items'*? This is precisely what Žižek means in the argument that the ideological projection (onto an imaginary figure or a master signifier) is 'a way to stitch up the inconsistency of our own ideological system' – in ideology,

class domination is displaced and 'misprojected' onto the imaginary entity of the Gypsy. And I assume that here even Laclau would agree that the distortion is constituted by the projection of the fullness of the social in a twisted way against the ideological figure of the Gypsy, who can incarnate the irreducible fissure in our reality. This is also how ideology functions as a fetish with the distinction between the 'revolutionary-antagonistic' (Symbolic) and the 'conservative-corporatist' (Imaginary) classes, well-exemplified by the two satellite vans that passed by Sabina's village one day. While the 'revolutionary-antagonistic' class propagates a non-ideological, objective approach to reveal that 'Gypsies are not like that' (*Informaţia la putere! – The power of information!*), the 'conservative-corporatist' class clings to fantasies and images (*Realitatea TV – Reality TV*) which display the social as a Whole that is disturbed by the 'enemies within' or out.[60] (However, they are both reactionary and conservative as they are both television viewers.)

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[60] Or as Žižek formulates this distinction in a different way, '[t]he first involves a false universality: the subject advocates freedom or equality, while being unaware of implicit qualifications which, in their very form, constrain its scope (the privileging of certain social strata…). The second involves a false identification of both the nature of the antagonism and the enemy: class struggle is displaced, for instance, onto the struggle against the Jews, so that popular rage at being exploited is redirected away from capitalist relations as such and onto the "Jewish plot." (…) [I]n the first case, the explicit "good" content (freedom/equality) covers up the implicit "bad" content (class and other privileges and exclusions), while in the second case, the explicit "bad" content (anti-Semitism) covers over the implicit "good" content (class struggle, hatred of exploitation)' (2009, pp. 66–67).

In sum, since I'm concerned with the ideological fantasies as part of a wider, meaningful totality, I want to avoid defining the discursive instances of domination of the Roma people, their culture, history, and customs as privileged points of rupture in the construction of the social state of domination. This does not mean that these features are not important. But, on the one hand, it is an attempt to de-ethnitise the socio-economic problems of poverty, exploitation and domination in general, and on the other to emphasize that this is not a research on/with/for the Roma in the first instance. The critical thrust of ideology as an analytical tool is to understand the processes of the mystification of domination, which reaches further than merely illuminating the imaginary construction of the Roma. Of course, it is not at all accidental that the Roma are overrepresented in urban and rural poverty especially in Central-Eastern Europe, and are a significant fraction of the (dormant) Real class, but from the ideologico-critical perspective the domination of 'Roma' is a *synecdoché*[61], denoting and referencing the ideological constellation of a broader hegemonic formation (bloc). When Bogdan constructs

fantasy-scenarios to displace class domination onto the trickster 'crows', he not only reproduces a racist discourse, but he also overlooks that, just like Sabina and just like almost all of the *Ţigănie* in the village, he is also one of the successors of the millions of Romanian workers who were betrayed by the restructuring of the Romanian economy after 1989 (between 1990 and 2002 more than 3.5 million jobs disappeared, and the employment ratio dropped by 44%) and who left the country afterwards to make a living abroad (Dumitru, Cosmin, Constantinescu, & Ciobanu, 2004). Especially after the EU accession in 2007, and the financial crisis in 2008, the participation of Romania in – what Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown and David Ashton (2011) call – the '*global auction*' of labor became one of the highest in the EU. According to a recent World Bank report (2018), more than 2.65 million working-age Romanians lived and worked abroad legally or illegally in 2017-18 (ca. 20.6% of the population). Bogdan has been working abroad for almost seven years. He visits his family every summer and brings the money that he could save in London, where he also experienced institutional discrimination:

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[61] It does not mean to reduce and suppress the suffering of the Roma in the background by transposing it into a literary form. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, '[s]ynonymy, metonymy, metaphor are not forms of thought that add a second sense to a primary, constitutive literality of social relations; instead, they are part of the primary terrain itself in which the social is constituted' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 110).

> [Bogdan]: I had the examination in dining, but the examiner was a total racist. Generalizing all the time about Romanians. You know… it was very hard to get a job in London…

What Bogdan overlooks, again, is that with the racist fantasy-scenarios he effectively displaces those structures of power in which both his and many Gypsy families' predicament in Braşov County is rooted. Twenty-seven years after the transition, due to the privatization and closing down of factories and moving industrial production close to big cities, the intensification of global auction has been affecting the everyday life of the whole village to a great extent. As Irene, the headmaster of the school argued, the huge participation in the global auction of labor makes the teachers' work very complicated when it comes to those families who take their children abroad:

> [Irene]: We have total of two hundred pupils, but there are now only around a hundred and forty, because they migrate. They often go abroad, and come back only in January, so we have a difficult situation.
>
> [Me]: Do they go to school abroad?
>
> [Irene]: Well, yes, but usually it is not official education, more like NGOs…

Sabina is one of the few thousand Gypsies from the region who travel regularly to Poland

in order to support their family with the money that they can collect abroad. In their case, the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the internal market of the EU mutates into *the free movement of a cheap labor force and dispossession, as a part of the democratization and Europeanization of poverty in general.* During the time that we had spent at Sabina's place, her son Mihai came back unexpectedly from Bonn, Germany, where he was selling his labor to the biggest Haribo factory in the country, which had recently come under fire when a German television documentary, *The Haribo Check* (2017), alleged that Brazilian workers were producing a key ingredient of the gummy bears in conditions that resembled modern-day slavery on the plantations – they worked for $12 a day, without access to water, toilets and proper accommodations. Mihai brought two cartons of the colorful gummy bears for the family and a dozen 'fidget spinners', the trendiest toy that year (see picture above). Two spectacular commodities: the materialized forms of a single and unique purpose – inscribed in their 'metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties' – to provide the childish imaginary of Western prosperity, hope, progress and salvation. While Sabina was crying bitterly, holding her son again in her hands after five months, her grandchildren were already easing their hunger

with Haribo's 'carnauba wax bears'. Confronted with such a complex snapshot of the global hunt for the logic of Capital with all its inconsistencies, I just couldn't get the Haribo theme song and slogan out of my head, which had been ingrained so deeply into my mind as a child during the 1989 transitions: '*Haribo macht Kinder froh – und Erwachsene ebenso*' ('Haribo makes children happy – and adults as well'). If one reads this slogan against the background of the images of poverty, the global auction of the labor force, the structural torture of the poor and modern-day slavery, then doesn't it immediately give the impression of a cruel cynicism (*Haribo macht froh!*), analytically similar to the inscription (*Arbeit macht frei!*) above the entrance of Auschwitz? Isn't there an ideologico-critical similarity between how the capitalist 'end of history' (there is no alternative) *is* carried out, like 'the "final solution" was carried out as a gigantic joke, which submitted victims to a supplementary act of gratuitous, cruel and ironic humiliation' (Žižek, 2002a, p. 63)? Regarding this pure banality of Nazism (cf. Arendt, 1965), one shouldn't forget to add to it the cruel cynicism through which it operated, i.e.,

> the *brutal 'sadistic' aspect of humor itself*: humor can be extremely cruel and denigrating. (…) [T]he infamous 'Arbeit macht frei!' over the gates of Auschwitz is no argument against the dignity of work. Work truly makes us free, as Hegel put it in the famous passage of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* on Master and Servant; what the Nazis did with the motto at the gates of Auschwitz is simply an act of cruel mockery analogous to raping someone while wearing a T-shirt saying 'Sex brings pleasure!' (Žižek, 2008, pp. 341–432)

The logic of Capital submits its victims to sadistic jokes in the same manner, which – viewed from the point of view of sheer poverty – is violence *per se*. There is an obscene *jouissance* in Haribo: a colorful and childish commodity, which promises happiness *and* contains exploitation of labor on a global scale, modern slavery, harm to health and the brutal degradation of the environment among its ingredients. But this 'sadistic' aspect of humor is characteristic to capitalism in general, from Coca-Cola's 'Open happiness!' to Tesco's 'Every little helps'. If one reads these slogans against the background of poverty, then the words of Hungarian Marxist philosopher Gáspár Miklós Tamás seem appropriate for illuminating this parallax, in which 'poverty throws the poor people in at the deep end of macroeconomics' (Tamás, 2008b).

7.1 The Political Economy of the [Semi]Periphery

When the spectacular commodity of a gummy bear plays about the *jouissance* (enjoyment) of the poor, then one really has to stick her nose into the global politico-economic logic of the capitalist world-system. Especially when it comes to the post-socialist semi-

peripheral and peripheral countries in Central-Eastern and Eastern Europe, and the mechanisms that were conducive to the restructuring and reengineering of the Soviet bloc after the Cold War. In Romania, with the 'revolution' in 1989 and the execution of Nicolae Ceauşescu and his wife Elena, a forty-two-year-long period of 'communist' rule ended. Since 1990, a comprehensive reengineering of the political economy has been on the governmental agenda, which started with a general collapse in production, the disintegration of command economy, the liberalization of the market, privatization, inflation, rising unemployment and the opening up to the flows of international Capital:

> The dominating clamor during the first decade was to 'return to the West' and the popular pressure for opening was enormous. Romanians did not substantially question or debate the nature or the variations of the Western model. There was a widespread consensus that it should include a multi-party democracy and a market economy. The term 'capitalism' was seldom used, and the variations of capitalism even less debated (Daianu & Murgesc, 2013, pp. 8–9)

While the National Salvation Front (*Frontul Salvării Naționale*), which took power after 1989, and also its opposition, Group for Social Dialogue (*Grupul pentru Dialog Social*), celebrated the empty signifiers of 'Westernization', 'return to Europe' and the 'market economy', the public discourse was thrilled with the imagination of a 'third way' political economy. The *Timişoara Proclamation* is exemplary in this sense, since it promoted a form of reform socialism. While the Proclamation endorsed the 'Westernization' discourse, it 'nevertheless cautioned that "[we] do not wish to copy Western capitalist societies, which have their own deficiencies and injustices"' (Ban, 2014, p. 8; cf. Ban & Tamames, 2015). But despite the workers' and trade unions' expectations, the political agenda had been set by the national – political and technocratic – elite, who promoted the comprehensive liberation of the market economy in cooperation with transnational agents: 'fellowships and visists funded by Western governments and foundations (…) facilitated the diffusion of liberal democracy in the same package with a neoliberal ideology purged of its meritocratic pretenses and laced with the conservative elitism' (Ban, 2014, p. 15). But while Romania was in a relatively good economic situation (it had a large labor force and Europe's fourth biggest rail network, and had no foreign debt, while other countries owed Romania nearly 9 billion dollars, which was ten times more than Romania's external financing needs in 1990), still, Romania found itself very soon on the political and economic garbage dump of the 'old continent'. The adoption of the neoliberal agenda led to growing inequalities and exclusion, and placed Romania in an inferior position in the global market. As Florin Poenaru argued in *Krytyka Polityczna* (2016), when the

Romanian Minister of Finance told reporters in an off-the-record meeting that Romanian workers should take a cue from workers in Brazil or India who are ready to work for pennies, the Minister expressed what critical thinkers and academics have been saying for years: Central and Eastern Europe is for European capitalism what the global South is for global capitalism – a reservoir of cheap and flexible labour.

Today Romania is one of the poorest countries among the EU-28, with the largest working population *that lives in poverty despite having a job*. And contrary to the 'methodological nationalism' of explanations, which allege against the failures of Romanian politics, 'such developments were not pathologies of the Romanian political economy but general trends in countries once advertised as textbook success stories for neoliberal development' (Ban, 2016, p. 647). Moreover, the Romanian post-socialist predicament is only one instance of the historical interplay between the 'glorious West' and the gloomy semi-periphery after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. As I've recently argued in the article, *We should've made a revolution* (2018, pp. 465–481), co-authored with György Mészáros and András Marton, from the perspective of American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis[62], the 1989 'transitions' were a part of the re-integration of former socialist countries into an inferior position in the world system. Wallerstein (1983) argues that the socialist countries had already much in common with the capitalist world-system before 1989 – for example, the belief in the linear progress of economic growth and development – and they were already part of the capitalist world-system even before the transitions. From this point of view the 'really-existing' socialism was a *form of totalitarian state capitalism* and had many common features with the capitalist world-system, since it was also based on 'commodity production, wage work, social division of labor, labor subjected to capital, the imperative of accumulation, class exploitation, class rule, conformity forced upon people, hierarchy and inequality, the total suppression of all sorts of workers resistance, (…) [t]he only missing element was market coordination, which was replaced with central planning [cf. planned economy]' (Tamás, 2008a, p. 8). Wallerstein also argues that, while Western conservatives celebrated the 'watershed' of the transitions from 1989 to 1990, it was actually a terrible challenge for the capitalist world-system. The socialist leaderships reassured people's faith in development and progress, and thus functioned as a 'stabilizing power because they sat on the adventurous leftism of the masses. Now when you remove these people from power, what you

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[62] Wallerstein's (1974, 1980) world-systems analysis is a geopolitical approach that assumes that every country operates to maximize profits, determined by the logic of accumulation of capital. This global framework refers to the transnational division of labor, which divides the world into core, semi-peripheral and peripheral countries, and outlines a series of power relations.

eliminate is the control that was sitting on the disgruntled masses on behalf of the capitalist system' (Wallerstein & Dunaway, 1999, p. 297).

Despite the interpretations that hold that Central-East European transitions were built exclusively from the outside, through the multinational influx of capital and knowledge, the history of the transitions was not written solely by either the nations on the semi-periphery or the core authorities, but by the interplay between them. The transitions were based on top-down processes on a national scale, conducted by the national-political elite and the technocracy, who successfully aligned with the North Atlantic vision of global neoliberal capitalism even before 1989 (Szigeti, 2010), exploiting the belief that the 'experts' can 'pursue "development" more effectively than the indigenous bourgeoisie' (Wallerstein, 1976, p. 478). Johanna Bockman and Gil Eyal (2002) argue that the roots of the transition into global neoliberal capitalism were composed in a transnational dialogue among the West- and East-European elite as early as the years of the Cold War. The political leaders of the transitions were thus already prepared – with the help of international economic-political backup – to convert their political, economic and cultural capital into global, international capital, and to push through the reforms necessary for this process (Bozóki and Szalai, 2010).

> The overnight implementation of neoliberal stabilization and liberalization policies in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the Soviet Union during 1989–91 was thus not simply a ceremonial bow to the orthodox Western doctrine (…) but was interpreted by East European economic transformers… (Bockman & Eyal, 2002, p. 342).

Thus, Bockman and Eyal understand post-socialist neoliberalization as a process of translation based on transnational dialogue between Western- and East European economic theorists, decision-makers and advisors. This interplay between the core authorities and the semi-periphery was also determined by the termination of the dual structure of the external dependency of the former socialist semi-peripheral countries: political dependence on the Soviet imperial center and economic dependence on the Western core countries (Böröcz, 1992). In the subsequent years after the transition, the core countries, including those from the European Union, aimed to extend their economic influence by integrating new states into a global hegemonic project, with its ambivalent system of governance: Western 'governmentality' characterized by an outright postcolonial posture. As József Böröcz (2001) argues, Eastern enlargement as a geopolitical process of the European Union is inseparable from the imperial and colonial past of the EU's core countries. This imperial-colonial past is one of the foundations of these countries' privileged position in the capitalist world-system. It is impossible for the (semi-)periphery to take a share in the benefits of this historical-economic

core position typical for core countries (that is, one fundamentally based on unequal exchange). Prosperity, power, and centrality connected to it are admittedly attractive for the semi-peripheral countries; however, these countries' catching-up narratives constitute and result from an imitative model of development, which presents 'modernization' as a shared interest. In it, however,

> the foreigner of the contiguous peripheries embodies an underdeveloped state of the center's past, and is therefore necessarily inferior. (…) These cultural prejudices regarding 'Eastern Europeans' almost never face any kind of opposition. These colonial cognitive patterns paradoxically can, to a certain extent, operate so smoothly due to the lack of a colonial past in these countries' (Böröcz, 2001, p. 35-40).

Thus, it is no surprise that the post-socialist countries have willingly and successfully aligned with the culture of global capital. Deregulation, privatization, monetarism, and new individualism became parts of the political-economic agendas, planting a specific neoliberal climate in an already particular post-socialist, semi-peripheral context. This climate was characterized by the *promises of upward mobility*, and mobility toward the core from the periphery, that Bakic-Hayden (1995) calls 'nesting orientalism'. Western values became equivalent with *improvement* and the Eastern context with *decline* (Gagyi, 2013). As Wallerstein put it, '[u]nder pressure from core states and putting pressure on peripheral states, their [the semi-peripheral countries'] major concern is to keep themselves from slipping into the periphery and to do what they can to advance themselves toward the core' (Wallerstein, 2006: 29).

In sum, the political-economic transitions were in no sense 'revolutions', but the reengineering and replacement of *dictatorial/totalitarian state capitalism* (inappropriately called socialism or communism) with neoliberal global capitalism (Ferge, 2010; Tamás, 2008a). And just as 1968 was a symbolic beginning of the disillusionment with the Old Left and 1989 was a 'culmination of that disillusionment' (Wallerstein & Dunaway, 1999, p. 297), the illusions of the revolutionary potential of 1989 also quickly vanished. In Hungary, for instance, only 14% of the population said that their lives became easier after the transition, only 26% of the population disagreed that the expansion of the EU is due to get control over markets and 66% of the sample thought that the EU is actually colonizing Hungary (Vásárhelyi, 2005). But expectations regarding the transitions were naïve in all post-socialist countries. Václav Havel, the first president of the Czech Republic (1993–2003) after the Czech–Slovak split, wrote that the entire second world 'exploded at the turn of the 1980s and fell of its own weight in a wild and material collapse' (Václav Havel as cited by Kotasek, 1993, p. 475). But in 1989 there was hope that 'everything will be better', even if the possible outcomes were not

completely unknown. The potential social-economic collapse was not a secret, international experts had predicted the evaporation of millions of jobs, the collapse of industry and agriculture, the polarization of society, etc. But the official communication was that after the transition everything would be better, and the intelligentsia gave the public very limited information about the estimations, since the question of which economic-political system to choose had already been made. For the elite, the obvious choice was a *neoliberal turn*. But a huge fraction of the working class in Hungary, Poland and Romania actually wanted democratic socialism without the communists (Vásárhelyi, 2005), and even before the transitions, '[t]hroughout the 1980s, Eastern Europeans sought to realize non-state socialisms' (Bockman, 2012). However, in 1989, the pre-neoliberal foundations of capitalist, bureaucratic, bourgeois 'democracies' had been established in post-socialist countries (Bartha, 2011; Éber et al., 2014; Gille, 2010; Krausz, 2010). The European integration in this sense can be understood as the successor and hence the new cradle by which *neoliberal hegemony became stable in the region* (Böröcz, 2012; Mikecz, 2010), with the political program (an abstraction-based 'mathematical fiction' deprived of any social and historical reference to its own condition of possibility) 'for destroying collective structures which may impede the pure market logic' (Bourdieu, 1998).[v]

Contrary to the traditional critique of neoliberalism, according to which the managers of global capitalism promote the deregulation and the radical reduction of market restrictions by continuously diminishing state interventions (i.e., fostering the withdrawal of the state), in practice, neoliberalization relies rather heavily on strong state apparatuses that provide the institutional framework for protectionism, property rights, monopolization, the deregulation of the market and, most importantly, for the discipline and punishment of the marginalized masses. And this is where Wacquant's proposal for a *via media* between the Marxist critique of the political economy and the Foucauldian critique of the neoliberal state and its apparatuses is of utmost importance. The neoliberalization of post-socialist, semi-peripheral countries, and the emergence of the Central-Eastern European *Centaur states*

> cannot be understood outside of a broader pattern of penalisation of poverty designed to manage the effects of neoliberal policies at the lower end of the social structure of advanced societies. Social deregulation, the rise of precarious wage work (against a backdrop of continued mass unemployment in Europe […]) and the return of an old-style punitive state go hand in hand: the 'invisible hand' of the casualised labour market finds its institutional complement and counterpart in the 'iron fist' of the state which is being redeployed so as to check the disorders generated by the diffusion of social insecurity (Wacquant, 2001, pp. 401–402).

Hence, the rapid neoliberalization of semi-peripheral countries after 1989 resulted not in the withdrawal but in *a specific reengineering of the state and its apparatuses* (from welfare to workfare and prisonfare), by strengthening its punitive 'iron fist' in order to protect the new hegemonic regime of capitalism and also 'to curb the social turmoil generated at the foot of the urban order by the public policies of market deregulation and social welfare retrenchment that are core building blocks of neoliberalism' (Wacquant, 2010b, p. 210). Johanna Bockman (2012) argues in a similar fashion, along with Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore (2012), that neoliberal discourse is not merely the ideological mask of capitalist exploitation, but the very way the relations of production are organized and engineered through new and localized forms of governmentality, in which 'the geographies of state institutions and policies are closely intertwined with evolving processes of uneven development: states provide a relatively stable regulatory landscape within which capital's locational dynamics are articulated' (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 356). Although the ideological fantasies inscribed in Western ideals of progress, hope and salvation provided the opiatic illusions for post-socialist, semi-peripheral narratives of 'catching-up' after 1989, these illusions quickly turned into disillusionment, which urged the reengineering of the state towards establishing the new punitive regimes for governing the victims of neoliberal capitalism, those deprived of any constitutive fantasies about progress, development or modernization.

According to a comparative study led by Iván Szelényi between 2000 and 2001, which focused on poverty and ethnicity in six post-socialist countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovakia), the production and development of a new type of poverty, i.e., the extension of an underclass (the wretched, the hopeless and the wasted) was characteristic to the decade after 1989 in all the studied countries (cf. Czismady, 2003). Women, ethnic minorities[63], and poorly educated people were overrepresented in the emerging underclass, which stood *in-itself* (*an Sich*) as a direct threat against the background of neoliberalization in

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[63] Iván Szelényi argues that Gypsies themselves constitute a large fraction of the new underclass in Eastern Europe. He asserts that post-socialism 'generated a qualitatively different experience in the life of Roma. Gypsies, of course, were always poor, but they may now have constituted an "underclass" with the fall of communism. To formulate this theoretically: during pre-socialist times, Gypsies constituted a pariah caste, or an under-caste. They were discriminated against, they were poor, but they lived in quite traditional communities and performed socio-economic functions, which were not well rewarded, but were seen as necessary. Socialism – to put it as simply as one can – proletarianized this pariah caste, included them in society, but slotted them into the very bottom of the social hierarchy. Discrimination persisted (though, given the official anti-racism of the communist regimes, was suppressed into a collective subconscious) and Gypsies had to perform the physically most demanding, dirty, unskilled manual tasks. They were, however, an integral part of society. During the post-communist transformation, the bottom fell out beneath the Roma. They are not in society anymore. The ethnic majority sees the Roma as a nuisance, as a group, which could be disposed of. They are not simply poor. Society sees them as "useless" – for the first time they constitute an underclass' (Szelényi, 2001, p. 60, translation mine).

the gloomy semi-periphery. According to the study, people experienced a lower extent of deprivation and poverty during socialism, and '[w]ithout exception, interviewees in all countries remembered that they had a better life in 1988 than in 2000' (ibid., p. 5). And in fact, semi-peripheral 'socialist' states as compared to capitalist states had higher social expenditures and better indicators regarding health, education and pensions (Éber, 2018b), and the effects of rapid neoliberalization after 1989 were drastic and traumatic not only for the underclass (the Real class), but for fractions of the working class as well. As Göran Therborn (2016) notes,

> the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, the former Soviet Union, caused four million extra deaths in the course of the 1990s, and that was an effect of unemployment, impoverishment, humiliations, loss of sense of life, and the collapse of the healthcare system (ibid., p. 118).

The consequences of the transitions were catastrophic for many, 'each and every one of the post-socialist societies has undergone a decay greater than war damage' (cf. Böröcz, 2016) and almost three decades after 1989 the seismic shock that the social has undergone is still active in the rearrangement of the discursive landscapes of Central-Eastern Europe.

7.2 The European Complex

The transitions not only redrew the politico-economic landscape of Europe and laid the foundations for the post-colonial, geopolitical process of 'Eastern enlargement' by which the core countries of the European Union could reengineer the multidimensional system of dependency with their semiperipheral economic hinterland. The transitions also repositioned the ideologico-discursive landscapes according to the emergence of the new hegemonic bloc. As Böröcz (2001) relentlessly argues,

> one of the most difficult PR tasks of the EU elites nowadays is to plant the belief into the public opinion, that it would be useful, proper, worthy, advisable or even possible to share the fruits of the prosperity, power, centrality and privilege – the structural benefits of the imperial-colonial past – with some of the societies of the Eastern and Central-Eastern parts of the continent, which are perhaps considered as Europeans, but were not allied with the morally superior, 'good' and 'winner' team of the Cold War, and whose Europeanness – largely because of the lack of their colonial past – was only a partly accepted fact even before (ibid., p. 30).

The ideologico-discursive construction of 'Europe' is thus structured both by a synecdoché, i.e., 'the continent is equal to the European Union and the "rest" can be forgotten' (ibid., p. 26), and by the comprehensive allegory which represents desirable Western ideals and identities, shaped by progress, hope and modernization. This fantasy scenario is effective in mystifying and distorting the fallibility, the uncompletedness and the 'real' social predicament

of Western 'democracies' (cf. Éber, 2018b). Dipesh Chakrabarty, historian and postcolonial theorist, addresses precisely this European fantasy scenario when he argues that 'Europe' is a hyperreal construction in the Baudrillardian sense, as 'a product of both the imperialist imagination of "civilizing mission" and nationalist dreams of modernization' (2008, p. 86), an imaginary entity 'reified and celebrated in the phenomenal world of everyday relationships of power as the scene of the birth of the modern' (2000, pp. 26–27). This hyperreal construct not only mystifies the constitutively inferior character of the semi-peripheral countries exposed to never-ending 'catching-up' attempts with the hyperreal 'Europe', but also distorts the Western core's involvement in undermining this hyperreal construct – it mystifies the 'post-political Europe of accommodation to the world market, the Europe which was repeatedly rejected at referendums, the Brussels technocratic-expert Europe' (Žižek, 2010, p. 86). The hyperreal imaginary is, however, continuously undermined by the decline of nation states, competitive austerity, recession in member states, alienation of non-Eurozone countries, growing inequality, declining hope, misanthropy and xenophobia.

The imaginary construct of 'Europe' is even more threatened when it comes to the question of democracy. Žižek argues that while people don't believe in democracy anymore, they still act as if it worked: 'we are facing the shameless cynicism of the existing global order whose agents *only imagine that they believe in their ideas of democracy, human rights, etc.*' (Žižek, 2011a, p. 410). Yannis Varoufakis, founder of the DiEM25 movement, went so far as to say in a debate with Noam Chomsky in April 2016, that '[t]he European Union doesn't suffer – or the Eurogroup – from a democratic deficit. It's like saying that we are on the moon and there is an oxygen deficit.' Moreover, the dispersion of post-fascist, far-right, neoconservative authoritarian discourses (frequently articulated by figures like Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, Donald Trump, Viktor Orbán, Jarosław Kaczyński, etc.) are having horrifying success in rearticulating the discursive landscapes in the new hegemonic historical bloc. The fantasy scenario of 'Europe', that seemed to represent a temporary fixity of democratic and liberal values, is being subverted. Thus, I propose that Chakrabarty's concept of a hyperreal 'Europe' no longer holds, the constitutive dream of the 'European Disneyland of Democracy' is *passé*, and especially after the financial crisis in 2008, I argue, the fantasy-scenario of 'Europe' emerges as a '*complex*' both in the sense of a composite network of its diverse interconnected parts, and also – *a fortiori* – in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms. As Lacan argues, the *complex* consists of

> images with which the subject identifies one after the other in order to act out, as sole actor, the drama of their [the images'] conflicts. (…) It is a commedia dell'arte in the sense that it is performed in accordance

with a typical framework and traditional roles. One can recognize in it the very characters that have typified folklore, stories, and theater for children and adults – the ogre, the bogeyman, the miser, and the noble father – that complexes express in more scholarly terms (1966/2006, p. 90).

The *emerging European complex* is largely effective in supporting semi-peripheral fantasies, with its composite network of conflictual images. One kind of imaginary relation between the Western core and the post-socialist semi-peripheries is portrayed by Böröcz as a folklore, where the European Union acts 'like an exhausted, but persistent schoolmaster, who steadfastly tries to make real men out of the naughty children' (Böröcz, 2001, p. 38). Such imageries become a *complex*, when the subjects identify with them and act out their drama and conflict (i.e., the conflict that is inscribed in the imagery) on an everyday level. So, against the static, strong, non-conflictual, glorified image of a hyperreal 'Europe', today the ideological mystification does not consist anymore of concealing social struggles – on the contrary, *the ideological mystification is effective in shaping and portraying the European* commedia dell'arte *of conflicts, thus providing the political coordinates (the frameworks and roles) for a semi-peripheral theater*. Drawing on the Lacanian triad, the European complex has a Symbolic and an Imaginary register, that is cut through by the Real.

On the Symbolic level (revolutionary-antagonistic imagery), as I argued in the previous chapter, one can observe the proliferating multiplicity of struggles and new antagonisms, which goes hand-in-hand with the disavowal of class politics. As David Ost argues (2015a), it is especially the case in post-socialist, semi-peripheral countries, where the Marxist-Leninist heritage of class analysis, and the concept of class in general, has a bad connotation. Thus paradoxically, after 1989, while 'class relations were becoming more prominent and conflictual with the onset of a capitalist economy – class analysis has been far more successful making sense of capitalist society than of state socialism – they also became harder for most people to see' (ibid., p. 546). And while the emerging politics of recognition after the transitions could have contributed to radical emancipatory struggles, the elites and the technocracy separated the 'claims for redistribution, recognition and representation, and selectively enlisted each element, in a limited and distorted way, to legitimate neoliberal capitalism,' in order to maintain their position 'by taking personal advantage of the new forms of empowerment and new commons, and by dislodging and restricting new forms of political representation and cultural recognition from new forms of economic empowerment' (Bockman, 2012, p. 314). This had, however, profound consequences, in the general failure of leftist politics and especially in the strengthening of the Imaginary register of the European complex.

The Imaginary register (conservative-corporatist imagery) is characterized by the proliferation of nationalist, far-right and neoconservative politics (as part of the proliferating new antagonisms as well). While Symbolic 'leftist' and neoliberal politics have been trying to dissolve the imperialism of core countries by presenting the possible decline inscribed in national values and portraying the West as the promise of improvement, democracy and the new 'normality', the Imaginary right-wing, neoconservative politics have been successfully dissolving the problem of the national, financial oligarchy by emphasizing national values and promoting confrontation with the 'real' sources of the problem: Western liberal imperialists, Gypsy families, migrants, etc. (Gagyi, 2013). This Imaginary register of the European complex portrays the conflictual imagery, where the problem is the 'political elites not representing the nation, of which you are an upstanding citizen, and that such enemies ought to be punished. With "normality" pushed and "class" shunned, "nation" had a free ride as the cry around which to galvanize critics' (Ost, 2015a, p. 544). Today, the Imaginary register seems to resonate much better with *the continuation of disillusionment* after 1989, and with the need for a 'real' revolution after the promises of 1989 ended in failure. Given the general disillusionment with the Left, that 'did not seem to end poverty [and] didn't seem to end nondemocratic governments' (Wallerstein & Dunaway, 1999, p. 297), neoconservative discourses gained strong support from the public, especially after 2008. As Wallerstein argues, the reiterating moments of economic downturns, the inevitable crises of capitalism, which lead to growing inequalities, function as a boost for neoconservative discourses. During the moments of downturns, semi-peripheral countries have an increased possibility to expand their control of the national market at the expense of core states and to establish new alliances reflected in the increasing degrees of nationalism and militance, while core countries have a decreased ability to intervene. During the downturn of production and trade patterns, due to the increased capacity of semi-peripheral countries to act at the expense of core powers,

> the indigenous bourgeoisie and the professional strata look upon the state as their negotiating instrument with the rest of the capitalist world-economy (…) [T]hey are 'nationalist'; that is, they will always be ready to brandish the flag if they believe it has a blackmail effect, and to put the flag in cold storage for a price (Wallerstein, 1976, p. 469).

However, neoliberalism and neoconservatism should not be conceived as dichotomous elements of a discursive landscape. The imagination of a strong state, the concept of hard government and a society based on work combined with authoritarian morality are constitutive elements of the neoliberal reengineering of the Centaur state. As Wacquant argues, 'authoritarian moralism [is] an *integral constituent of the neoliberal state* when it turns its sights

on the lower rungs of the polarizing class structure' (2010b, p. 216). This paradoxical character of the hybrid, neoliberal and neoconservative complex, i.e., the 'tension between a weak but strong state, and between freedom and control, liberty and authority' (Bailey & Ball, 2016, p. 131), is part of the innermost logic of Capital. As Wallerstein noted, while the 'two broad organizing tendencies – that of integrating production on a world-scale and that of forming strong national states – are in principle deeply contradictory, (…) the ever-present tension or antinomy between them is one of the perspective's [world-systems analysis'] basic, orienting concerns' (Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1977, p. 113). But neoconservatism is not only an 'integral constituent' of neoliberalization, its strengthening is also rooted in the inconsistencies and failures of neoliberalism. As Ost put it, 'too much economic liberalism threatens political liberalism – a particular problem in eastern Europe given that it undertook its transformation in the very heyday of neoliberalism' (2016a, p. 2). Almost three decades after the neoliberalization of former 'socialist' states, two of them – Hungary and Poland – have emerged as the *vanguard* of the new regimes of political authoritarianism combined with economic liberalism, providing the material evidence 'that neoliberalism is constitutively corrosive of democracy' (Wacquant, 2010b, p. 217). The far-right governments in Hungary (Fidesz since 2010) and in Poland (PiS since 2015), and the multiple far-right youth organizations, small ultra-right parties, and local neo-fascist troops are part of the broader re-emergence of the far-right, alt-right, post-fascist, neo-fascist etc. discourses – not only in Europe. These parties, movements, militant troops and organizations are not 'malfunctions' of a generally well-functioning system, but *symptoms* of the most disturbing inconsistencies of global capitalism. These symptoms, however, turn upside-down and start functioning as *fetishes* (i.e., the Žižekian *envers* of the symptom) on the everyday level, providing the most sublime Imaginary scenarios of the European complex. Drawing on people's general disillusionment in the Left and in the promises of the 'post-socialist reform package', the radical right in Hungary and Poland have successfully engineered the ideological struggle on at least three levels.

First, while explicitly opposing liberal democracy and the politics of recognition, it is right-wing politics that has embraced the politics of (re)distribution recently. One shouldn't forget here that, as Ost (2018) reminds us, '[w]hen fascism emerged in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, many saw it as a leftwing movement' (ibid., p. 113). Today, the Hungarian and the Polish far-right are introducing measures for redistribution, even if these are 'pervert redistributions' (cf. Ferge, 2004) – e.g., 'rezsicsökkentés', i.e., the reduction of utility costs in Hungary, and 'Rodzina 500+' in Poland, i.e., a universal social benefit families receive after the second and each next child – and moreover, these new regimes argue 'more consistently

against privatisation and trade liberalisation and in general criticises neoliberalism' (Gille, 2010, pp. 26–27). As Ost put it, the far-right in Hungary and Poland

> not only tramples on democracy but imposes special taxes on foreign banks and corporations, forces lower utility rates (Hungary), legislates higher pay for short-term jobs (Poland), and endlessly challenges west European 'domination' (…). And though this is too little to bring about equality with the West, the program does appeal, even to moderates tired of hearing that their countries have no choice but to remain weak and poor and that all checks on capitalism are impossible and counterproductive (2016b, p. 3).

And these measures highly resonate with the disillusionment of the betrayed working class and underclass. In his ethnography, Don Kalb (2009a) shows precisely this process, wherein Polish working collectives, who were once connected to the Solidarity movement and were supporters of the democratization of the country, today are vehemently rejecting the liberal elite they have been allied with since the 1980s, and are putting their faith in the nationalist far-right. But while the far-right governments vehemently criticize Western values and the European technocracy on the rhetorical level, in practice they support transnational big capital and the national bourgeoisie and are largely dependent on EU funds. And even though the European Parliament warned both Hungary and Poland by triggering Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, transnational corporations largely benefit from the 'authoritarian equilibrium' in the EU (cf. R. D. Kelemen, 2017), since these authoritarian regimes weaken workers' advocacy in favour of capital, ensure lower taxation rates for big corporations and provide one of the cheapest labor forces in the region. This hegemonic conflict, then, encourages more permissive treatment from EU institutions.

Second, the far-right not only gained its strength by engaging in politics of (pervert) redistribution, but also by playing with nationalist sentiments as part of an identity politics. This new regime of politics of recognition not only incarnates the fullness of the society – e.g., Hungary belongs to the Hungarians, Poland belongs to the Poles – but also constitutes an internal fissure within the social body which cuts through categories that outline who the 'real Hungarians' and 'real Poles' are. This is the process that Hana Červinková (2016) has recently called the 'production of homogeneity' – [t]he biopolitical goal of the new neoconservative regime is the production of docile citizens – hypnotized and dulled into compliance by neoliberal consumerism, the TINA logic of global capitalism and nationalist and patriarchal fantasmagorias' (ibid., p. 44). On the one hand, the production of homogeneity delivers what liberal democracy failed to do:

> What didn't it deliver? Community, solidarity. (…) So when social democracy no longer knows how to provide for community – and with neoliberalism promoting only individual answers and Leninism quite

dead – today the successors of the fascist tradition re-emerge strong. As in the past, they are ready to challenge both liberal politics and economics in the interests of a community that most certainly does not include all, but eagerly incorporates non-elites willing to go along (Ost, 2016b, pp. 2–3).

On the other hand, and this is third level of the far-right's successful hegemonic project, precisely because it constructed a narrowly defined (white and Christian) community, it can effectively oppose the geopolitical inferiority of the semi-periphery. Thus, paradoxically the production of homogeneity based on nationalist sentiments is still a part of the narrative of 'catching-up' with Western ideals. Whiteness and Christianity in fact 'can be seen as easterners' effort to demonstrate that they are "real" Europeans – white and Christian, the kind that in the west had the national dignity, good jobs, and social protection they think they should have, too.' (ibidem.) As Böröcz (2001) argues, not only the ideals of emancipation, salvation, modernization, and democracy were exchanged after 1989, but the values of coloniality were also inscribed in the cultural import from the Western imperial center. It is because of post-colonial character of the transitions, that in post-socialist semi-peripheral countries,

> many people believe very seriously that 'racial' and cultural/civilizational hierarchies can exist between people, and that 'superiors' legitimately can use these against the 'inferiors'. In Eastern and Central Europe, a shockingly thoughtless, unreflected 'whiteness' has become an integral part of identity construction, and a surprisingly large group of political and cultural elites is silently or cynically assisting to it (ibid., p. 38, translation mine).

Within this framework, politicians and far-right organizations can successfully exploit the image of the migrant, the external intruder, and also the enemy within (Gypsies, Jews, etc.). And it is not only the 'losers' of the transitions who are hypnotized by this enemy propaganda, but more and more the liberal elites as well. As Jaroslav Fiala and Pavel Šplíchal (2016) recently argued in an interview discussing how xenophobia is a consequence of the failures of the transition in the Czech Republic, liberals very often object to Muslim culture because it appears as anti-liberal. 'For instance, the founder of the first anti-Islamic initiative, Martin Konvička, started off with extremely liberal rhetoric, but he sees no problem or contradiction in aligning himself with non-liberal anti-Islamism, so the whole movement is undergoing a kind of "fascization".' (ibidem.)

Here, the liberal sentiment (freedom/equality) mystifies the classism of the liberal elites and other privileges and exclusions. While, when the 'losers' of the transition argue that the 'intruders' will take their jobs, this argument mystifies how the capitalist market dominates and determines the predicament of the workers, creating the always-already uncertain and

unpredictable situation of the precariat, which really is a cause for concern for the working class and the urban precariat.[64] As Ost (2016c) put it:

> [t]he economic problem today is not just the low wages that has already driven some 20 million easterners to the west since 1990, according to IMF estimates. It is also the uncertainty about the future which the 2008 crisis (the region's first bona fide capitalist crisis, as opposed to post-communist one) unleashed, and the endless pressure on all but the elite to be perpetually flexible, pliant, and docile on the job. (ibidem.)

In sum, I propose that the rise of the new semi-peripheral, authoritarian regimes indicates three shifting modalities of the 'post-socialist age', as Fraser would have it. First, the emergence of the far-right discourses and governments are the symptomatic evidences, that *class domination and class politics are more disavowed than ever before in the past three decades*. While the new authoritarian regimes displace structural class relations with the Imaginary register, which consists of the constitutive paradoxes of *pervert redistribution*, *the production of homogeneity* and *nationalist Europeanness*, the liberal democrats also disguise class relations within the Symbolic register, which consists of the *glorification of identity politics*, *the celebration of heterogeneity* (i.e., multiculturalism), and *the internationalism of Capital* (i.e., globalization). These two registers together portray the ideological fantasy-scenario of Europe, which I referred to as a 'complex', but it shouldn't distract one's attention from the fact that *the Imaginary thrives against the failure of the Symbolic*. One cannot emphasize enough the contribution of liberal democracy and the liberal elites to the rise of these far-right governments. They, who today argue that globalization and neoliberalization increased 'standards of living and deposited smartphones even into the hands of the unemployed are as clueless as those stalwarts of state socialism who insisted, (…) that thanks to their rule almost everyone now had running water and electricity' (Ost, 2016c).

Second, while the interpretations and theorizations of neoliberalism[*s*] are primarily fascinated by and beholden to the analysis of policy measures, regulations and the 'bureaucratic field' in general, where '[p]olicy-makers and administrators appear to swallow it all, (…) for anthropologists, administrators [it] can never be the whole story' (Kalb, 2009a, p. 321). The

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[64] As Scheiring (2016b) argues, liberal elites mystify their classism with anti-racist commitment, so they can disguise class domination by portraying the 'working class as "white trash", inherently racist, dumb, and their advocates as ridiculous. By focusing on "poor whites with poor character" the liberal elite wanted to distract attention from the discontents of globalization and maintain the supremacy of economic liberalism.' While the Symbolic class exploits the discursive platform of the refugee crisis, the Central-Eastern European emigration problem is not on the political menu at all, even though, since 1989, Romania has lost 9%, and Latvia 25% of its population, and since the EU accession, around one million Polish people have been attracted to the UK (cf. Tycner, 2016).

emergence of far-right discourses and the construction of hybrid – neoliberal and neoconservative – penal states indicate that *the ideologico-discursive constitution of the hegemonic frontiers is performed more than ever and literally on the streets*. This is a shift in the modality of the new authoritarian regimes, which Wacquant has been trying to take seriously into account in his ethnographies (cf. 2009b). It is part of the practico-theoretical endeavor, what Žižek calls the 'de-fetishization of democratic institutions', which thrives against the fascination with the pseudo-democratic *variété* of legal rights.

> We do not vote about who owns what, or about worker-management relations in a factory; (…) It is illusory to expect that one can effectively change things by 'extending' democracy into this sphere, say, by organizing 'democratic' banks under people's control. *Radical changes (…) lie outside the sphere of legal rights* (Žižek, 2010, p. 88 italics added).

There is hence a need for a new internationalism and a new universalism against the universality of policies, human rights vocabularies, civil society mantras, which have been so successfully incorporated into hegemonic neoliberalism, which 'while *de-facto* allied with authoritarianism, cannot do without a political liberal imagination, *pace* the penal complex, or better precisely because of its close association with the penal and punitive state. It is a crucial part of its self-misrecognition' (Kalb, 2012, p. 322).

And third, just as marginality is *advanced* in the sense that it is *ahead* of us, I assert that the re-emergence of the far-right is advanced in the same sense – *it throbs and pulsates through the aortas of contemporary societies*. It is with reference to a new stage of the basic acknowledgement that neoliberalism and neoconservatism form a totality – which I shall call '*advanced hybridity*'; with the new regimes of authoritarianism the political pendulum tilts to the far-right end of the spectrum – which I'm tempted to call '*advanced imaginality*' – and poses the question of whether there is any necessary relation between capitalism and democracy. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) have already argued that there is no necessary relation between socialism and democracy, and I propose that the same holds for capitalism and democracy. *Advanced imaginality* (i.e., the extension and displacement of the Imaginary register of the European complex) cuts through pseudo-isomorphisms, and deconstructs the chains of equivalences and subverts the field of differential moments that were hegemonized by the Symbolic classes – hence, the astonishing scenarios of the era of advanced imaginality: young women take leading positions in anti-feminist, alt-right, identitarian movements (i.e., more generally the feminization of fascism); gay people join alt-right, white supremacist organizations led by gay people who discredit themselves and their fellows as 'aberrant' while promoting post-fascist ideas; ecclesiastical leaders call for keeping refugees outside borders *in*

nomine Dei; more than a few European leaders accuse an almost 90-year-old Holocaust survivor of secretly and effectively undermining European values and actively flooding their countries with refugees from the Middle East; and finally, in response to the latter, the international proletariat defends this old man, who is a multimillionaire capitalist, by the way.

* * *

While class antagonism is apparently constructed between the Imaginary and the Symbolic classes, they both thrive against the primordial background of the Real class, the spectral population of poverty and advanced marginality, those excluded from any structural locations within antagonisms. The story of Sabina, and the few thousand Gypsies from her region is encircled by this complex, post-socialist, semi-peripheral context that I tried to outline in this section. The post-socialist condition, and *the era of advanced imaginality immediately crumbles into a farce before the poor*: the universal exception, who has never showed up or held a banner at any demonstrations, who would have her bills settled before engaging in an all-night debate on LGBT rights, who looks for the cheapest meat in the supermarket before being interrogated by the animal liberation front at the exit, who is more stressed out at the end of the month than by reading the monthly budget implementation report of the European Commission, and who would happily make the nation great again after finding a proper place to sleep:

> The poor cannot overcome interests, eating, heating, lighting, roof and floor insulation. The poor – not like the writer of these lines – cares about what is on the television. For the poor it cannot be indifferent what the free newspaper writes. The poor cannot look down on the scrambling, screaming, outraged crowd during the madness of the shopping malls' sale – I neither despise it, but it does not matter: the middle class despises such things. The poor cannot cover their ears against the public cultural crap if they do not want to completely give up on music. The poor cannot give a different book to their children, than the intellectually depraved school. The poor are constrained by the relations – regardless of their behaviors and tastes – to remain foolish, vulgar and tasteless, in order to care for nothing else but their private affairs. In other words, to be like the society that exploits, destroys, torments and despises them, while directly lives from them. (…) Words of consolation and humaneness are a remote murmur for the poor, who belong to a caste, just like four thousand years ago, although this is not mandatory today. Only general. Try – I was trying so naïvely during the transition – to tell the poor in Eastern Europe that it is 'democracy'. If you survive the beating, you will know what you deserve for rudely insulting the wretched (Tamás, 2008b, translation mine).

8 THE HEGEMONY ANALYSIS OF A SETTLEMENT IN POLAND

'Keep Calm and Carry On'

True, we are begging for money on the streets. I admit. But no one talks about the police officers. They are also begging daylong... for this document, for that record, for a valid passport, for everything. We are begging for papers, and hence, they are begging for papers. Then they fine 500 złotys, so we need to beg more and more… vicious circle.

<div align="right">Dika</div>

It was after the EU accession of Romania that Sabina and her family immigrated to Poland for the first time. Some of their older relatives were part of the vast migration wave, which started after the transition. During the 1990s, approximately half a million Romanian Gypsy people might have crossed the Polish border and stayed in Poland, but correct estimates are hard to make (Kapralski & Lechowski, 2018). After the transition, Romanian citizens were allowed to enter Poland with a tourist visa, which guaranteed only a 90-day-long stay, hence those Gypsy families, who intended to stay longer, had to develop techniques for prolonging their 'tourist' status. While the Polish authorities organized deportations several times and introduced a re-entry ban, Gypsies found several ways to outflank the system. In cases of deportation and receiving the re-entry ban stamp in their visas, many of them changed their surnames through incredibly well-organized divorces and marriages within their communities and requested new passports from the Romanian authorities. If they managed to avoid deportation, it was either because they could hide their passports from the police (e.g., in the Ethnographic Museum in Tarnów between 1993 and 1996) or because they could prolong their stay up to three months by crossing the Polish-Czech or the Polish-Slovak border, returning to Poland immediately (in the mid-1990s it even became a business to buy such stamps in large numbers from the border office). While the tourist visa didn't allow for economic activities, Gypsy families were able to earn relatively large amounts of money with small-scale trading (clothes, shoes, carpets, alcoholic beverages) and begging on the streets. Gypsy street vendors and begging children became a widespread phenomenon both in bigger and smaller cities – Gorzów Wielkopolski, Kraków, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin, Warsaw, Wrocław, Zgorzelec, etc. News of the opportunity for good financial income in Poland had quickly spread among Romanian relatives, and entire Romanian rural slums became depopulated by the mid-90s. Some families even sold their houses to cover travel costs.

Since they arrived usually by train at the bigger train stations in Poland, these stations also functioned as shelters during the first years of the first migration wave, until the moment when the stations started to become overcrowded and the police started to take measures for

liquidating these places (e.g., Dworzec Wschodni in Warsaw). From then on, smaller groups of Gypsy families started to build small bungalows using (recycling) wooden planks, broken doors, old carpets and general public waste they found on the streets. They constructed smaller and bigger settlements from a few to dozens of these wooden bungalows, usually on hidden, peripheral parts of the cities, close to transportation. This allowed them to stay in a community and for longer periods in Poland, even during the wintertime. As Sławomir Kapralski and Paweł Lechowski note, '[i]n the 1990s, virtually every provincial city in Poland was inhabited by Romani people from Romania for a longer or shorter time. Their population may have been more concentrated along the western border' (2018, p. 76). By building settlements in the cities, Gypsy families managed to settle for longer periods and they could also better organize their daily activities of small-scale trading and begging, in which sometimes every member of the family, from the children to the grandparents, participated. But due to their intensified presence in the cities, trading became risky: the city police either imposed huge fines for illegal economic activity or took the legal measure of deportation. Hence, begging remained the dominant and safest method for earning money. During the first years, Gypsy beggars were able to make a relatively high basic income on the streets – 'they soon found out that, as citizens of the country that had been liberated from Ceaușescu's regime as a result of a revolution a year earlier, they could count not only on sympathy and compassion, but also on human generosity.' (ibidem.) But this generosity quickly vanished after Polish people realized that Gypsy families were not willing to move on. Gypsy beggars were not only targets of police interventions, but

> were subject to aggression from certain groups of Polish citizens. In Kraków, such situations occurred almost every day in the mid-1990s, when the biggest number of the Roms stayed there. Most often they were beaten and robbed of collected money, or at least there were attempts to do so. The victims included not only men or young boys, but also women and children. Due to fear of deportation, they did not report such cases to the police (ibid., p. 78).

In the second half of the 1990s, Gypsy people were more and more exposed to the verbal or physical violence of nationalists, and the lack of a shared language only intensified the hatred. Although their semi-hidden settlements provided a minimal level of security, it also separated and detached their community from the Polish people. Exemplary, regarding the changing modality of Polish generosity and hospitality, were the forced evictions from Grota-Rowecki Bridge in Warsaw (1996) and from Tarnogaj in Wrocław (1998). In the latter case, the Gypsy community was misled that they would be part of a social program, but instead they were put on buses and deported to Romania (cf. Nomada Stowarzyszenie, 2013). As Joanna Kostka (2018) summarized this brutal measure,

one hundred people, including small children, were rounded up and forced onto the buses, with no prior notice. In what was called 'Operation Alien' (Operacja Obcy), the county police, in full riot gear and rubber gloves, began to demolish the settlement using iron bars and sledgehammers. The residents were transported to the border guard unit in Kłodzko, where they were placed in the gymnasium and deported the same day (ibid., p. 176).

Almost the same institutional measure took place in Warsaw. As Katarzyna Czarnota and Emilia Kledzik (2011) put it,

> [e]arly in the morning, government officials, escorted by the police, arrived at the encampment areas and forced people to leave their homes. Buses were brought to take them next to Romania. (…) In 1996, Jerzy Ficowski wrote: 'On the Vistula, by the Grota-Rowecki Bridge, martial law has been declared at the local level. There was no transportation for the Gypsies' property, which was then burned. They were allowed to take only their hand luggage. I associate this with something bad'" (ibid., p. 13).

It cannot be emphasized enough that these oppressive measures thrived against the background of the post-socialist reengineering of the politico-economic landscape of Poland. As Ost (2015b) argues, after 1989 the dominant anti-communist rhetoric and the disavowal of 'class talk' (Marxist class analysis) started to represent inequality and poverty as an individual failure instead of a structural and systemic symptom, which rhetoric effectively aligned with an individualist meritocratic discourse and moreover mystified the emerging new post-socialist constellation of economic relations of production. As Ost put it, '[t]he paucity of class analysis allowed illiberal populist nationalism to grow, blaming economic problems on internal "anti-Polish" enemies. (…) [T]he poor tended to be portrayed as alcoholics from troubled backgrounds, shunning education, uninterested in individual advancement' (ibid., p. 610-615). The leaders of the Solidarity movement also left 'class talk' behind, and Ost's book, *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe* (2005)*,* illuminates perfectly how the anger of the working class – abandoned and betrayed by the liberals – was hegemonized by the far-right, especially when the Kaczyński brothers and their Law and Justice Party (PiS) first came into power in 2005. Kalb (2009b) concludes in his ethnographic study of the Polish working class with similar emphasis: the (re-)emergence of the far-right and the 'populist paranoia' cannot be simply explained by focusing on the nationalist bourgeoisie and party politics, it is rooted deeply – more than ever – in the post-socialist reconfiguration of class relations, social insecurity, anger, and more generally in the failure of the liberal elites, whose 'celebratory discourses of successful democratization, economic growth, transition, and EU accession obscure deep local histories of dispossession, disenfranchisement, and dedemocratization that force themselves onstage via volatile and biting populisms that rock the

political process in unexpected ways' (ibid., p. 219). The Polish far-right successfully reached for the heart of the betrayed workers with protective economics and by targeting top-level corruption, and, most importantly, it introduced pro-worker measures. Thus, they became the first party after the transition which started to protect the workers against global capitalism – it lowered the retirement age, guaranteed drug benefits for the elderly, provided an affordable housing program, increased the hourly minimum to 13 złotys, introduced a new child-benefit program 500+, etc. (cf. Ost, 2018). And besides the 'earned' support from the workers, the far-right government also relies on memory politics for building a strong national identity of the 'true' Polish community, especially after 2015, when PiS made it again into power. A significant measure was the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance in 2018 which is an explicit denial of the Polish nation's participation in the Holocaust. As Adam Chmielewski (2018) shows, this is an effective ideologico-hegemonic strategy for reconstructing nation on the basis of 'innocence' and 'dignity'.[65] This nationalism, as a part of the new regime of an advanced imaginality is not only reaching out more successfully than ever to young people (viz. National-Radical Camp – *Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*; All-Polish Youth – *Młodzież Wszechpolska*), but as Rafał Pankowski argues, it is also becoming international (which I tried to capture with the term 'advanced'), hence the paradoxical phenomenon of the 'internationalization of nationalism' (Pankowski, 2018). The international cooperation between far-right organizations has been *advancing* since the new millennium – *Swoboda* (Belarus), *Autonomní Nacionalisté* (Czech Republic), *France Renouveau Français* (France), *Jobbik* and *Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom* (Hungary), *Forza Nuova* (Italy), *Autonomous Nationalists* (Lithuania), *Srpski Narodni Pokret 1389* (Serbia), *Slovenské Hnutie Obrody* (Slovakia), *Democracia Nacional* (Spain), *Nordisk Ungdom* (Sweden), *UNA-UNSO* (Ukraine), just to mention of few. The internationalization of nationalism is only one side of the Möbius strip; its other is the *internationalization of poverty*. But the international poor are rarely the

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[65] This rhetoric is – as always – supplemented with what Kalb calls the 'celebratory discourses' of economic growth, and the nation's prosperity, which in a certain sense has its aspects and modalities of truth. After shock therapy, the Polish economy started to grow rapidly, and since 1992, there has not been a year when it didn't grow, even the financial crisis couldn't break economic development. According to the European Commission's 2017 report, while GDP per capita in 2007 was only 53% of the EU-28 as measured against purchasing power parity, in 2015, it accounted for 69%. However, as Rafael Labanino (2017) argues, these data conceal significant regional differences. 'According to a report by the European Commission in March 2017, four of the EU's 20 poorest regions are in Poland. The gap between the per capita GDP of the richest and the poorest Polish regions is almost double. (…) Moreover, these regional inequalities haven't really changed since the 1990s. (…) Over the last 27 years, Poland has been struggling with high unemployment: since 1991, the unemployment rate has never been below 10 per cent and in 2002 it peaked at 20 percent. It is true that it was around 7 percent in the second half of the decade, but reached 10 percent again in 2013.' (ibidem.)

beneficiaries of nationalist sentiments, especially when it comes to Gypsies, who are not only international, but who are lacking in having a 'nation' of their own. Thus, partly due to the oppressive institutional measures and violent attacks, the population of the first wave of the Gypsy migration radically decreased by the beginning of the 2000s. The EU accession of Romania, however, provided new hope for the Gypsy families to re-enter Poland as EU citizens without the fear of being deported. And while their movement became easier, they also started to experience a change both in the advancement of the 'bureaucratic field', in the attitude of Polish people and in the profitability of begging, which

> is no longer the most profitable profession, and beggars are increasingly often subject to interventions of law enforcement services, financial penalties, and potentially also arrest. (…) [R]epressions against the begging Romanian Roms announced by the local City Guard are becoming more intense. On the other hand, trade in various forms has become an increasingly safer profession for them as EU citizens (Kapralski & Lechowski, 2018, p. 83).

Thus, against the emerging penal Centaur state, Gypsy families had to start improvising new forms of trade and started participating in the transnational flow of commodities (trading in German and Czech cars, kitchen equipment, Romanian homemade products, and also collecting and selling metal scrap etc.), but still, most often at the heart of the black market. Because of these illegal activities, and also because of their shared memories from the 1990s, they usually try to avoid contact with state institutions, even though during the years they have spent in Poland most of them have become fluent in the Polish language. Due to the lack of information about legal procedures and the large rate of illiteracy among them, they are very often unable to register as residents in Poland, and even if they intend to cooperate with state institutions, their rights are easily violated, not to mention the public violence they are exposed to on the streets. Thus, while they have legal rights as European citizens to stay in Poland, they are still living a spectral life in the margins, excluded from society, but at the same time – although they try to avoid being so – *included in the new interinstitutional regime of advanced marginality in the post-socialist semi-periphery.*

8.1 The Gypsy Settlement and its Dispositif

I first met Sabina and her family in one of the bigger cities of western Poland in 2016. They were living in a relatively large settlement together with approximately 150 Romanian Gypsy migrants. Their bungalows (30-35 at that time) were built on an abandoned territory inside the city – illegally, since the land was property of the city. The territory was, however, neglected and overgrown with grass, thus it was ideal for providing basic protection for the families. If one was walking by the 'borders' of the territory, unaware of the settlement, one would not even sense the presence of the Gypsies.

The settlement was a hidden place in the 'desert' of the suburbs, situated behind brushwood, a territory without borders, an emplacement without proper address and without electricity, running water, adequate sanitation, etc. Its spatial borders were delimited by so-called 'panel houses' (characteristic to 1970's socialist housing estates built from concrete block), a huge industrial warehouse and logistical center (with security service and complex surveillance technology), and a working-class quarter of the city outskirts (detached houses, garden lots, etc.). I started to visit the settlement regularly with social workers during the winter

at the end of 2016. We went there very often during the pitch-dark nights, but the families either managed to steal electricity from the nearest power cable or could afford to use their generators, because a lightbulb was usually on, both at the front of the bungalows and inside. I learned during my previous studies in rural slums, that the first thing to observe during wintertime is whether there is smoke coming out from the chimneys. Then you would start shouting at the pack of dogs, who would rather bark at you than bite, however, sometimes they would taste your leg as well. It was usually the children who chased the dogs away, and who accompanied us from bungalow to bungalow.

The settlement was constructed as a miniature village with a trodden 'main' dirt road, and small 'streets' perpendicular to it, which led to the bungalows. The 'street' between the bungalows was covered with carpets, which functioned as a pavement, especially during more rainy days, protecting against the massive emergence of mud. As Romanian architect Cătălin Berescu put it, the urban slum inhabited by Gypsies is like

> a prison-like new settlement that reminds us of the Second World War, of an incredible squalid form of 'social housing' that reveals all the traits of an environmental racist attitude, of a form of resettlement that

produces residential segregation which is difficult to overcome and of a national policy to improve living conditions that, more or less consciously, conserve ethnic divides (2011, p. 351).

When we entered the bungalows, it was often so hot inside, that we had to take our clothes off. The stoves in the bungalows were built by the craftsman in the settlement, who worked as tinsmiths in Romania before the transition. The families were burning literally everything to heat their houses, but when they could afford it, they heated with wood. The social worker's aim with these regular visits was to deliver official letters to the families (that due to the lack of an official address arrived at the local NGO's office), help them with everyday administrative and personal cases and, generally, to check whether they have food and something to heat with. The conversations were usually similar to the following one, between one of the social workers (Lena) and one of Sabina's relatives (Dika):

[Dika]: I think, I need a passport for my daughter.

[Lena]: I thought she already has one.

[Dika]: She has a passport, but it is going to expire.

[Lena]: And how old is she, seven?

[Dika]: She will turn eight.

[Lena]: I will call and ask. Do you know how much it costs? 100 euros?

[Dika]: 85. Kasia [another social worker] said that there will be passports for free... maybe.

[Lena]: I do not know, I'll call you on Monday and we will find out.

[Dika]: Thanks Lena! And please ask Kasia, when will the three trash containers be brought here.

Dika was very sick for a while that time, and I helped him collecting some wood and textiles from the trash containers in the immediate environment of the settlement. However, it was not easy to find enough material for heating. A big bucket full of wood would not last a day in these conditions, and I couldn't even fill the whole bucket.

[Dika]: It's enough only till tomorrow morning… [coughs strongly] look at me… what happens with the people if they live in such conditions. They get sick all the time. Do you think they can live normally like the rest of the people? You know, when I wake up in the morning, I think 'God what a hard day' [*Boże, jaki ciężki dzień*]. Now I'm sick and nothing has gotten better for 3 days. I was in the hospital, I stayed there for 5 hours, I got 4 drips [of medicament]. I feel really bad. I am afraid, not to infect the children.

Dika, just like the majority in the settlement, has no trust in state apparatuses – while in the 1990s they experienced forced deportations and evictions, after 2007 they had to realize that a new, more complex regime of institutional discrimination and control emerged in Poland. Whilst in the 1990s the development of border control and deportation procedures were supported by EU financial assistance (cf. PHARE program), the implementation of the Freedom of Movement Directive in 2004 reshaped the technologies of international and national biopolitics (Kostka, 2018).

As a *de facto* neoliberal project, strict eligibility criteria have been introduced with new legislation, which (according to *Article 12*) requires every EU citizen to register their stay after three months of residence for which one has to present proof of income (employment of financial self-sufficiency), valid passport or ID card, and health insurance. But the registration procedure is even more strict in Poland.

> Prompted by EU pressure, the Polish authorities took Article 12 to the extreme, applying a sufficient resources test to all registering citizens of the Union, and demanding proof of permanent address (…). A senior public servant explained that under center-right government led by Civic Platform (PO) the Office

> of Interior was determined to 'play up to the EU demands by adopting the strictest stance possible on unregistered migration'… (Kostka, 2018, p. 173)

Evidently, such a strict registration procedure is an almost impossible travail for the Romanian Gypsies, which thus immediately places them outside the system – outside of the labor market, social security, healthcare, family assistance, education; but at the same time, since the failure to register is not penalized *per se*, it places them also *inside* the new, institutional regime of advanced marginality, and this is a new component of poverty for Dika, Sabina and others. As Romain Cames (2013) argues, drawing on Agamben's *Homo Sacer*, this new regime consists of the confusion between the normal and exceptional, where the settlement 'is precisely the "structure in which the state of exception […] is realized *normally*." (…) The camp is the spatial arrangement that centralises these lives devoid of value [by which] the state creates the map of its own acceptable and desirable population' (ibid., pp. 10-11). Fueled by the individualizing approaches to poverty characteristic to post-socialist neoliberalizations, the new semi-peripheral regime of advanced marginality installs a variety of penal procedures against the excluded people, which realizes the state of exception as the 'normal' modality and

legitimizes the criminalization of poverty and the punishment of the poor. One of the most drastic measures occurred in 2014, when the city authorities of Gdańsk demolished five bungalows in Jelitkowo district, leaving 15 people, including five children, homeless; the other occurred in 2015, when the city authorities of Wrocław destroyed six bungalows with all the belongings of the families, including passports, IDs, stoves, money, etc. which were transported immediately to a rubbish dump (viz. Krawczyk, 2015). In both cases, the families did not receive any official notice or warning. When I talked to social workers who worked with the Gypsies at the time of the evictions, they expressed anger and a loss of faith in state apparatuses, public institutions:

> [Wiktor]: We even started a group of dialogue with the different people like prosecutors, border police, people from social services, sanitary department – they promised, that they are not going to demolish this settlement, but finally they did.

> [Janusz]: So how to trust officials?! The houses with everything were destroyed, while the people living there went to the city. They left their houses in early morning and during the day their houses were destroyed. We didn't know who took decision about it but after that, because it was illegal from our point of view to destroy houses, we started a campaign in the media. We protested when Polish prime minister

> came to Wrocław. It was crazy because the local government, the City Hall, decided it and they destroyed the camp three days before the visit of Prime Minister of Polish Government… and all Ministers came to Wrocław to give 100 million złotych for the *European Capital of Culture* event. It was so stupid and they didn't even think about this… We went there with the Roma people to protest and to say that it's the *European Capital of Evictions*.

> [Me]: How did the families perceive this eviction? How did they talk about it?

> [Janusz]: First of all, they lost their homes and everything what they had, documents, pictures. They felt like victims because of the system, but it happened later. First, there was this human aspect, like 'I lost everything'… But I remember fear. On the first day after the eviction I went to another camp to talk with people and I remember that they kept asking, when will it happen to them?

Perhaps the case of the eviction in Wrocław properly exemplifies the Janus face of the neoliberal Centaur state: on the one hand, as the prospective European Capital of Culture it promotes multiculturalism, 'openness and tolerance' ('*miasto otwartości i tolerancji*'), and defines itself as a 'meeting place' ('*miasto spotkań*'), while on the other hand, as the European Capital of Evictions, it takes brutal measures against the poorest, while 'the facets of public

space are becoming militarized in order to secure the privileges and benefits of the corporate elites' (Kostka, 2018, p. 182). And although the brutality of the new regime of urban poverty explains to a large extent the general mistrust toward state apparatuses, the fear and unwillingness of the Gypsy families to cooperate with authorities and their attempts to keep their settlements hidden, as compared to their situation in Romania, it is still more worthwhile for them *economically* to stay in Poland.

There was a phrase in the settlement that originated with Sabina and was used often by others as well: I have PESEL, I have everything ('mam PESEL, mam wszystko'), which meant, that if they managed to register their stay in Poland with the effective help of the local NGO, they received the Polish national identification number (PESEL), which entitled them to social services and, most importantly, they could benefit from the far-right government's 500+ program, receiving 500 złoty per month after each child. Due to this benefit, the settlement I was visiting had been growing rapidly after 2015-16, since the families were able to save money and send it back to their families in Romania. As one of the social workers of the local NGO explained, if this would be the only source of money they receive, it would still be worth it for the Gypsy families to come to Poland:

> [Lena]: … because of this new social benefit called '500+'. They [PiS] decided to give this 500 złotych to every next child in family and for the first as well if you are poor. We supported their [the Gypsy families'] registration at the social services and then we found out that there is a leader in the settlement and he is Roma person and now he is helping others. So, now most of the Roma in the settlement has this benefit. They have 4, 5 or 6 children. We made a trick to this government which is extreme right wing… we helped this excluded group getting the money… the Roma, whom they [the government] hate. We brought up the 'Roma issue' which they would prefer to keep 'under the carpet', so they don't like neither the Roma nor us.

And while the 500+ program is widely appreciated by working class families, since it 'has led to a dramatic decline in child poverty rates' (Ost, 2017, p. 24), it is interesting how a Gypsy beneficiary appears to be a trick on a xenophobic far-right government. Obviously, it is 'tricky' that PiS indirectly and unsuspiciously supports Romanian Gypsy families with relatively high governmental funds, but it leaves intact the penal regime of urban poverty and the extreme exclusion of the poor in general. A representative of the local MOPS (Miejski Ośrodek Pomocy Społecznej – Municipal Social Welfare Center), who was also involved in the case of the settlement, argues that such a program often ends up as an excuse for not implementing systemic changes on the level of social institutions:

[MOPS representative]: These are changes that, if I could qualify them privately, I would say stupid and do not bring anything wise to the system. They do not bring any new quality to the people, and they cause terrible expenses on the part of public administration, and this is sick.

It doesn't help one, for instance, in finding a job within a highly competitive and discriminative labor market. Sabina has tried it a few times. Once she showed me her Curriculum Vitae. It was only one page, but she took such care of it, she kept it in a box, properly covered in a plastic bag to keep it clean. She created it according to the European standards, with a proper picture on the top-left corner, personal data, working experience, etc. Not many things were listed – 'I speak 3 languages (Polish, Romani, Romanian)', 'I can cook very well'. We were joking, that we could imagine a capitalist corporate leader arguing that this is the format that they are looking for: pure, simple and straightforward. Of course, she was always rejected when applying for a job. In sum, besides the 500+, people in the settlement still had to make money by trading and begging. As Sabina told me once, she is very ashamed when she has to beg for money on the streets or near the church. In Romania it is not only forbidden by the law to beg, but she wouldn't be able to appear like that in her own village.

[Sabina]: It is hard in Romania, we don't have a big house, one room for the whole family like here, it's hard. In Romania there is no place to beg and it's not allowed. To live in Romania, you need to have a lot of money. Here if you have 50-100 złoty it's really ok for the children. But the situation didn't get any better. There is this 500+ benefit and thanks to this we don't beg that much anymore… but sometimes we need to do so. After all day, it's about 100-150 złoty. Monthly it's about 3000.

[Me]: Do you have businesses now?

[Sabina]: I used to sell clothes and flowers during the summer. Some are doing some businesses with cars. Some are collecting them and sell in parts. We collect and sell scrap. You can earn 100-200 złoty.

Gathering scrap metal and plastic waste was only a source of money in the settlement. As Tomasz Rakowski (2006) notes in his research, which he conducted near the Belchatów lignite mine in central Poland, with marginalized and excluded Poles living in extreme poverty, gathering is not only a source of income, but also

a specific practice which provides the opportunity for participation in the local circulation of goods as well as in a social environment – they seem to 'join' the mine through playing a particular game with the guards and authorities. This is an attempt to take part in the world they have been excluded from, and which is so close that they cannot turn their backs on it (ibid., p. 7).

Once I joined the Gypsy children from the settlement to help them collect scrap and stealing flowers. It was performed by them as an exciting game, with complex fantasy scenarios and various imaginary roles, while playing hide and seek with each other, and playing tag with the city police. It was quite tricky to steal roses in the city at that time, due to public surveillance systems, cameras and CCTV, so they had been stealing flowers from the cemetery for a while, where they came up with mystical stories about ghosts, family members who passed away, and so on. When we went to the city center to sell the flowers, a Polish woman stopped me and asked whether I was helping these children. She gave me a flyer, with the message written on it: 'Dając pieniądze, nie pomagasz. Pomagaj mądrze!' – If you give money, you don't help. Help wisely! As I later figured it out, this flyer was part of an antipoverty, anti-begging campaign that started at the end of the 2000s and appeared in several cities (Gdańsk, Lubin, Olsztyn, Poznań, Wrocław, etc.) on publicly-funded posters, flyers, etc. The campaign has been accompanied by intensified police control and the issuing of fines (up to 1500 złoty), although begging is not forbidden according to the law in Poland. The campaign effectively exploited the neoliberal mantra of individual responsibility – i.e., being poor is not a necessity, but a

choice. The campaign was not explicitly anti-Roma, but as Kostka argues, constituted the image of the '*begging Gypsy, too lazy to do anything else*' (2018, p. 179), moreover, '[i]n an interview, a manager of the social work unit Monika Ostrowska insisted: "They [Roma] are very clever and have developed methods of begging to perfection. Recently, children begged with a small dog. It arouses pity. Please do not be fooled by their poverty"' (ibid., p. 180).

From the perspective of ideology criticism, what one encounters here is a shift in the predominant, *symptomal* mode of ideology according to which the articulation would have been simply, 'Don't help the beggars, they are too lazy to work!' In this symptomal mode, the discursive apparatus would effectively mystify (or repress in psychoanalytic terms) the structural and historical roots of poverty, while the ideological mystification would be threatened by symptoms (the return of the repressed), namely that they are not too lazy to work, but *this is how they work* due to the social state of domination. But the articulation 'If you give money, you don't help!' is the reverse (*envers*) of the symptom, and in it, ideology functions in *fetishistic* mode. It effectively embodies the symptom by explicitly pointing to the beggar who needs help, and moreover, it says: if you don't give them money, *you already helped*. While in the symptomal mode the subject is detached from the symptom ('Refuse the begging hands!'), in the fetishistic mode there is an affirmative modality ('Help with refusal!'). While both

ideological motives function in a similar way from the discursive point of view – they both mystify the ultimately dislocated, historical and contingent character of poverty, by a hegemonic articulation (either blaming the victim in a neoliberal style or playing with the postmodern culture of charity) – only the latter, the fetishistic mode involves enjoyment (*jouissance*) with the most seductive instance of what Žižek would call Lacanian *interpassivity*. In the case when the subject helps the most by *not doing anything at all*, the subject enacts the community's own passivity. This formula works quite effectively within the postmodern culture of charity as well, where passivity is channeled into the pseudo-activity of pressing a button online. Or, as I argued in the first part, it is the same with donating money to an organization, who in the name of the donor *doesn't* give the money to the poor. Thus, this fetishistic mode of ideology contains a Marxian opiatic function: while it effectively reproduces the social and institutional punishment of the poor, it also provides the fantasy scenario for the Imaginary and Symbolic classes, by saying that *this is help*. Keep calm and carry on! But the most tragic aspect of this new form of ideological mystification is that there is nothing false in it. Of course, the entire propaganda of the publicly-funded materials is a 'Lie', but one presented in the guise of truth: even from the ideologico-critical point of view, one could seriously argue that, yes, giving money doesn't help, radical structural change is needed.

> [Kuba, social worker]: To clarify this issue, they do not beg because they are Gypsy, they beg because they are poor and economically excluded. You can find Polish people begging on the streets. And all of these awful things… because there is no institutional and political support.
>
> [Marcin, social worker]: It is important to know that these excluded Gypsy communities make zero problems, actually. It is perceived as huge problem for the city, but they are actually living in more affordable and more sophisticated way than other poor families in Poland and still, Straż Miejska can find the reasons to put fees on them.
>
> [Lena, social worker]: We have police and something called Straż Miejska, like city police.
>
> [Kuba]: It is half police, half a security service, it's public.
>
> [Lena]: Once, one of them, a woman, caught another woman begging on the street and she took her money with no confirmation, no paper. So, we could say that city police stole money from the Gypsies.

As the social workers of the local NGO argued, the antipoverty campaign had really infiltrated the public discourse, or in other words: the campaign constituted the manifest reality or megaspectacle of 'beggars in the city center', wherein this particular element of reality escaped from the complexity of the social symptoms and became an enlarged representation of it. And the state apparatuses that were involved in the daily life of the settlement embraced this megaspectacle and reproduced it by translating it to their own procedural framework.

Due to the reinforced police control, I managed to talk several times to the Straż Miejska (City Police) officers.

[Straż Miejska officer 1]: Begging is the main problem. It is possible, that these profits from begging are passed on to someone, and used in human trafficking. It is known that the children beg more, and the older also bring new cars from Germany. It cannot be ruled out, that this is organized throughout in Europe.

[Straż Miejska officer 2]: From my local observations, because I used to be in this nomadic area, I have seen quite characteristic tattoos of these people, usually associated with criminals.

[Straż Miejska officer 1]: The other thing, begging, concerns the city center and, speaking humorously, people [the Gypsies] go to work in the morning.

[Straż Miejska officer 2]: So foreign to us culturally…

[Straż Miejska officer 1]: In the city center, from our point of view, this is an undesirable phenomenon. This is our main problem. Of course, we impose fines that are paid, but this phenomenon continues to be permanent.

[Me]: So, they pay the fines…

[Straż Miejska officer 2]: They pay because they are afraid of the execution. The problem is, for example, that court proceedings require an interpreter that costs money and its paid by Polish people.

[Straż Miejska officer 1]: In terms of their income, we participated in a meeting organized by the
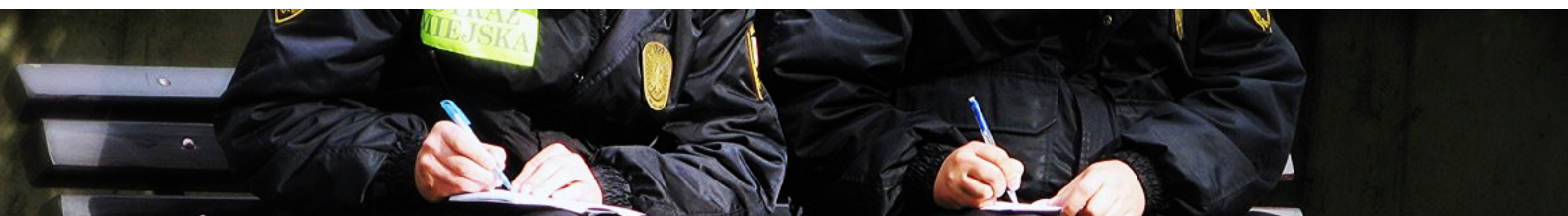
Romanian Embassy and we met a Romanian police officer, and he was very surprised of our problem, because he thought it should be radically solved. They perceive it as organized crime. This is not a situation in which someone has driven them.

[Straż Miejska officer 2]: There are high expectations, especially by restaurants and guests. 'Well, do something with this' – we hear – 'Do something with the beggars in the city center, with the nomadic people… what are you for?' – they say.

The discursive apparatus of the police officers is not only relevant for ideology criticism, because it articulates the criminalized image of the trickster Gypsy, whose illegal activity is culturally determined, but more importantly because they float this articulation against the background of the fantasy scenario of a suspicious, transnational and organized criminal activity. The reason that this fantasy scenario can function so effectively in maintaining the distorted image of the poor, is that *there is* suspicious, transnational and organized crime, which is not prosecuted, since it is not the poor's business, but one of the transnational elite's, which actively participates in the production of poverty. The megaspectacle of begging, interpreted as a cultural 'way of life' is also characteristic to the approach of the Social Welfare Center:

[MOPS representative]: They have a basic problem: low level of the social and labor competences, which makes it hard for them to function in the social rules that we offer as host society. Unfortunately, they have this tradition of making money by begging, which is unacceptable in Poland, but our society got somehow this idea of giving them money. Begging is not a crime, but it starts to be a crime when you do it in an aggressive way or you make the children beg with you. If they are begging on Sundays, people going home from Sunday worship will give them money. Some of the Romnis [Roma women] I talked to complained that it's not nice, nor easy.

Besides the classic tropes of 'begging as a tradition' – a *modus vivendi*, which is almost like saying that being poor is a cultural heritage – I especially find the idea of a 'host society' remarkable, which expresses its hospitality by 'offering' social rules, which one either accepts or shall bear the consequences. The same problem of hosting applies to the local schools. Since children have to help their families with making money, they very rarely attend classes. In one of the schools, which we simply called 'Areszt' with the children (lockup in Polish), the teacher of the segregated, mixed-age Gypsy class remembered that she and the other teachers from the school often saw the children begging near the church, when going home from the church.

[Oliwia]: It's very hard to affect things, when they are not inside the school. I have the biggest influence on children when they are in school. I invented a method for one of them, who is always begging on the street. He knows that he can do it, but at least twice a week he needs to come to school. I'm convinced that he likes it here, at the school, so maybe he will be willing to come without coercion.

And although Mrs. Oliwia would have appreciated if the Gypsy children would attend the school regularly, the same doesn't hold for the parents of the Polish children, especially in the Areszt, which is the closest school to the settlement. The parents, who are most often residents of the immediate area of the settlement, have a quite conflictual relation with the Gypsy families:

[Kuba, social worker]: In the beginning people wanted to help them, they gave them hot water, clothes, food… they wanted to meet them, I mean the people from these blocks. After months and years, it started to be problematic for the local people, the settlement was bigger and bigger. They maybe thought with this stereotype, that they are Gypsies and they will go. They became a problem – hygiene, dogs, music…

As the neighborhood got more and more laden with anger and conflicts, the local newspaper started to give voice to the Polish residents, which only fueled the fire. First, the

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daily police control was reinforced in the camp, later young neo-fascists started to insult the Gypsy families. As Michalina Marczak (2016) remembers, 'not only has the community experienced frequent threats and harassment from the supporters of neo-Nazi groups but many Roma have been verbally insulted and physically assaulted on the streets on a daily basis' (ibid., pp. 391-392). Due to their mistrust of public institutions, the Gypsy families never officially reported these abuses. And while even the Polish Roma community is relatively small in Poland (between 16.000 and 50.000), still, the 'Public Opinion Research Center's report [2014] shows that Roma are the nation least liked by Poles (55 percent of the respondents declared a dislike of Roma, with Romanians – disliked by 45 percent of Poles – following them in the second position)' (Jupowiecka, 2015, p. 163). As an actor from a local theatre who participated in various educational activities in the settlement recollected the initial times of the conflict:

> [Ania]: I mean, negative perceptions and conspiracy theories. That's the biggest enemy. That's the only direct form of hatred that I met when I was with them, yeah. And the people from the neighborhood always felt free to make those comments, to shout at them [at the Gypsies], to display this hatred.

At the time I was doing this research, this conflictual field of the neighborhood was

discursively oversaturated with hegemonic articulations of *pollution*. Even the City Police introduced stricter controlling techniques and issued 500 złotych fines for using improper, not environmentally-friendly materials to heat the bungalows.

> [Straż Miejska officer 1]: The regulations, generally, are violated in this area. Especially ecological regulations: waste incineration. We promote the segregation of waste, we have a contract with the [company]. Not to mention sanitary problems – there is no running water, no toilets, there was also a problem with vehicle wrecks, that are unused. It is not allowed in Poland.

The problems of trash, dirt and pollution dominated the discursive landscape of the settlement, especially during the winter, when the families had to heat with anything they could find besides 'eco-friendly' products (e.g., wood). Here, just like in the case of *begging*, the discursive constellation of the ideological mystification floats a hegemonic articulation (*air pollution*) over the state of domination – with direct reference to the discursive formation of new environmentalism ('Saving the planet starts at your trash bin!') – and effectively distorts the ultimately dislocated, historical and contingent character of domination, due to which people cannot afford to heat their homes. This hegemonic articulation not only mystifies

domination but is also inherently fetishistic: it attaches the subject to the objects of new environmentalism. Trash becomes the fetishistic object – as opposed to the symptomal mode of ideology, where they would be repressed – inscribed into fantasy scenarios which could provide surplus enjoyment (*surplus jouissance*) for the subject. Protesting against the air pollution in the Gypsy settlement involves the opiatic illusion, according to which the neighbors and the authorities are glorified in their attempts of protecting the environment, while they are effectively reproducing the very social conditions of people having to heat with trash in the settlement. This is, (similar to an ideologic-critical perspective of waste segregation), what Žižek calls a *false activity*: 'people do not only act in order to change something, they can also act in order to prevent something from happening, so that nothing will change' (2006a, p. 26). This new environmentalism in the post-socialist semi-periphery also addresses the Western fantasy of progress and salvation, which, as connected to the imaginary of whiteness, *cannot accept the orientalist dirt of the periphery's wretched*. Moreover, it also contains a hyperreal character, so that air pollution in the settlement effectively conceals that environments are threatened by big capital's negligence of its brutal contamination of land and water in the first instance. But just as in the case of begging, there is nothing false in this form of ideological mystification. Of course, the hegemonic articulation of 'Gypsies are polluting the air' is a 'Lie', but again, one presented in the guise of truth: there is nothing false in saying that Gypsies are polluting the air in the settlement. The ideological 'Lie' arises precisely at the moment this truth mystifies domination.

What is common in the fantasy scenarios of 'air pollution' and 'begging' is how they constitute the ideological distortion from the point of view of hegemony analysis. In both cases, a hegemonic articulation (a) crosses the field of domination and excludes the subversive signifiers ($\mathcal{Z}$) that would be capable of rendering a specific state of domination into a struggle, thus the articulation conceals and distorts, mystifies ($\lozenge$) the ultimately dislocated, historical and contingent character of domination (d). But these articulations are also emplaced in the structural location of antagonisms, either as an empty signifier (D_1) or as a part of the chain of equivalences ($D_1, D_2 \dots$ a). The articulation of 'If you give money, you don't help!' is a part of a broader neoliberal-neoconservative hybrid campaign, 'aimed at changing the problematic behavior of unproductive individuals rather than promoting wider structural adjustments and reforms' (Kostka, 2018, p. 179) , while the articulation of 'air pollution' is part of the claims of environmental protection, and the antagonistic construction of new environmentalism.

$$\frac{d}{\diamond}$$

$$\begin{array}{c} D_1 \\ \diagup \quad \diagdown \\ \theta = \theta = \theta = \theta \,... \\ D_1 \quad D_2 \quad D_3 \quad a_{\text{(begging)}} \; \diamond \; \not\ni \; S_{\text{(d)}} \end{array}$$

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} D_1 \\ \diagup \quad \diagdown \\ \theta = \theta = \theta = \theta \,... \\ D_1 \quad D_2 \quad D_3 \quad a_{\text{(air pollution)}} \; \diamond \; \not\ni \; S_{\text{(d)}} \end{array}}{d}$$
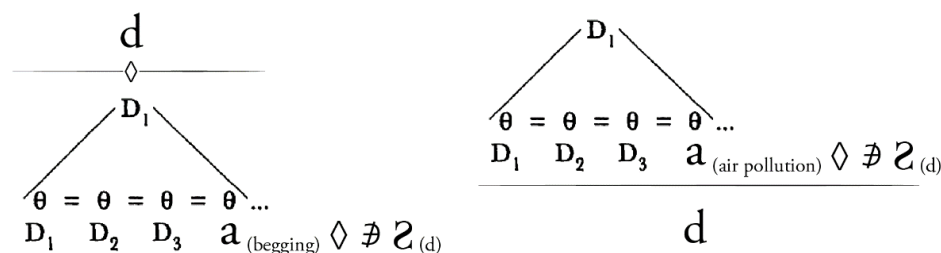
Thus, what one can observe, is a specific case for the critique of ideology (that is becoming more and more the dominant form of mystification in postmodern global capitalism), where *a struggle overdetermines its structural other – domination*. It doesn't simply mean that a struggle overshadows a domination (as in the Marxian manifest reality one element of the real would conceal another element of the real), but that this struggle thrives effectively against the background of domination. In the case of 'air pollution', from the point of view of the antagonism, the structural location of the state of domination (d) that it overdetermines, is that of the Lacanian *extimacy* or Laclau's *heterogeneity*, which cannot be inscribed into any structural locations in the antagonism but makes the antagonism possible. It is almost impossible to inscribe the social deprivation of Gypsy families into the hegemonic structure of new environmentalism. It would be quite bizarre to float the demand (D_i) for the inclusion of Gypsy families under the empty signifier of environmental protection (D_1), since that would lead to the absurd rhetoric where social inclusion would be demanded in favor of clean air – which rhetoric however is not far from contemporary alt-right movements at all.

But in the case of 'begging', the hegemonic structure is fundamentally different, since the antagonism is constructed directly *vis-à-vis* the excluded poor, thus the state of domination (d) is not in extimacy, but constitutes the other side of the antagonistic frontier, the antagonized force. Within this structure not only the specific articulation of 'Refuse help!' is ideological, but the very construction of the antagonistic frontier (◊) – which (1) positions the excluded poor as the antagonistic Other, who 'prevents me from being totally myself' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 125), and (2) promises the 'fullness of society' by eliminating the 'enemy within'.

> 'Gypsies attack people in the old square', 'The Gypsies grope passing women. How to protect yourself', 'Roma are not poor they know how to lie and steal' (…). The image of an aggressive panhandler (…) effectively hid[es] structural dimensions of poverty and normalized institutionalized racism. (…) [These] campaigns reinforce social stigma by implying that beggars are engaged in criminal activities and that they have other choices for generating income, (…) thus concurrently discipline the poorest strata of society and racialize the 'other', to reduce the visibility of poverty and hide it as social issue. In this political landscape, violent expulsions and criminalization of migrants, particularly those living in 'visible poverty' (…) serve to appease growing public insecurities while relieving the state of responsibilities for upholding the human rights of all its residents (Kostka, 2018, pp. 178–183).

In this case, it would not be impossible to inscribe the radical exclusion of Gypsy families into the hegemonic structure of the security mantra, but such a dislocation would deconstruct the antagonistic frontier and would also reshape the political contours of the security discourse, not necessarily in favor of the nationalist bourgeoisie. *In sum, both hegemonic projects are constructed around a parallax, where no common ground is possible between the irreconcilable sides of the ideologico-hegemonic articulation: between air pollution and social deprivation, and between the anti-poverty mantra and poverty.*

These two fantasy scenarios (begging and polluting) also outline the two registers of the emerging European complex: on the *Symbolic* level there is the proliferation of struggles (enhancing social security, standing up for environmental protection), but it fails and cracks in the *Imaginary* register, which structures the antagonisms against the *phantasm* of the trickster, dirty Gypsy. Thus, the ideological construction of the discursive field of the settlement tilts to the Imaginary register, and also illuminates a shift in the hybrid Polish state (neoliberal and neoconservative) which constructs bizarre scenarios of the new regime of advanced imaginality. I argue that the post-socialist, semi-peripheral Centaur state is not only rewarding upwards and disciplinary downwards, as Wacquant proposed, but due to the socialist heritage of relatively strong social institutions in the region and also due to the far-right's imaginary of a strong state, the Central-Eastern European Centaur has been developing two additional political tentacles: a *pervert-disciplinary arm upwards* (e.g., the accountability regime against the liberal elite), and *a pervert-rewarding arm downwards* (e.g., the 500+ program). The approach of the City Police is quite exemplary regarding the latter arm;

> [Straż Miejska officer 3]: There are attempts to civilize (*cywilizowania*), simply speaking. The civilization (*ucywilizowania*) of these people, in a way, we think would be good. Make them citizens of [the city], who will go to work and live in apartments. Because I know there were such attempts. However, according to our assessment, these people, at least the majority, do not want to take advantage of it… they want to do what they do, yes, help if it is material help, free medical care, medicines, maybe some gifts, yes, but they want to remain themselves.

The officer is right, there was an attempt to 'civilize' the Gypsy families. What he overlooks, however, is that the families started to refuse participating in such programs precisely because of how this 'civilizing attempt' was installed. During the early 2010s, one of the local social organizations, in cooperation with the city, started to plan a housing program for the Gypsy families. The leader of the program convinced one family (15 people) in the settlement to destroy their house. As a social worker of the local NGO explained it, this was his 'method for changing life':

[Kuba]: He worked a bit with them, became exhausted and then quit. Guys from the Gypsy family destroyed the house. They were put in an apartment in a building dedicated to teenagers, like a half open place for kids coming from difficult families. They [the Gypsy family] lived there and the conditions were terrible. It is not only about placing them like this, identifying the Roma as the problem, but life conditions there were awful. It was 15 of them and apartment was really small.

When it turned out that the leader of the housing program is going to quit and that the Gypsy family ended up in a terrible condition, the MOPS started to intervene and moved the family to a second place, which functioned as a social apartment for ex-prisoners within the immediate neighborhood of the biggest prison in the city and a therapy center for drug addicts. So, the family was *de facto* closed into an institution of the resocialization of criminals. The officers, who were living there with the 'clients', subjected the family to daylong surveillance, control and imposed a strict evening curfew. As Kostka puts it, '[h]uman rights advocates compared the center to a corrective institution that not only hides poverty from the public view, but also humiliates and further disenfranchises people' (2018, pp. 181–182).

[Lena, social worker]: They moved them to the social apartment with ex-prisoners… it shows a bit how they think and treat these people. Where to put Roma family with small children?! Concentration with ex-prisoners… They live in front of the prison and next to it there is a psychiatric hospital, and then, the building where the ex-prisoners are living…

[Kuba, social worker]: It looks to me like a detention center. They are under constant control, the people working there are trying to 'integrate' them. They come to the rooms, they open wardrobes, pots in kitchen, fridge. They also open their letters. Awful!

However, in the interpretation of the MOPS, it was a successful initiative, based on workfare and resocialization, which was difficult due to the Gypsies' 'behavior':

[MOPS representative]: The officers managed a job for [one of them in the family] in a kindergarten for 4 hours a day, like technical work, little bit of cleaning but also help with preparing the food. Work wasn't problem for her, she was able to clean, serve the food, she understood the expectations, but being away from family for four hours a day was huge problem for her. They all need to discuss and talk about the family life, they cannot make independent decisions on their own, and all decisions need to be done by all family members.

This enforced proletarianization based on punitive workfare was hence also combined with individualist narratives, introducing a crack in the protective family structure of the Gypsies both within the family (which had been moved out from the settlement), and within the wider community:

[Kuba]: They tried to escape within three weeks, they went to Poznań or somewhere, but they did not have an alternative there. The worst thing is that the relationships with people from settlement got worse, they were treated like traitors.

I went several times to this corrective institution, but the family always refused to talk to me. As they explained to the social workers, they don't want to participate in 'projects' anymore in the future, neither in research, nor in simple discussions. This housing program is not a unique and particular case, it is embedded in a wider European context of proliferating Roma housing programs, especially after the consideration of the case of the marginalized Roma on an international scope as a 'European issue' after 2007-08 (cf. Gagyi & Pulay, 2017). As Berescu argues, such housing programs should at least promote desegregation by taking the wider context of the local community into consideration, and instead of ad hoc interventions, community-based programs should be prioritized before reaching for the bulldozers:

> If we now look at the current practices, there is a European wide policy to isolate the Roma and place them in highly regulated, low-standard segregated housing units. It is hard to imagine that the European money and a booklet with the 10 principles[66] will simply change the behaviour, attitudes and practices of national and local authorities. If this is to continue we will just replace the old, ugly slums with brand new ghettos (2011, p. 352).

Within such attempts of 'integration', the disciplinary character of the Centaur state is even more disguised than when it practices explicit technologies of punishment. The 'incarceration' of the Gypsy family into this corrective institution under the discursive tagline of 'housing project' is exemplary regarding the ideologico-critical problem, when *it is the darkest under the candle*. The extension of the punitive arm of the Centaur state with this pervert-rewarding tentacle displaces the poor to ever-deeper control in the guise of humanism, engineered on the basis of middle-class fantasies regarding the 'normal' way of life. It is precisely how the *inversion* of exclusion, marginalization and extreme deprivation provides the basic structure of advanced marginality, consisting of inclusion *through* exclusion,

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[66] Berescu refers here to the 10 European principles as stated and unanimously agreed to in Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, Brussels, 7.4.2010 SEC (2010) 400 final, 2.

patronization *through* punishment, and spectacularization *through* stigmatization (i.e., the Gypsy family as a 'bio-décor' for the caring city).

* * *

Considering this particular post-socialist, semi-peripheral modality of advanced marginality, it is necessary to supplement Wacquant's territorial characters of advanced marginality (hyperghetto, anti-ghetto), with the Central-Eastern European 'hybrid-ghetto'. Since it is 'hybrid', its territorial character cannot be generalized, but it is neither that of a hyperghetto, nor an anti-ghetto, rather always a third instance in-between the two. Obviously, the Gypsy settlement in Poland shares some of the main territorial characteristics of advanced marginality: lack of income and employment security, fragmentation, erosion and degradation of wage labor; disconnection from macroeconomic trends; spatial marginalization intensified with territorial stigmatization; and the lack of symbolic representation. While Wacquant characterizes advanced marginality also with the dissolution of strong social bonds (reduction from *place* to *space*), persistent fear, inherent isolation from the community, the dreams of escape and the loss of hinterland, the Gypsy settlement is precisely its opposite with strong

hinterlands in Romania and diverse social bonds across Poland, that is topologically closer to how Wacquant describes the 1970's American ghetto: as places with strong identities, rich in mutual aid, cultural heritage. But the exclusionary logic of the Gypsy settlement, just like that of the hyperghetto, is also 'determined by ethnicity, modulated by class position (…), and aggravated by the state' while the anti-ghetto 'is rooted in class inequality, inflected by ethnicity (…) and partially deflected by public action' (Wacquant, 2014, p. 1962). While the Gypsy settlement is similar to the hyperghetto, in that it is ethnically homogeneous unlike the anti-ghetto, which is heterogeneous, there is one distinction between the hyperghetto and the anti-ghetto, which coalesces into a particular characteristic of the hybrid-ghetto. It is the mixture of 'an intrusive and omnipresent police-and-penal apparatus' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 3), that is characteristic to the hyperghetto, and of 'the strong presence of public institutions catering to social needs' (ibid., p. 5), characteristic to the anti-ghetto. I argue that *this strong omnipresent and omnipotent interinstitutional character, which is interlinked into what I called the 'dispositif of advanced marginality', is the primordial distinctive modality of the semi-peripheral hybrid-ghetto.* Moreover, I argue *that the dispositif of advanced marginality, the*

geometry of the arrangement of apparatuses is where the ideological constellation of the discursive landscapes of poverty is constituted par excellence. I assert that it is of utmost importance to start taking this interinstitutional character that is superimposed on semi-peripheral hybrid-ghettos very seriously into account. As Czech Roma rights activist Ivanka Čonková argues, 'we have to realize that the segregation of Roma children (…), evictions (…), police abuses are not unrelated problems. (…) Roma integration programs have failed because their authors have focused on each issue separately…' (2016). One should hence consider a broader European context, which, as Polish ethnographer Aleksandra Kubiak put it, 'speaks volumes about tolerance, creates opportunities for free movement of people, but cannot deal with emerging settlements legally and socially. And this trend will not decrease…' (2012). One should also pay particular attention to the local, contextual dispositifs of advanced marginality as well, which apparently also preserves and reproduces urban poverty. As one of the City Police officers admitted:

> [Straż Miejska officer 2]: The phenomenon has been occurring for 10 or 15 years, and such a large city cannot cope with the problem…

Thus, as I already argued, my ethnographic research is an attempt to capture this ideologico-discursive landscape of the dispositifs of advanced marginality. In order to do the 'mapping work'[67], I always joined (both as a researcher and as a volunteer) a local NGO, which functions nowadays as a 'gatekeeper' of the neighborhoods of relegation. In Poland, I started to cooperate with the social workers and anarchist activists of a local organization even before starting the research. Two of them became very good friends of mine. I was trying to help them build links with the schools in the city, and they were helping me contact the state apparatuses, translating and interpreting the Polish language. I accompanied them on their regular visits to the settlement, and they accompanied me to institutions and on a research trip to Romania as well. We became comrades in the traditional sense. In the very beginning, I started to draw a map of the dispositif of the Gypsy settlement, relying merely on their daily experiences. Then I spent seven months within the deepest organs of the dispositif of the Gypsy settlement in Poland, taking fieldnotes, conducting interviews, recording conversations, always after signing

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[67] I follow here the ars politica and ars pedagogica of Lotar Rasiński, who notes that 'it is possible to do a kind of "mapping work," which will allow us to "find our way" in a particular situation which ideology presents to us as inevitable. Such maps have a capacity to liberate us from pictures that "hold us captive" by opening up a space of freedom that is, by pointing at possibilities of thinking, acting (…) otherwise. It means that it is possible to think otherwise, that it is possible to "work" on oneself and thereby to make oneself to a degree "free"' (2018, p. 140).

an informed consent agreement with the participants.[68] I paid particular attention to taking good quality and communicative photos, since my daily routine often consisted of walking and traveling across various landscapes of the city, from the urban periphery to the center and back, it thus involved the position of the *flâneur*. However, even at the expense of the contextualization of my fieldwork, I will not reveal the exact location of the research in order to guarantee the maximum anonymity and protection of the participants. Finally, in designing my ethnographic research, based on close cooperation with social workers and activists, I followed Wacquant's approach to the ethnography of urban poverty. As he argues,

> much is to be gained from forging links between activists and researchers who (…) battle on the social front, and this *at the European level* so as to optimise the intellectual and practical resources to be invested in this struggle. There is a tremendous mine of scientific and political knowledge to be exploited and shared on the scale of the continent. (…) For the true alternative to the drift towards the penalisation of poverty, soft or hard, is the construction of a European social state worthy of the name (2001, p. 410).

And the activists and social workers I started to work with really had a tremendous mine of knowledge, especially about the dispositif of the settlement, since one of their central tasks had been to mitigate or manage the everyday circus of the apparatuses: the police, the doctors, the city police officers, the teachers, the MOPS representatives, the university students and their professors, the angry neighbors, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Catholic priest, the Orthodox bishop, the journalists, the TV staff, the researchers (like me), the legal aid experts, the photo artists, the theatre artists, the foreign musicians, the film directors, the international human rights associations, the child protection experts, the animal protection advisers, the housing program leaders, the waste rationalization managers, the mobile toilet suppliers, it goes on.

My very first visit to the camp was already concerted on the silent rumble of the vast organ of the dispositif. Dika invited us to a commemoration of her father, who died a year before. Dika organized a dinner in the settlement with the family, they brought out every table in front of their house, they prepared soups, meat, drinks, and welcomed us with incredible hospitality. They were telling stories about Dika's father, and after the dinner, the social workers told me how the father died:

> [Kuba]: Dika's father was a quite respected person but he wasn't anyone special here. Dika and his family were the first step for me to work with adults. Before then, I worked only with kids. I started because I knew that his father is sick, so I offered my help. One day they asked me to call ambulance, because the father felt really sick with the stomach. The ambulance didn't want to come, but when they arrived, they

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[68] For detailed description, see ethical considerations in the attachment.

were rude, aggressive, xenophobic and racist. Than they wanted to make diagnose from inside the ambulance car. The doctor said, he will not get out from the car and he told me that the father already had been in hospital and he is ok. So, I started to shout at him and told him that he shall write this down on paper, that he diagnosed the patient without getting out from the car… if the person is going to die he is going to be responsible for it. It took a while to get him [Dika's father] to the hospital.

[Lena]: For me it's simply discrimination. It wouldn't happen to any other people…

[Kuba]: The father was getting worse and worse, and ended up in a critical condition, then spent almost half-a-year in the hospital. In the NGO we made a fake insurance for him, not fake, I mean, we hired the father to cover him with the insurance and to have this benefit money for funeral that the law guarantees. We expected that he will die soon so we did it. It was winter, so when he died it was hard to transport him, so they waited with this till spring started. We prepared everything and helped them about the procedures, contacting the funeral company and organizing the transport of the body to Romania.

The lack of health insurance effected the already poor health conditions in the settlement to a large extent. Since they could not cover the costs of medical treatment, the Gypsy families decided to use medical service only in critical situations. But even in such situations, the treatment often depended on the 'good will' of the doctors. This site of institutional exclusion

had its worst impact on the children. While some families managed to transfer the child's health insurance from Romania (which is possible in Poland when a child is enrolled in education), still, it didn't guarantee proper medical treatment.

[Lena]: Not all of the children got insurance, and even if they did, it is hard to get to specialist in Poland. Some of them have this special problem with their teeth, this problem causes all other infections because their immunology system is weak. Children have many infections, they eat twice a day, so they are smaller than Polish children in the same age group.

Sometimes this institutional exclusion is brought to the extreme, when for instance a Gypsy child with a very bad flu received simple water in a vial and iron for her treatment. And this cruel biopolitics of the dispositif is not only connected to the hospital and medical service. During the winter, the families asked me several times to help them with buying their medication in the city, because even if they had the money for it, they were simply not served. I went to the pharmacy and asked for diapers and medicine. They gave it to me, without question. I asked them why they didn't give it to the mother. They said, because they thought she had 'fake money' (fałszywe pieniądze). Also, the MOPS got involved in this biopolitics,

when one day during the winter they appeared in the settlement and took the children for vaccination without proper consultation with the families, claiming that there was an 'epidemy' in the settlement.

> [MOPS representative]: At one point, when there was measles epidemic (epidemia odry), we were taking children for vaccination, because we could do it.
>
> [Lena]: But there was no epidemic, are you aware of it? Five children were sick…
>
> [MOPS representative]: I do not know. I was not working here then and I only say what I know.

This form of brutal biopolitics is not exclusively characteristic to the new authoritarian Centaur state, but the far-right government in Poland obviously has an implicit effect on reengineering the state apparatuses. As Ost argues, 'already in December 2015, as noted, PiS passed a new civil service law that withdrew the requirement for prior experience and the proscription on political party membership for the heads of state bureaucracies. Today PiS loyalists staff the state at all levels' (2017, p. 22). It was quite evident during my meetings with the MOPS:

> [MOPS representative]: I think that social problems arise from cultural ones. This is the reason, because if they want to live next to us, but in their own culture without changing it, they can only earn money through begging. I spent many hours with the family [in the post-prison resocialization center] I remember that very important conversation that opened my eyes. We experienced each other in such a shocking situation. It was such a confrontation… she [the Gypsy mother] gave birth to her child when she was 14 years old, I was 28. I told them how many years I have spent in education, they just looked at me surprised. When they heard that I was 60, they looked at me and said 'Smile!' and were surprised that I had my own teeth. We were a phenomenon for each other. She saw in what state of health she is through me: she is sick, she has no teeth, while at the age of 60 I am healthy, in good physical shape, I have energy, I do not cry… they cry all the time. It is always a question, really, about what they want and what they want to change? And if they are ready for the change. I have the impression that a lot of actions that in our opinion are heading for change are perceived as repression by them, rather than trying to direct their actions, so that they can function differently in this society. They do not feel it yet, they have this resistance. The question is whether they really know the path according to which they want to live in a society, in a different culture?

This is an exemplary hegemonic articulatory practice of how the dispositif conceals its governmentality by displacing it to the realm of culture and individual responsibility. But besides this common ideological mystification, there is a more important ideological fetish in this articulation: the subject encounters *jouissance* (enjoyment-in-sense) in the mirror of the 'living corps', against which she is capable of feeling healthy, successful, full of energy. If there is a positive function of advanced marginality, then it is how it – as a symptom – turns upside-down and starts to function as a fetish, as the embodiment of the Lie (they are sick, we are

healthy), which enables the subject to sustain the unbearable truth (the society is sick). This fetishistic disavowal was also characteristic to the neighborhood, which disavowal often escalated into verbal and physical violence. Again, while this form of fetishism is not exclusively characteristic to the new authoritarian Centaur state, still 'the toxic official rhetoric encourages street violence against "others." There has been a sharp escalation in attacks on foreign-looking individuals since PiS came to power' (Ost, 2017, p. 23).

> [Straż Miejska officer 1]: The attitude of the local residents is also negative, these people actively protested, took part in meetings and expressed their views. These people cannot be accused of the lack of tolerance. These are educated people, and suddenly their surroundings have ceased to be friendly.
>
> [Straż Miejska officer 2]: The first years were calmer. More introverted. Even I was wondering. They [the Gypsy people] were traveling by public transport, by trams, and they were quiet. And now they can argue with other passengers in such a strange way… we will not do certain things because we do not behave like that. And they are very loud, women can spit on you, that is foreign, it is so foreign culturally.
>
> [Straż Miejska officer 1]: This shows, in my opinion, that they did not meet with aggression. They must feel good here.
>
> [Straż Miejska officer 2]: …they feel great.
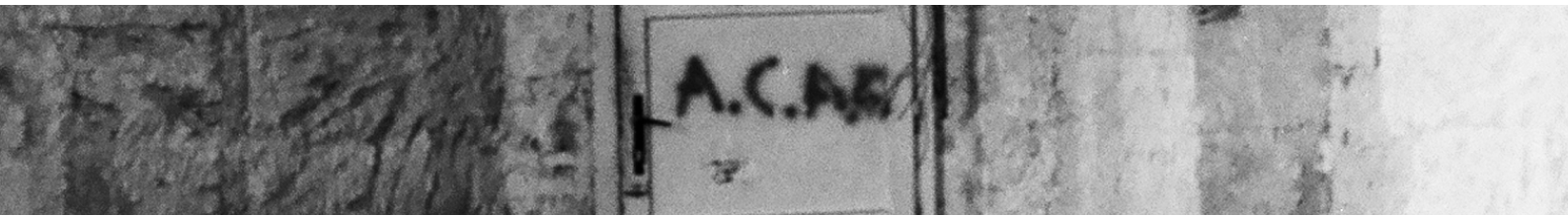
> [Me]: Do we have any records that local citizens attacked Roma people?
>
> [Straż Miejska officer 1]: We are surprised, but no, there were no such accidents, but honestly there is such a fear that the problem will grow, someone for example says an ugly word and a disaster happens, like throwing a bottle of gasoline…
>
> [Straż Miejska officer 1]: They are in one place and it is easy to channel the frustrations on this group, because it is different.

The City Police officers not only find surplus enjoyment in the fantasy scenarios of 'throwing a bottle of gasoline', but also on the level of ideological cynicism: they know very well that the Gypsy people are victims of hate crimes and violence, but they still act as if they didn't know it, as if the Gypsy people were 'feeling good' in Poland, in order to conceal that it is actually them, the police-and-penal apparatus, who finds *jouissance* in punishing the poor. It is they who feel great. To give a brutal example of this radical enjoyment: during the reinforced security controls in the city center the City Police officers often took beggars to the police station. During one occasion, they put the children in the police car, but they never arrived at the station, they just took the children to their own playground. They were speeding in the city

and then all of a sudden used the handbrake, so that the children would hit their heads on the metal grid that separates the back seats of the car from the front. Then they dropped the children off at the settlement. As the children told me, they were scared, while the police officers were laughing 'diabolically.' But as I argued regarding the distinctive character of the hybrid-ghetto, besides those apparatuses, which conduct the mainstream of biopolitics within the dispositif, there is also a strong presence of apparatuses 'catering to social needs'. There are two main trends that dominate this other face of the dispositif: 'NGOization' and what I call 'circusification'.

NGOization. After the Central-Eastern European transitions, non-governmental organizations played a key role in assisting the multinational influx of capital and knowledge on the national scale (Ost, 2016a). In post-socialist countries, this assistance was implemented 'in the language of "democratic consolidation" and "civil society development", or increasingly in terms of "capacity building" and "sustainability"' (Fagan, 2006, p. 115). As argued before, in the post-socialist semi-peripheral context, Western values became equivalent with *improvement* and the Eastern context with *decline*, and the NGOs started to embody the promise of keeping the country 'from slipping into the periphery' (Wallerstein, 2006, p. 29). The process of NGOization is thus deeply rooted in post-1989 civic society mantras, largely influenced by the Polish mass movement of workers. But while the concept of civic society was based on the assumption that a participatory civic culture is conducive to the enhancement of democratic processes, this idea nonetheless contributed to the neoliberal imaginary of the withdrawal of the state. While after the transitions the NGOs were perceived as progressive forces, the neoconservative tilt of the Centaur state contributed to the perception of NGOs as being 'an arm of a generalized western colonizing project' (Hemment, 1998, p. 45). As Ost argues, in Poland,

> NGOs (…) work with many of the same marginalized people that PiS has been appealing to. In Fall 2016, PiS began attacking NGOs as sinecures for political rivals, sites of unadorned corruption, and safe spaces for foreign agents. (…) Catholic organizations explicitly linked to the (wealthy) Church, meanwhile, are awarded huge sums from the state budget. Salazar-style Catholic corporatism is increasingly a relevant comparison (2017, p. 23).

Besides the far-right attack, a leftist critique of NGOs has also emerged in the past decade (cf. Choudry & Kapoor, 2013; Mikecz, 2018). The main points of criticism are the following: *NGOs started to dominate the political field of struggles*, marginalizing more radical political movements; *NGOs have partly depoliticized or instrumentalized the field of emancipatory political praxis* with promoting professionalization on the basis of a mature and realistic

attitude, while engaging with – what Žižek has been criticizing so boldly in Laclau's theoretical debauchery toward – issue-oriented politics, while resigning from global political strategies in favor of partial demands; the liberal idea of the civic society promotes politics of recognition, and *renounces politicizing class domination and transnational structures of hegemony*. Gergő Pulay and Ágnes Gagyi (2017) argue that yet another dimension of the problem is related to the question of representation, which consists of an ontological gap between the reality of poverty and the reality of political representation, which presupposes a middle-class position from those applying for a spokesman role. Moreover, the struggle for representation between the different actors and organizations constitutes a meta-level of struggle, which is a struggle over the rules and methods and of who has the legitimacy to speak. As a consequence of the multiplication of spokesmen, actors, and the general struggle for representation, the marginalized communities become more and more visible

> which paradoxically leads to a situation, where their situation becomes even harder to understand and interpret. The public attention to which the 'problematic' neighborhoods and groups are exposed has grown together with the multiplication of actors (including media professionals, representatives of various bureaucratic organizations or experts committed to social responsibility) who all have demanded their own part of the cake and a professional autonomy for articulating the particular name, interpretation and possible solution of the specific social problem (Gagyi & Pulay, 2017, p. 83, translation mine).

Hence, this constitutes a hegemonic relation between the local organizations, in which the struggle is for the 'gatekeeper' position. This hegemonic conflict between the organizations often leads to a distorted communication, where they are tempted to enlarge how successful an intervention was or dramatize the terrible conditions of the social group they represent. Pulay and Gagyi call this phenomenon 'symbolic gentrification', when the repetitive and unsuccessful daily work of activists and social workers acquires a higher value in its symbolic representation. Regarding the Gypsy settlement in Poland, it was the NGO I've been cooperating with, which was in a gatekeeper position, but due to the lack of other prospective organizations during the time of the research a hegemonic conflict emerged between the NGO and the state apparatuses. It was, moreover, a strongly politicized NGO composed of anarchist activists, which not only meant the re-politicization of urban poverty, but also being reflective regarding their own praxis:

> [Kuba]: We try not to be a charity organization, we provide our support, skills, our work… This is why I think we don't have a lot of money because we do not prepare these stupid, shitty projects, to do something just because we want to earn money. We always look for practical things, like to have a goal and to have effect but a real one, not only on the paper that we did something. Especially about Roma people, because

you can do a lot of projects with Roma for Roma, but the best way is to make huge festival withe the songs, skirts and you know… than you do two awful things because you earn money and second, you make the stereotype deeper. The myth is deeper and deeper that Gypsy people only dance and sing.

This myth is partly mitigated, but partly reinforced by, artists, directors, musicians, who do not apply for the gatekeeper position, but who constitute a major part of the dispositif of the settlement:

> [Lena]: Sad thing about artists is that their activity doesn't bring real changes for the Gypsies. Even if it is nice, artists actually get more than Roma people.
>
> [Kuba]: It was this story about an artist, photographer, who used a photo of a woman, a breastfeeding woman, as cover of some magazine and didn't ask for the permission. This woman saw this photo and wasn't happy about it, because it is connected with tradition, it is a taboo in her culture.

Circusification. I call 'circusification' *the specific modality of the dispositif, which consists of the multiplication of artistic and cultural projects within the already dense interinstitutional framework of advanced marginality*. It resembles the world of the circus in terms of establishing the 'theater' of representation, which provides *surplus enjoyment* for the audience (Symbolic class) – an enjoyment that thrives against the background of the everyday torture and suffering of the poor, and where the symbolic and political reward is on the side of the artist. These projects often promote the identification with the excluded, through categories of intersectionality ('Roma, woman and queer'), with participatory methods, focusing on giving voice to the excluded. 'In cases of attempts for promoting the identification with the position of the "weak", the very assumption of identification often makes it unclear, that for whom will the recognition generated through "participation" become a real resource' (Gagyi & Pulay, 2017, pp. 91–92, translation mine). Of course, there are artistic projects, which are designed according to mainstream concepts of empowerment, critical pedagogy, or participatory democracy, but I assert that there is an irreducible distance between inscribing the element of struggle into art and inscribing the element of art into struggle. As Czarnota and Kledzik argue,

> [i]nitiatives of this type are certainly useful from the point of view of disseminating knowledge about the Roma group, but they lead neither to greater inclusion of the Roma community nor to transformation of stereotypes about it. At a moment faced with a lack of charismatic Roma practitioners of critical art in Poland, that gap has been filled by non-Roma artists whose attention is focused on what is probably the 'hottest' point of spatial negotiation between the Roma and the majority society – the encampment… (2011, p. 26)

Even if such projects do not deepen the stereotypes about Gypsy people, they – as Lina said – don't bring real change for the people. Hence, the circusification of the dispositif exploits

the slogan 'Enjoy poverty!' by providing surplus enjoyment (*we not only enjoy helping the poor, but we enjoy the surplus of it, which is their enjoyment*), and from the ideologico-critical perspective, this entertaining tentacle of the dispositif is completely aligned with that of the police-and-penal apparatus. In Poland, the settlement was crisscrossed with these tentacles of entertainment, and the artists produced drama classes for children, photo exhibitions of the everyday life in the settlement, a photo album, a music video directed in the camp, a documentary film, architectural installations, afternoon parties with musicians, community picnics in the local park, etc. One of the biggest groups of artists were locals, they worked with prisoners, disabled people, refugees, homeless people, and organized demonstrations, performances, community meetings:

> [Ula, artist]: We played in the settlement first in 2012. We started going to the camp to see what is going on and we were coming with lot of people, lots of instruments, playing music and games with them. I remember shouting and jumping children. In the beginning it was easy to interact with children but adults were concerned about what we actually want to do. We came there to play with children, with theatre elements, acrobatics, flying things, singing songs, dancing. I brought them songs from Romania. Then we started to take them to the local park. Every time we went out, the mothers were taking decisions whether kids can go with us. Some of them asked us for money in exchange for taking their children to the park.

As Sabina told me, when, after 2013, more and more people started to come to the camp, they first didn't care about it, but after a few years it became overwhelming for them, so they started to seek ways they could benefit from this 'social safari'. 'Can you imagine that all these people would come to *your* house every second day?' – she asked. Hence, even the presence of the Jehovah's Witnesses had been also transmogrified into an economic relation under the mask of a religious relation – they asked for money for participating as subjects in the missionary work, just as they asked for money for 'renting' their children to the artists. Because, while the children of the upper classes benefit to a large extent from such informal programs after school, the children of the poor only make it to an anonymized reference in the organization's application for the next project fund. In sum, the dispositif of the Gypsy settlement is a vast organ, that conducts the symphony of the interwoven apparatuses and

> fully exposes the penalizing nature of the Polish neoliberal regime and its insidious drive to stigmatize destitution. Inside institutionalized hostilities, social workers as well as community development practitioners and integration experts appear complicit in implementing social policies that are degrading and inhumane. (…) They also have a schizophrenic character, on one hand espousing basic humanitarian principles and on the other authoritarian moralities (e.g., surveillance, eviction, removal of children) (Kostka, 2018, p. 179).

And here I totally agree with Kostka: the dominant formations of the dispositif of the Gypsy settlement were the *human rights discourse* and the *legal discourse*, sometimes in conflictual, sometimes in supplementary, relation. On the one hand, the discursive dominance of the human rights mantra is a consequence of the hegemonic position of liberal democracy and the 'Rights of Man', that has been so boldly criticized by Marx when writing *On the Jewish Question* (1844b). For Marx, the trick in the liberal concepts of rights and justice is that they promise a community, while they effectively separate human beings on the basis of the assumption that people need protection from each other.[69] And against the liberal defense that it is only the problem of the scope and scale of the definition of human rights, I agree with Žižek that the extension of the abstract-universal notion would not do the trick, since the problem is in the very *form of the universality* of human rights, which poses the question: 'How, in what specific historical conditions, does abstract universality itself become a "fact of (social) life"? In what conditions do individuals experience themselves as subjects of universal human rights?' (Žižek, 2000a, p. 105). Obviously, it is in *societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails*, where this abstract-universal form predominates the subject's fantasies. This is, so to speak, the condition of possibility of the human rights regime which for Cames, drawing on Agamben, 'does not mean being able to make claims before the nation-state (e.g., recognition, social services, political representation, etc.), but it means being placed ineluctably under its total control' (Cames, 2013, p. 24). On the other hand, although the very existence of urban poverty is 'not a scientific or technical problem but a moral statement; although every aspect of it can be described, measured and tagged, [what] distinguishes a ghetto from a regular (…) territory has to do with our capacity to draw a line between what is acceptable and the unacceptable' (Berescu, 2011, p. 345). Still, the discursive apparatus of legal regulations was overrepresented in the ideologico-hegemonic articulations regarding the settlement. The expressions 'according to the Polish law' or 'according to the law' ('zgodnie z polskim prawem', 'zgodnie z ustawą') functioned as an ideologico-discursive weapon in the conflictual 'games of truth' within the dispositif. Polish researchers also point to the problematic cases, when authorities are 'justifying their actions by citing the law in force at the time but without taking into account the human aspects of the situation' (Wiktorska-Święcka, 2016, p. 76), when

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[69] '[T]he right of man to liberty is based not on the association of man with man, but on the separation of man from man. (…) The right of man to private property is (…) the right to enjoy one's property and to dispose of it at one's discretion. (…) Equality, (…) is nothing but the equality of the *liberté* described above. (…) Security is the highest social concept of civil society, the concept of *police*, expressing the fact that the whole of society exists only in order to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights, and his property.' (ibidem.)

'authorities have been explaining that they are not able to undertake concrete steps because of legal barriers and lack of competencies' (Ferenc & Mandelt, 2014, p. 13), or when '[u]nder a restrictive and economically driven legal framework, the impoverished Romanian Roma communities found it almost impossible to register as EU citizens often finding themselves in a limbo of bureaucratic protocol' (Kostka, 2018, p. 177).

It is absolutely beyond the scope of this dissertation to further develop the ideologico-hegemonic character of the dispositif of the Gypsy settlement, and it is not my intention at all. What I have tried to illuminate above is how the ideological constellation of the discursive field is constituted through and by the dispositif of advanced marginality. But most importantly, I'm interested in *how the School is positioned within the new regime of urban poverty, which, however, cannot be grasped comprehensively without acknowledging that the educational apparatus and teachers are positioned at the ideologico-hegemonic epicenter of the dispositif of advanced marginality.*

8.2 The Education Vacuum

If there is one fundamental lesson or message of my overall research, a kernel of thought that constitutes the implicit 'red thread' of this dissertation, then it is the acknowledgment of the *par excellence* pedagogical character of the dispositif of advanced marginality, and my intransigent assertion that the dispositif is pedagogically meaningful for teacher education and for transformative teacher learning *in potentia*. This assertion doesn't only concern the dispositifs of advanced marginality as the *a priori* pedagogical environment, but any dispositifs – from rural landscapes to unacceptably wealthy elite dystopias – of which a School is an integral part. In all kinds of dispositifs, *transformative teacher learning can be understood as a site of teaching, of educating the hegemonic geometry of the dispositif itself*, which involves an ideologico-critical praxis.

While I argued before, that the transformative potentiality of the School is its separation which can unlock the world in order to expose it to the risk (the impossibility) of education, in terms of teacher education an engaged attachment to the social is inevitable for the sake of what Masschelein and Simons call the '[l]ove (…) for the material the teacher is engaging' (2013, p. 68). A certain degree of engagement is also necessary from the ideologico-critical point of view. As I will argue later in detail, I propose a weak conception of transformative teacher education, that is based on the encounter with the Real through the inherent inconsistencies, dislocations, structural failures, ideological parallaxes of the dispositif. This practico-theoretical extension of the pedagogical horizon of teacher education is also part of the critical endeavors for

transposing teacher learning into the politicized, conflictual, hegemonic landscape of the social, which also contains a displacement of the teachers' role as influenced by Gramsci's account of the 'organic intellectual' and Henry Giroux's concept of 'public pedagogy'. Gramsci emphasized the role of organic intellectuals in hegemonic struggles, in contrast to traditional intellectuals, who see themselves as independent, but who rather assist in the maintenance of ruling ideas. Organic intellectuals, for him, grow out of the working class or join the working class with the purpose to transform popular consciousness into socialist consciousness. Gramsci defines two important characteristics of the organic intellectuals: (1) they can emerge from all kinds of fields of the social, may it be an engineer, a farmer, a civil servant, a doctor or a lawyer and (2) they are permanently engaged with the everyday practice of the local communities in order to transform the consciousness distorted by common sense. Gramsci argued that 'all men are "philosophers"' (1932/2000, p. 325), and that '[a]ll men are intellectuals' (ibid., p. 304), each man

> outside his professional activity, 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' (ibid., p. 321).

The organic intellectual brings into being new modes of thought, their practice, however, 'can no longer consist in eloquence, (…) but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator…' (ibid., p. 321).[70] This type of public engagement is also present in Freire's and Giroux's work. For Freire, an educator is 'a politician also' (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 31), 'whose dream is the transformation of society' (ibid., p. 47). She 'constantly re-forms her reflections' (Freire, 1993, p. 80) through observing 'certain moments of the life of the area – sometimes directly, sometimes by means

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[70] Gramsci's concept of the intellectuals, since it couldn't overcome its class determinism, was abandoned in the era of the linguistic turn. It was Foucault in the late 1970s, who brought the question of intellectuals again into the discussion of power-knowledge relations. Similarly to Gramsci's distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals, Foucault also makes a distinction between the 'universal intellectual', as the jurist or notable who 'bears the values of all, opposes the unjust sovereign or his ministers and makes his cry resound even beyond the grave' (1980a, p. 128), while the 'specific intellectual', as the savant or expert, becomes 'more and more important in proportion to the political responsibilities which he is obliged willy-nilly to accept, as a nuclear scientist, computer expert, pharmacologist, etc.' (ibid., p. 131). David Blacker supplemented Foucault's concept of the specific intellectual with two categories: (1) *efficacy,* which is 'the necessity of organizing one's endeavors around a specific locus', which 'by restricting one's scope of activity, one often widens and deepens the (potential) consequences of that activity' and (2) *honesty,* which is the idea of paying attention to the consequences of one's practice and to 'how the results of one's efforts are used' (Blacker, 1998, p. 359). The concept of the specific intellectual highlights the role's political *function*, as an intentional engagement with the local community. The role of the specific intellectual 'along with a handful of others' is political 'in his specific relation to a local form of power' (Foucault, 1980a, pp. 129–131).

of informal conversations with the inhabitants' (ibid., p. 111), in order to organize her practices in solidarity with the oppressed. In line with Freire's account, Giroux has elaborated the concept of 'public pedagogy' (cf. 2000, 2003, 2004a, 2004b), which he understands as a specific response to the corporatization, erosion and elimination of public spaces, where the 'pedagogical' cannot be reduced to what goes on in the School:

> This means that any viable theory of radical pedagogy must not only be concerned with issues of curriculum and classroom practices, but must also emphasize the institutional constraints and larger social formations (…) to challenge dominant teaching practices as well as systemic forms of oppression (Giroux, 2003, p. 8).

For Giroux, the social is a 'contested sphere over the production, distribution, and regulation of power' (Giroux, 2004a, p. 62), thus it is the primary terrain for a transformative, politico-pedagogical intervention. Political *and* pedagogical, with the emphasis on *making the pedagogical more political*, and 'making the political more pedagogical' by addressing how agency unfolds within power-infused relations – that is, how the very processes of learning constitute the political mechanisms through which identities are produced…' (Giroux, 2000, p. 11). This entails a shift from the liberal understanding of the teacher's role towards the politically engaged position of the educator. While the former draws on a depoliticized, technological project, which disempowers teachers and subjects them to the neoliberal regimes of standardized testing, accountability and managerialism, the latter promotes the teacher's politico-pedagogical potential for transformation:

> Educational work, at best, represents a response to questions and issues posed by the tensions and contradictions of public life and such work, when critical, also attempts to understand and intervene in specific problems that emanate from the material contexts of everyday existence. (…) In part, this points to the necessity for educators and others to link educational work, both within and outside of schools. (…) At the risk of over-emphasis, educators and others require a politics of resistance that extends beyond the classroom as part of a broader struggle… (Giroux, 2003, pp. 11–14).

Giroux thus promotes a politico-pedagogical praxis, where educators work both inside and outside of the educational apparatus, engaging with the community to better understand how power operates, how ideological mystification is produced, and how subjects are constituted. I argue that *the pedagogical* 'aspect change' *from the role of the teacher to that of the educator is transformative teacher learning par excellence*. Giroux's commitment to public pedagogy is not only based on keeping the traditions of critical revolutionary pedagogy alive, but also on the acknowledgement that – as argued before – *global capitalism is already pedagogical in character*, fueling a mode of 'oppressive public pedagogy', which 'produces a

particular view of the world and mobilizes an array of pedagogical practices in a variety of sites in order to normalize its modes of governance, subject positions…' (Giroux, 2000, p. 27), and, moreover, the far-right's current success can be also attributed to its persuasive public pedagogy: through 'the mass media, from news services to book publishing, as well as formal educational sites – the Right developed its own pedagogical spheres for engaging the public' (ibid., p. 16). This means that the politico-pedagogical struggle cannot be closed inside the classroom, since it already takes place in the social. In line with Giroux, my attempt to highlight the pedagogical character of the dispositif of advanced marginality is also based on the acknowledgement that a transformative, emancipatory pedagogical praxis cannot be reduced to the classroom, cannot be detached from the oppressive public pedagogy of the new interinstitutional regime of urban poverty.

However, when I started my ethnographic research in Poland, I was not concerned with the pedagogical character of the dispositif – although I already tried to understand the School as an integral part of it – but I was putting the emphasis on the heterotopia of urban poverty as an educationally meaningful site for transformative teacher learning. Inspired by Francisco Silva Cavalcante's work with elementary school teachers in Circles of Literacies (Cavalcante, 2000), and the conceptualization of households as rich in funds of knowledge by Norma Gonzalez et al. (1995), my initial thrust was to organize working groups in the schools with the teachers, who are involved in the education of the Gypsy children from the settlement, with the support of the local social workers. I organized these working groups also drawing from Freire's concept of Culture Circles (1993), which for him is the initial setting for a *thematic investigation*, based on dialogue (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Mclaren, 2000; McLaren & Leonard, 1993). Thematic investigation is a method in the process of what Freire calls *conscientizaçao*, where the object of the investigation is 'thought-language with which men and women refer to reality, the levels at which they perceive that reality, and their view of the world, in which their generative themes are found' (Freire, 1993, p. 97). According to Freire, these generative themes emerge from the dialogue of the participants and highlight how specific situations are articulated within the ideologico-hegemonic discursive landscape. (For example, heating with trash in the Gypsy communities is a generative theme, insofar as it generates articulatory practices, where it is signified as air pollution, irresponsibility, illiteracy, social deprivation, etc.). Engaging with the teachers in the working groups was based on the assumption that the themes connected to the Gypsy settlement 'represent situations familiar to the individuals whose thematics are being examined, so that they can easily recognize the situations (and thus their own relation to them)' (Freire, 1993, p. 114), and that these themes, which reference social

relations of domination, 'contain and are contained in limit-situations' and are 'concealed by the limit-situations', beyond which 'lies an untested feasibility' (Freire, 1993, p. 102). In order to overcome these limit-situations with the teachers, which are not 'the impassable boundaries where possibilities end, but the real boundaries where all possibilities begin' (Alvaro Vieira Pinto as cited in Freire, 1993, p. 99), my initial plan was to prepare the teachers for households visits in the settlement as part of the thematic investigation, looking for traces of the generative themes and their possible articulations with the help of the social workers. I was convinced that well-prepared visits to the settlement could contribute to teachers' transformative learning, as they would gain an understanding of the students' social reality.

Two schools were involved in the education of the Gypsy children at the time of the research, both quite close to the settlement, located in relatively poor districts of the city: one of them – which we called *Nibylandia* (Neverland) – was teaching the five children of the family that ended up in the corrective institution after the housing program, while the other – *the Areszt* – started to be involved in the education of the children from the settlement due to pressure from the local NGO, and between ten and fifteen Gypsy children attended that school from the settlement. In Nibylandia, the children were included in regular Polish classes and four teachers were involved in their learning on a daily basis, while in the Areszt the children were segregated in a 'Gypsy class', hidden in a classroom of an unused rear corridor of the school, with only one teacher taking care of them. While starting the cooperation with Nibylandia was easy - the teachers and the director were willing to work with us - gaining access to the Areszt took almost half a year. I had several meetings with the director, who always found excuses in order to avoid a meeting between us and the teachers, and especially the teacher of the excluded Gypsy class. His argument was that there is nothing interesting to research in the school, they have no big problems and they do the best they can with the children from the settlement. Since the director was a football fan, he preferred to talk about the Hungarian teams and Polish football. Once, in order to prove that there is no need for research like this in 'his' school, he invited me to the teachers' council ('*rada pedagogiczna*') so that I could present my plans to the teachers. When I was invited into the room, there were at least 50 teachers in a small, airless room, sitting like children in straight lines and in rows, while the director was standing in front of the blackboard, speaking into a microphone. The director approached me when I stepped in, immediately gave me the microphone and said, 'Please' ('*No proszę*'). I started to talk in my very poor Polish, but at the moment I said the word Gypsy ('*cyganie*'), the whole crowd of teachers started to rustle and whisper. Then, one of the English language teachers came to me and offered her help for translation. I asked whether there is anyone who would be interested in at least talking to

me once about the Gypsy children. One of the teachers shouted from the whispering crowd: 'There are no problems here ('*Nie ma żadnych problemów tutaj*'). Then the director thanked me for my presentation and promised that he will contact me if there was anyone interested in my project. The director never called me again, but the head teacher of the Gypsy class contacted me after a while. She had talked it through with the director and they agreed that I can have meetings with her, but always after classes. In sum, I was able to form a working group in Nibylandia with four teachers and two social workers, and a small working group with one teacher and two social workers in the Areszt. With the former, I managed to organize eight meetings, while with the latter only four. In the Areszt, which most of the children from the settlement attended at that time, isolated in a segregated class, the head teacher had already established a form of cooperation with the parents when we started to visit her in the school. She thought that cooperation with the parents is necessary, because lots of students are absent during the week as they need to make money by begging on the streets. Mrs. Oliwia had been organizing regular meetings with the parents in the school for quite a while by that time, and she also managed to invite a Romanian interpreter:

[Oliwia]: I think the teacher must initiate this contact. The parent will not come otherwise. I call and remind them on the day of the meeting and a day before. Then they come. We usually talk about school affairs, about results, notes, showing the students' notebooks.

[Me]: How was the atmosphere?

[Oliwia]: When I said something negative about a child, the parents were outraged. I think they react in the same way as any other parent. When they hear a negative comment about the child, they promise, that they will react. It often works. So, they are willing to cooperate but it is difficult for them to initiate it. If I could compare it, I remember the times when I went to school and the teacher was respected by my parents. It is like that. It's easier for me to work with them, they are not as demanding as Polish parents. In Polish classes, this happens more and more often, that parents come and have a whole list of wishes at the meeting. For me it is important to explain to parents that if they come to school regularly from the beginning, they [the children] will keep on coming. They must have this regularity.

The head teacher's commitment was also recognized in the settlement. Dika and his family thought that it is a good school, close to their houses. Dika also thought, however, that 'it would be much better if they [the children] would learn in one class with Polish children.' From this point of view, Mrs. Oliwia's attempts for strengthening cooperation with the families

can be understood as the governmentality of inclusion *through* exclusion, as the attachment of families and the children to instances of exclusion inside the educational apparatus. But the 'darkness' of exclusion thrived against the 'light' of good intentions: Mrs. Oliwia was convinced, for instance, that preventing discussions between the children during the breaks by showing a Polish cartoon on TV would be conducive to better student learning. She was so concerned about the class attendance of the Gypsy students, that she even visited the settlement without asking for the help of social workers.

> [Me]: So, you managed to go to the camp?
>
> [Oliwia]: I was there. I had a meeting with the parents.
>
> [Me]: What did you ask for?
>
> [Oliwia]: Generally, we talked about the school, and lessons. It was such a polite visit (*wizyta grzecznościowa*).
>
> [Me]: What was your impression when you get there, to the settlement?
>
> [Oliwia]: I knew what to expect because I checked this area in the pictures on the internet and watched a movie. I went with the children to the camp, because dogs were a huge problem for me. Luckily, I was with children.

> [Me]: Was this meeting nice for you?
>
> [Oliwia]: Yes, the houses were very clean, warm, parents were open. The difficulty was to make parents understand that it is their duty to make the child come to the school every day. There are parents who do understand it, but there are those who do not understand it. Parents also do not fully understand that you have come to the meetings, some had never showed up. One girl told me that her mother does not know why she should come to school so she will not come…

From the ideologico-critical perspective, Mrs. Oliwia's incredible commitment and her belief in the education of the Gypsy children overshadowed the institutional exclusion that she was actively organizing, which shadow retroactively darkened her truly unique social praxis with the families. Even though she saw the abyss between the reality of the educational apparatus and the heterotopia of the settlement, she never attempted to translate this knowledge into her own pedagogical praxis, so that it became disavowed as an unknown known: e.g., while she knew that education is not meaningful for the families, she still acted as if she didn't know it, as if the parents would have not understood that school attendance is obligatory. Within this ideological cynicism, the fetishistic object of compulsory education (and the gospel of

education) embodied the ideological Lie which mystified the unbearable truth, that segregated learning in the school only reproduces the prevailing structures of domination.

In Nibylandia, the meetings of the working group went very well, both the teachers and the social workers were engaged in preparing for the household visits. The director was especially supportive, but she had her own doubts about visiting households. As she argued, it was a regular practice during socialism, and she also included it in her own pedagogical praxis:

> [Teresa]: When I was a teacher I visited homes, helped with the homework… but today I wouldn't dare to do it, since the world became very aggressive. (…) I was a few times in the settlement and saw how it looks like, and there nothing is required from these children. They do not listen. It is very difficult to demand something from a child who in the past did what he wanted, and now we put him in school…

It was from the very beginning quite characteristic in the working group discussions, that the irreducible gap between the heterotopia of the settlement and the educational apparatus made the teachers generally interested in having discussions about the Gypsies' 'way of life'. Due to the fact that they experienced this fissure in the dispositif with its own contradictions *as part of* their everyday pedagogical praxis, their basic articulatory practices were structured in order to suture this fissure in a discursive manner. They argued that, due to the Gypsies' way of life,

> [Marta]: …the relationship between the school and the family of the Roma are not as developed as between the school and other [non-Roma] families.
>
> [Lena, social worker]: But our question is, whether you have similar problems with Polish parents and Roma parents?
>
> [Marta]: Certainly yes, we also have problems with Polish families. Maybe not with everyone, maybe less, but we have. We have a problem with those families who think that school is only an obligation. They do not relate to the education of their children, or seek to improve the quality of life of these children. Roma families, the majority of them, do not see education as something good and necessary for the child's development. They are more hermetic, and as I observe it, they live differently. I do not know a Roma family who runs a company or produces something…
>
> [Agnieszka]: My husband worked in a warehouse, where the Roma came to buy meat. Once, a fat gentleman came. Someone asked him the question, where he works, and he replied that he did not have to work. It is sad… someone works all night and then comes Mr. Rom who is the king of the whole world and he does not have to work.

Within these articulations the social and economic exclusion of the Gypsy people is mystified by the dislocation of domination as a pure difference, as a 'way of life'. But this ideological mystification is more interesting in how it stitches up the inconsistencies of the teacher's ideological system, i.e., how the mystification of domination retroactively sutures the

teacher's lower-middle class fantasies interwoven with meritocratic neoliberal imaginaries, in which the individual's effort through education and hard work becomes conducive to prosperity. On the other hand, however, the teachers were interested in the inconsistencies of the social environment, which they were confronted with on a daily basis in the poor working-class district:

> [Marta]: We have a very specific workplace, since almost all of the children come to the school from this neighborhood… I personally have nothing to do with the football hooligans, but how can I explain to my students that he behaves badly, as it behaves like his father?
>
> [Dorota]: The parents of the children from our school are poorly educated. Generally, they are cleaner [than the Gypsies], and have basic education. But during the break, we see them sitting here nearby, drinking beer, being unemployed.
>
> [Marta]: This is a copy of poverty.

Thus, the teachers were also confronted with the predicament of the Polish urban precariat, a 'copy of poverty' as Marta said ('*To jest takie kopiowanie biedy*'), almost in a hyperreal sense. In sum, the teachers' everyday reality had been cut through by the symptoms, inconsistencies, fractures and cracks of the logic of Capital, which they translated within the working group into a curiosity toward investigating the social reality.

Together with the teachers and the social workers, we tried to map the advantages and the structure of household visits, and the visit to the settlement. The teachers argued that establishing such a relation between the school (*szkoła*) and the home (*dom*) or environment (*srodowisko*) could contribute to the production of two types of knowledge: direct knowledge (*wiedza bezpóśrednia*) and pedagogical knowledge (*wiedza pedagogiczna*), as the teachers called them. As they argued, if one observes, for instance, that a student doesn't eat healthy food regularly, then it can be translated into pedagogical knowledge, and the teacher would then put more emphasis on health education.

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[Dorota]: I was thinking about printing a nutritional pyramid or a menu, to go to her place [a Gypsy student's grandmother] to talk about it, because I would like to do it in a comfortable atmosphere. When I am at school, I do not have time to do it. Maybe in her home, in a nice atmosphere, the grandmother would talk about her granddaughter's health…

[Agnieszka]: …if you have 1000 zlotys and 2 or 3 children, then what will I tell them about healthy eating, which is simply much more expensive?

[Gosia]: For me the biggest problem is coming to school on time. So, I can start the conversation from that point. They are up till really late, and it is really difficult for them to wake up in the morning and come to school on time. (…) Then, I can ask where he is doing his homework. This regular way of life also matters to me. To tell mother that children must go to sleep early, that they need to take rest. Later, it influences how they behave at school. The mother is not ignorant at all, she listens to me. Maybe it's just that she's alone with all this, probably no one cares about it.

[Marta]: We could actually see the conditions in which they live there, because there are different aunts and other children living there. [The student] tells me different things all the time. Here it is difficult for me to find purpose other than the one to check the conditions in which they live.

It is important to note that the teachers started to attribute an educational function to the household visits, emphasizing more what they could teach, and to a lesser extent what they could learn. Then, according to Marta's suggestion, we tried to find purposes (*cele*) other than simply checking the conditions. The social workers were very supportive in starting to think about the pedagogical purposes of such visits. The teachers articulated trust (*zaufanie*), cooperation (*współpraca*) and supporting student learning (*uczenie wspierająca*) as possible long-term purposes of the household visits. During the following meetings, however, the teachers started to raise doubts about the disadvantages of household visits, for instance, that it could appear for the families as a site of control:

[Gosia]: What do we think about this diagram? It would be cool if we lived in the countryside. Everyone knows each other, everyone lives close to each other. That was the way it used to be, when the teachers were respected. Now people do not want to interfere, they do not reach out for help.

[Marta]: Parents very often feel threatened by school intervention, to protect themselves, they do not want to share…

[Agnieszka]: I am against visiting homes and I would not be able to do it due to the lack of time. In my case, every attempt to make contact with families ends up with nothing and I do not want to expose myself...

The teachers also argued that it is not a part of their role to register the conditions in which the families live, especially when there are so many other organizations that work with them:

[Dorota]: If a child does not have a bed, I report it to the social service and the whole machine goes on. Institutions and training teams are working there.

[Gosia]: If we see that the family is in trouble, it should not be addressed by pedagogical care but by the social care.

[Marta]: In the past it was different. I was going there to teach the child. Not for social purposes. Of course, we always had important conversations…

They also emphasized fear on both sides, mistrust on the side of the families, and again, the danger of implementing household visits as a site of control:

[Marta]: I wrote on my paper: discomfort and shame for the family, fear of aggressive behavior, and fear associated with the embarrassment of the student, her culture and family. But this is related to how the majority of society is discriminating…

[Gosia]: Well, she can be afraid of how I will see, portrait her family, the place where she lives. I also wrote: fear of misreading my visit. Fear of pressure. I am afraid of pressure from the family, strange questions, strange expectations from me. These are my fears. This all depends on the purpose of the visit. Because probably if I come there to get to know the family, they probably will have a different attitude. They want to present themselves differently, because it is their daughter's teacher. Because they are Roma, who are a minority group, so they could especially have such fears that I come to check on them.

[Agnieszka]: Well, I do not want to go there… I will not do it without your help… it can be a new experience for me. I really like my students.

During the following weeks, we tried to arrange the first household visits with the teachers, first a visit to the corrective institution, where their students lived, and then to the settlement, but all our attempts failed; the Gypsy families refused to meet with the teachers. First the teachers thought that it was due to a kind of shame of being poor, but the reason was much more deeply inscribed in the operational organ of the dispositif:

[Lena, social worker]: They said, that they no longer have the strength, even though that this is a friendly visit… they have had enough. They have had enough… having someone visiting them all the time, constantly being controlled by the ladies from social welfare, the police, and so on… and they have had enough.

The last two meetings with the working group in Nibylandia were more emotional due to the failure, and hence an interesting debate emerged between Marta, an older teacher only a few years before retirement, and Agnieszka, one of the youngest teachers in the school:

[Agnieszka]: But what a foolish idea to visit the houses…

[Marta]: No Agnieszka! I did it in primary school and junior high school. I was an 'expert' on walking from house to house. I remember a wonderful alley where I walked to the house of one Roma family. In the living room there was a TV, above it the image of Maria, we all sat together in the living room…

[Agnieszka]: I don't like it…

[Lena]: But why?

[Agnieszka]: Because I do not understand why I (…) as a teacher have to leave the school. Nobody would come to my child unless it was disabled.

[Marta]: It was education at all costs that time… because, Roma children did not come to school and that was a problem. And since the child did not come to school, so we went…

[Agnieszka]: I am a teacher, but I do not go to their homes to solve problems there. I cannot imagine that.

[Marta]: You don't feel a need for household visit?

[Agnieszka]: I never went to any houses and I will not do it!

[Gosia]: We did… First, to get to know the child.

[Me]: Ladies, you have an experience, so maybe you can explain…

[Agnieszka]: I will not do any household visit in the future.

[Marta]: I did, thirty years ago.

[Agnieszka]: I have my students in the classroom and I have to go to his home, to his private sphere. But for what purpose? I was not prepared for this…

[Kasia, social worker]: So maybe you do not feel that need.

[Marta]: We get to know the child's family, and its situations and values…

[Agnieszka]: I do not know, I can invite this family for consultations.

[Marta]: No, Agnieszka, no! You will not get to know your family, you will not understand anything. Let me tell you one situation. If a parent comes to your school, he will tell you everything you want to hear. If you visit them and you see what is happening, you discover the sad reality. When I went to that house and saw that 13-year-old girl sleeping on one couch with a 30-year-old father and mother, I had to say: it is impossible [to get rest]. Would I have found it out at school? Never!

[Agnieszka]: I know Marta, that you will not find it out at the school, but is this your role?!

[Marta]: Agnieszka, but if you want to understand a child, yes!

* * *

I argue that in both cases – both in the Areszt and in Nibylandia – the possibility for enhancing transformative teacher learning via teachers' active and reflective engagement with the social environment (i.e., the heterotopia of urban poverty) was constrained by how the educational apparatus is positioned in its respective dispositif. I propose that the modality of this position can be described by the notion of the '*education vacuum*', drawing on and reformulating József Böröcz's concept of 'property vacuum'. Böröcz argues (2016) that, during the 1989 transitions, the shift from the collective property to the technocratic celebration of private property created a vacuum: on the one hand property had been detached from the public, based on the assumption that 'it is unthinkable that under any social system a society could actually control its own assets in such a way that it is used profitably for the public good' (ibidem.), and on the other hand, 'property as such "sucked in" owners'. As an analogy, I argue,

the educational apparatus operates within the dispositif as a relatively disconnected entity, detached from its social environment. As I argued before, the detachment of the School is the positive condition of its transformative potentiality, but in the hegemonic field of the dispositif this detachment retroactively creates a negative vacuum: while the School is detached from its most immediate social environment, at the same time it 'sucks in' the problems of the social (both materially and on the level of the discourse, i.e., that education is the remedy for these problems). Hence, the education vacuum emerges between the *detachment* from the social and the *attachment* to the social symptoms as the School being responsible for them (student absenteeism, educational reform-dumping, the erosion and fragmentation of the teacher's role, etc.). One of the consequences of the education vacuum, is that due to the School's (structural) failure to become a remedy for the social symptoms, these symptoms are turned upside-down in the School into a *fetish*. For instance, the fetishistic discourse that 'Gypsy families don't respect and value education' is the ideologico-discursive *envers* of the symptom that students are absent from the school,

> not because of the alleged cultural gap and the reluctance of Roma to any form of education. The reasons are much more prosaic: it is impossible to go to school and beg at the same time on the street, and the cost of a school equipment often goes beyond the financial possibilities of the family from the settlement (Krawczyk, 2012).

I argue that the education vacuum is enhanced by the modality of the penal Centaur state, and the dispositif of urban poverty in it. As Wacquant argues, from the institutional perspective, this modality tilts rightward (from the social to the penal arm) in two aspects. On the one hand, it operates on the basis of 're-institutionalization', 'as when mentally ill patients get "deinstitutionalised" with the closing of hospitals and "reinstitutionalised" in jails and prisons' (Wacquant, 2012, p. 74), or when the Gypsy family in Poland was moved to a corrective institution under the label of a housing program. On the other hand, it operates through *re-mastering the hegemony of disciplinary techniques*, as when 'schools put the reduction of juvenile truancy and classroom violence ahead of pedagogy and hire security guards.' (ibidem.) Thus, within the dispositif of advanced marginality, effected by the modality of the Centaur state, the educational apparatus is not only *detached* from the social and *attached* to its social symptoms, but also *remastered* in terms of its institutional functions (reinstitutionalized) not only in itself, but also as a hatchery of other apparatuses of its respective dispositif (the police, priests, authorities of the social welfare center, activists, researchers, etc.), because the education vacuum also 'sucks in' new actors. Since the educational apparatus is unable (due to structural and historical reasons) to become the ultimate remedy for social problems, as

education pornography depicts it, its failure is transposed into the healing hands of an external actor-network. However, against the neoliberal education mantras which promote 'horizontal synergies' and the 'networking school', I argue that the institutional network, which is 'sucked in' by the education vacuum, invisibly cuts through the educational apparatus[71] and serves the reproduction and expansion of the vacuum itself. In sum, the education vacuum further intensifies both the *detachment* and *attachment* of the School apparatus as the new educational actors start to appear *within* the School, to take responsibility for the social purposes that the School fails to meet.

I propose that the central void that emerges in the education vacuum can be characterized and further illuminated with three structural mechanisms – which I call the '*neverland syndrome*', '*the atrophy of the pedagogical*', and '*cynical pedagogy*' – all structurally conditioned by the post-socialist struggles over the modalities of operation and purposes of the educational apparatus.

8.3 The Infantilization of Teaching

While mainstream interpretations hold that the post-socialist history of education is characterized by constant changes between leftist and rightist political regimes after 1989, György Mészáros (2013) argues that the post-socialist history of education is embedded in the story of the *stabilization of neoliberal capitalism* and is, to a lesser extent, about alternating governments. Political negotiations in the post-socialist semi-periphery established a laboratory for neoliberal reforms within education from 1989 on. As Jiří Kotásek argues, the post-socialist education reforms in the semi-periphery were 'sucked in' by 'the domestic and international *political power vacuum* caused by the fall of the dictatorial regimes' (1993, pp. 475–476 italics added). Just as the reengineering of the economic agenda was composed in a transnational dialogue among the West- and East-European experts,

> also within education, the reforms were framed as modernization efforts, and entailed implementation, or perhaps rather imitation, of some variants of educational policy models developed originally in the West. The notion of imitation refers to borrowing or transplanting not merely general principles and ideas, but also particular solutions and institutional design from the systems of the West (Gawlicz & Starnawski, 2018, p. 387).

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[71] I agree here with Bockman and Eyal, who, drawing on Bruno Latour's works on actor-networks, argue that, '[i]f a certain institutional form is reproduced and disseminated, this is in direct proportion to the amount of resources mobilized through network ties, to the strength of the ties forged, and to the capacity of interested actors to close them in a "black box"; that is, *to hide the work needed to connect together the different elements of the actor-network* (2002, p. 314).

Decentralization, the abolition of state monopoly, pluralization, allocation of power to regional authorities, and authorization of private and religious schools were part of this political agenda, just as the expansion of school autonomy and the extension of the political space for alternative initiatives in education, which created more space for alternative solutions and autonomy. These common principles appeared in the New Education Acts in Hungary as early as 1985, and then in 1993, in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1990, and in Poland in 1991 (E. Kelemen, 2000). The imitation and translation of Western political agendas of education were presented as a pledge to democracy and progress, in which, however, education reforms were considered as value-free, neutral, and generally applicable regardless of geopolitical contexts. Iveta Silova calls this set of education reforms, the 'post-socialist education reform package' (2014, p. 190), which consisted of the themes listed above, and also included 'student-centered learning, introduction of curriculum standards, decentralization of educational finance and governance, privatization of higher education, standardization of student assessment, liberalization of textbook publishing' (ibidem.), and had different compositions in each post-socialist semi-peripheral country.

A key element of the post-socialist political rhetoric was the articulation of an *omnipresent crisis* in education systems, and the continuous promotion of the need for reforms and modernization. The implementation of the post-socialist education reform package was based on the dichotomy of the narratives of 'crisis,' 'danger' and 'decline' (namely any deviations from the Western agenda) and the narratives of '"progress," "hope," and "salvation," which the West is inevitably positioned to bring to the newly-emerging societies of the post-socialist region' (Silova, 2010, pp. 5–6). As Silova argues, the crisis narrative was not based on empirical evidence, but was rather discursively constructed: education system reports, research studies, literature reviews were increasingly concerned with 'the alarming statistics, including falling expenditures, declining literacy rates, decreasing enrollment, rising student dropout rates, deteriorating capital infrastructure, outdated textbooks, stagnated curricula, and a shrinking number of qualified teachers' (Silova, 2014, p. 185).

Hence, this discursive landscape of crisis and danger retroactively enhanced the imaginary of an urgent need for reforms, which had been quickly internalized by Central-Eastern European experts. The values of democracy, human rights, and autonomy inscribed in the post-socialist education reform package concealed the inferior position of the semi-peripheral countries, and, as Silova argues, 'many Western scholars have thus been able to avoid post-colonial charges of imperial imposition and domination in the academic field' (ibid., p. 189). In this process, the semi-peripheral countries were portrayed as not capable, or not

mature enough to handle the 'backwardness' of their education systems – a logic that even today 'marginalizes local innovative capacities and restricts educators in the region to following narrow Western reform pathways.' (ibidem.) Thus, the image of the glorious West, trumpeting the education gospel, provided the *core* (sic!) iconography for the re-composition of the education systems. Decentralization, marketization, and assessment became the cornerstones of the catching-up imaginary.

Just as with the coordination of the transition, the coordination of the implementation of the post-socialist education reform package was not solely constructed on the national level, but the directions were also determined by international and intergovernmental organizations with strong economic interests (OECD, WTO, IMF, World Bank). 'Backed by "scientific" quantitative data from empirically validated studies and cross-national student achievement studies (e.g., PISA and TIMSS), international transfer of (Western) "expert" knowledge has become instrumental in solving national educational problems' (Silova, 2014, p. 190). Drawing on the analysis of international reports, Iveta Silova, Zsuzsa Millei, and Nelli Piattoeva (2017) argue that the Western regimes of truth in education had been maintaining an 'epistemic asymmetry' between the core and the semi-periphery since the 1990s, depicting their Eastern colleagues (policy makers and educators) as 'incapable of independently conducting research, articulating policies, or implementing education reforms' (ibid., p. 9). These reports emphasize the lack of knowledge in the region, the lack of meaningful research, the incapacity for professional development. The establishment of the international (inter)dependency in education were part of the process, wherein core groups started to

> manipulate education in periphery nations in order to disseminate ideologies supportive of their interests. From this perspective, international educational 'assistance' projects (…) can be seen as hegemonic ventures dedicated to the engineering of consent in periphery nations to a variety of inequitable and exploitative international structures and relationships (Clayton, 1998, p. 484).

In sum, the post-socialist education reform package consisted of stabilizing the core neoliberal hegemony in semi-peripheral education discourse. However, the rise of advanced imaginality (the extension and displacement of the Imaginary register of the European complex, especially in Hungary and Poland) anchored a neoconservative turn in education discourse as well, where 'nationalist and patriarchal fantasmagorias' (Červinková, 2016, p. 44) are increasingly superimposed on neoliberal education mantras. In the Polish semi-peripheral context, this ideologico-hegemonic project

relies on increasing individualization and destruction of social solidarities on the one hand (through high-stakes testing and growing individual disparities in the competition for lessening public resources) while on the other hand boosts affective group (national) essentialisms (through school curriculum and practices designed to build ethnically/religiously homogenous forms of citizenship and belonging) (ibid., p. 45).

This new regime has been constituted around the hegemonic reactivation of the traditions of authority, control and punishment in education, and of a monocultural ethos of a patriotic establishment addressing the lost prestige of the school and the eroded authority of teachers. Through the analysis of Polish school curricula and textbooks, Červinková concludes that at the heart of this neoconservative siege, a gendered, racialized, militarized and religious citizenship regime emerges, constituting the imaginary of a Polish 'heroic martyrdom' by the 'silencing of history': '[I]n its content and effects, the historical narrative of modern Polish patriotic education relies on the silencing of the historical multiculturalism of Poland and nurtures a concept of ethnically homogeneous Polish citizenship' (ibid., p. 50). The fantasy scenario of social homogeneity is manifested also in the revitalization of the literature canon, with introducing controversial rightist, nationalist authors to the national curriculum, providing 'strong identity models, based on a discourse of patriotic duties and self-sacrifice' (Popow & Sáez-Rosenkranz, 2016, p. 293). Within the ideological horizon of advanced imaginality, education is represented as a pledge to preserving national norms and values, which pledge is embedded in the hegemonic struggle of the Imaginary register of the European complex, characterized by the realization of the '*fight among nations*', and of a need to restore the lost cultural supremacy of the nation. In it, the ultimate purpose of education is the '*rise of the nation*', or as the ruling far-right government has articulated it: a '*rise from the knees*' ('*wstaje z kolan*'). Hence, the new neoconservative regime of education discourse thrives against the glorious background of the strong nation state, responsible for preserving (and producing) the fantasy scenario of homogeneity 'by an intriguing interplay of state ideology (deeply tied to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church) channeled through state educational institutions, including public schools, museums and other research and cultural institutes' (Červinková, 2016, p. 49). While the new education bill in 1991 promoted decentralization and de-étatisation in Poland, '[t]he latest bill (2016) on the general superintendence in Polish education restores the practical control of the central government over the establishment, transformation or closing down of every individual public school in the country' (Zamojski, 2018, p. 424). However, even if the neoconservative regime started to represent itself as the iron fist in education, its reforms contributed to the further destabilization of education discourse, just as the post-

socialist neoliberal education 'reform-dumping' did. As the director of Nibylandia argued, this continuous destabilization has been one of the biggest problems since 1989:

> [Teresa]: The main problem for me is the number of reforms of the past three decades, because changing the mentality of people is always hard and it is especially hard for the teachers. And it is not only because of the reforms. Nowadays we are forced to participate in projects, we force ourselves to do so. We add such contents like healthy school, healthy food, healthy everything, ecological thinking, not to mention what we [teachers] have to learn them… (…) And I think, maybe I'm wrong, that the school is a place where there should be a huge stabilization, as few changes as possible, and a sense of security for teachers and children.

Thus, while the neoconservative regime in education addresses the deteriorating quality of schools and the erosion of values (e.g., moral atrophy and broken society) on the rhetoric level, in practice it contributes to the destabilization of education discourse and to the insecurity of the teachers. I argue that the education vacuum is deepened by the effects of destabilization, that is the consequence of the post-socialist struggle over the modalities of the educational apparatus between the neoliberal and neoconservative discourses. In their analysis of the neoconservative, right-wing, tory philosophy that had been dominating education reforms in the United Kingdom during the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition between 2010-15, Patrick Bailey and Stephen Ball captured precisely this destabilizing, constitutive paradox of the contemporary hybrid education discourse, in the context of the coalition education policy:

> [o]n the one hand, there was the continuing neoliberal emphasis on the minimal state and a belief in the sanctity, efficiency and effectiveness of the market (…) [o]n the other hand, coalition policy was characterized by neoconservatism, evident in the continued central command and control over knowledge and values, and the ongoing mistrust and surveillance of the teacher (2016, pp. 128–129).

From this perspective, the post-socialist education discourse in the Central-Eastern European context is to a large extent similar to the hybrid education policy regime that Bailey and Ball described – characterized by the constitutive paradoxes of a weak but strong state, freedom and control, liberty and authority – but with its nodal points tendentiously shifting toward the neoconservative, authoritarian imaginary of the political spectrum of education discourse.

8.3.1 Neverland Syndrome

The teachers are the rhetorical cornerstones of the neoconservative education project, that is based on the promises of restoring their authority, respect, social esteem and wage-labour security. Putting teachers into the shop-window of education politics as living bio-scenery, however, is not exclusively characteristic to the new neoconservative regimes, but it has also

been a key element of stabilizing neoliberal hegemony after 1989 (Silova, Moyer, Webster, & McAllister, 2010). [72] After the transitions, a huge amount of pressure was imposed on teachers in the post-socialist countries: they were not only subjected to the multiplying reforms of the new political agenda, they were also expected to navigate, manage and implement the post-socialist education reform package and lead the system out from the oriental obscurantism toward new, global 'norms' controlled and disseminated by international 'experts'. As Silova and Brehm put it, in the 1990s,

> [d]irectly affected by the 'touch down' of global educational flows – whether education privatization, decentralization, or child-centered learning – school teachers have been affected the most. In the public eye, teachers embodied the success (or failure) that the post-socialist education transitions set out to achieve. (…) Their professional lives no longer belonged to them… (2013, p. 56)

Or more precisely, the professional lives of teachers during neoliberalization became a discursive terrain of struggle, as it had been, however, during socialism as well. By 'complicating' the taken-for-granted narratives about socialist education, Silova et al. (2017) examine precisely how teachers actively navigated, (re)negotiated and (re)defined the apparently sedimented terrain of socialist 'indoctrination'. In it, 'teachers considered themselves primarily as professional experts rather than ideologues in the service of the socialist state' (ibid., p. 82). Understanding the post-socialist, neoliberal, teacher-professionalism regime also as a site of struggle is especially important in order to emphasize the role of teachers as active agents and not only as subjected to the post-socialist education reform package. Silova and Brehm draw attention to the specific forms of teachers' resistance in the post-socialist context, and argue that the post-socialist education space is deeply conflictual, since it is hanging in a continuous deadlock: '[n]either resembling socialist pasts nor approximating (neo)liberal futures, the post-socialist education space contains a complex set of education phenomena in the early stages of its formation, (…) [i]t represents a state of "unfinished global transitions"' (2013, pp. 56–57). Within this conflictual terrain, the post-socialist education space is characterized by the floating signifiers of 'crisis' and 'danger' regarding teachers: on the one hand, these master signifiers are floated above the neoliberal sinister of an ageing labor force, feminization, declining salaries and the insufficiency of teachers' catching-up attempts with the Western iconographies of child-centeredness, individual learning paths, lifelong

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[72] I intentionally try to avoid the dominant vocabulary of policy discourse, which I consider an ideologico-discursive tool for concealing the innermost political character of the hegemonic struggles over the modalities of education.

learning, etc. (Silova, 2009); on the other hand, within the discursive realm of neoconservatism, these signifiers incarnate the incantations of the lost and eroded prestige of the teachers, the deteriorating quality of schools, the erosion of values and a general moral atrophy in education. The neoconservative siege, especially in Hungary and Poland, effectively thrives against the post-socialist process of neoliberalization, which planted the atmosphere of destabilization in education. Val Rust (1992), in his summary of the instable ethos of the post-socialist reforms in the beginning of the 1990s highlighted the following:

> the teaching staffs of schools are unstable, school programs are going through chaotic transitions, acceptable teaching materials are unavailable, and old norms of defining appropriate behavior and values have disappeared. Add to this the (…) environment where both parents and teachers appear to be in a state dislocation and high anxiety (ibid., p. 387).

But while the neoconservative siege opposes the neoliberal outburst against 'unprofessional teachers', the 'roustabouts of the nation' on the level of rhetoric, in practice it implements 'concerted attacks on teachers (and curricula) based on a profound mistrust of their quality and commitments' (Apple, 2014, p. 20). In Poland, the neoconservative, authoritarian education discourse promised stability in this chaos, but in practice it didn't bring teachers' prestige and recognition back; it only created the panoptical ethos for quality assurance (control and supervision), with introducing, for instance, the general superintendence in education. This, consequently, leads to a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, both the neoliberal and the neoconservative discourses pay special attention to the eroded role of teachers, promoting professionalism/respect, self-management/authority and new roles according to lifelong learning/patriotic education. But on the other hand, within both discursive terrains, a profile of wageworkers emerges, who are immature or incapable of working autonomously, participating in decision-making, and suturing the fullness of society (Cadiero-Kaplan & Hinchey, 2005). During one of the working group meetings in Nibylandia, we were talking about this paradox with the teachers, and they also created a small poster regarding this situation. They wrote low wages (*mało płaci*) and many expectations (*dużo wymaga*) in the 'government' column (*rząd*), and they drew a circle with 'I' (*ja*) in the middle, with arrows pointing to it.

> [Marta]: The government sees us badly.
>
> [Gosia]: I will not write it down, because if it goes out...
>
> [Marta]: They say, we only work two and a half hours a day. Today I came at eight o'clock, now it is 3pm, right? I'm on high speed all the time.
>
> [Agnieszka]: Well, I love my job.
>
> [Gosia]: Me too, me too, very much! We have not yet burned out. Yet!

[Dorota]: Jesus! Just do not show this to the management! [laughs]

[Lena, social worker]: No, absolutely, we do not want to show this to them.

[Me]: So, do you say that the government treats teachers bad?

[Gosia]: All the time they say, that we do not work, we do not work enough. We hear that all the time. Now a reform has been introduced and no one asked us, how we see it.

[Marta]: Listen, I've been working for thirty-five years and it was different back then. We have had time. (…) It was not such a rush, there was no rush, not like this madness. And now, everyone must be put under a label (*pod sztampę*), under the diagnosis, points, and so on. For me it is sick.

[Gosia]: There is no peace.

[Marta]: There is none! We write, write, write. Everyone must be put under a label. But who defines what a gardener must do? Let him grow plants, he knows it, he knows that they need a lot of water and other things. [Draws the picture with arrows.] I feel like being attacked by everybody. By the government, by parents and by my superiors. Maybe I am at this point in my professional life… For the children everything is pointless. They do not see the goal. These things are not meaningful to them, the school is unnecessary. The school makes them fed up and tired, and the parents put all responsibilities on teachers.

[Me]: So, is it all about pressure, the arrows? What does the government expect from you?

[Marta]: I need to prove that I'm doing something. Teachers are very limited in freedom of creativity. In order to take the children out on a school trip I need to have like 5 stamps from director, I need to ask parents to do anything. Everything needs to be documented. We used to have this freedom before, so maybe that's why it is so annoying now.
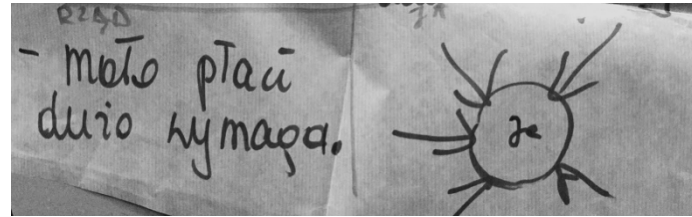
And moreover, in post-socialist countries teachers are facing a general mistrust also from the public. On the one hand, they inherited the distorted image of the servant of indoctrination from dictatorial state capitalism, which contributed to the loss of the status of the profession and also the loss of the teachers' moral credibility after 1989. On the other hand, during the post-socialist neoliberalization societies, becoming

> oriented to performance, in which individuals strive for their personal growth and self-realization, for personal comfort and for ever greater consumption, do not see the teaching profession to be sufficiently 'modern', lucrative and prestigious. This state of affairs is well understood throughout Europe but appears to have more impact in the post-communist societies than in the more stable Western societies (Kotasek, 1993, p. 486).

And as the multiple arrows show on the picture the teachers drew, they feel attacked not only from one side, but as Mrs. Marta said, from the side of the government, parents, superiors…

[Dorota]: During the 70s, parents would listen to the teachers. The teacher was not an enemy, but an authority. Today parents say that we are all evil, that we want something, that we only demand, and demand…

[Marta]: Being a teacher used to be my passion. I felt a big pleasure because of teaching. Not anymore, not this generation. I'm from different era.

[Gosia] I liked it a lot and I think that I also had times like when I felt excellent about teachers' role. After holidays I was coming back with ideas to do something immediately… Now, I don't have any agreement with children, I feel that I'm their oppressor, that I force them to do things that they don't like.

[Marta]: Many parents underestimate our competences. They think, that they know our job better. You know how we say: all Poles are an expert in medicine, politics and education.

I also find it extremely important that the teachers wrote 'low wages [but] many expectations' on their poster. I disagree here with Kotasek, who argues that the causes of the 'teaching profession crisis' are deeper than mere wages. I would say, rather, that the causes are more complex, but the wages constitute a central factor in it. The transitions had a bad economic impact on teachers in the post-socialist countries, whose social and economic appreciation have both been very low since then. Teachers are underpaid in the region, just like other public-sector workers. While the economics of education in Central-Eastern European countries reflect post-socialist macroeconomic trends in general, in terms of teacher salaries,

> almost all countries of the region fell below the OECD average in 2015. (…) The overall relatively poor condition of teachers in CEE states remains in place despite significant salary increases in recent years in some countries, most notably Hungary and the Slovak Republic (and to a lesser extent Poland), unlike in many countries that had undergone cuts following the 2008 crisis (Gawlicz & Starnawski, 2018, p. 389).

Concerning all these components that characterize the teaching profession in post-socialist countries, I call the ideological paradox '*neverland syndrome*', which emerges as the parallax between the glorification *and* infantilization, appreciation *and* degradation of the teachers. The ideologico-critical notion of the *neverland syndrome* refers to the mystical island where the story of Peter Pan and the Lost Boys takes place. They have special abilities (they can fly, materialize objects with imagination), however, since they never grow up, they will never be mature enough to live in the 'real world'. In the same way, the fantasy scenario of neverland syndrome attributes special abilities to teachers (they become conducive to economic prosperity, upward mobility, quality and equity, the fullness of society), which, however, fails in advance and remains merely a dream (or a nightmare) beyond the imaginary island of political rhetoric. And here lies the ideological mystification of the syndrome: the glorification of the teaching profession and the appreciation of teachers is not meant to conceal their

degradation, the mistrust against them and their economic exploitation. On the contrary, *the infantilization and degradation of teachers is effectively constituted precisely through their inevitable failure in 'growing up' to the respective fantasy scenarios of 'professionalism'* (e.g., catching-up with the Western iconography of education or standing up from their knees for the nation). This ideological mystification contains a strong class politics inasmuch as the new regimes of school evaluation, teacher appraisal, quality assurance, supervision, etc. reward those teachers who ingratiatingly identify with the fantasy scenarios (identification with the ideal-ego in Lacanian terms), that are fabricated within the innermost coordinates of global capitalism and fashioned by the respective dispositif of the educational apparatus. In Poland, the dispositif of the settlement channels the teachers' imaginary identification in different ways. Mrs. Agnieszka, the youngest teacher in Nibylandia, who was against household visits (because she was convinced that it is not part of her professional duties), identified with the 'expert' or 'professional' imaginary that has been characteristic of the dispositif of the settlement, also inscribed in the interventions of the Social Welfare Center, housing programs, or the anti-poverty campaigns (Help wisely!), and which imaginary is also promoted by the neoliberal education discourse. As I argued elsewhere (Tóth, 2017b), the professionalization of teaching is rooted in the historical shift from moral orthopaedics to scientific technology from the end of the 18th century, which has been conducive to the hegemonic sedimentation of expert authority, formal rationality and scientific method.[vi] As David Labaree (1992) argues, the regime of professionalization became an ideological cover for class control and reinforced disciplinary power in education, based on technical rationality and positivist methods, which accelerates

> the rationalization of classroom instruction by reinforcing a research-based model of teaching practice. (…) [T]he stress on raising academic standards and on using market incentives as a mechanism for reform (…) the rise of a science of teaching and the professionalization of teacher educators (…) depict the movement as an outgrowth of a process of scientific rationalization (ibid., pp. 125-144).

This imaginary identification with the Lacanian small other (the ideal of perfection that the ego strives to emulate), of the 'expert', constrains the very horizon of teaching praxis and detaches the teaching force from the social environment, which retroactively expands and deepens the education vacuum. In the case of Mrs. Oliwia, the teacher of the segregated Gypsy class in the Areszt, her visits to the settlement and her efforts for the inclusion of the Gypsy children in the excluded classroom is channeled through her identification with the punitive, disciplinary modality of the dispositif, which I described with the parallax of patronization *through* punishment and the pervert-rewarding arm downwards. Mrs. Oliwia's apparent

engagement with the social environment paradoxically also deepens the education vacuum, since it merely attaches the Gypsy families to another form of institutional exclusion in the dispositif, infiltrated with disciplinary and corrective pedagogical technologies in the classroom, which is fashioned by the neoconservative, authoritarian regime of professionalization.

These imaginary identifications, as constitutive of and constituted by the neverland syndrome, provide the fantasy scenario of the appreciated teacher, which retroactively mystifies their infantilization and social degradation, that their 'professional lives' are governed and constrained 'by globally circulating "norms" about curricula, textbooks, tests, and teaching methods, (…) positioned to possess the "know-how" [they are] required to master' (Silova & Brehm, 2013, pp. 56–57). Those teachers, however, who do not identify with the imaginary fantasy scenarios (the Lacanian ideal-ego) inscribed in the neverland syndrome are exposed to being labeled with pedagogical backwardness and an unprofessional attitude, especially the older teachers (like Mrs. Dorota, Mrs. Gosia and Mrs. Marta), who 'feel like being attacked by everybody, the government, by parents and by superiors.' If, as Gawlicz argues, there is a hegemonic 'discursive construct of the incompetent child' (Gawlicz, 2009, p. 92) in Poland, then one shall add that there is also a hegemonic discursive construct of the infantile teacher who, being unable to identify with the prefabricated fantasy scenarios, finds herself at the backside of the neverland syndrome, at the epicenter of a '*Kafkaesque professionalism'*. Without the identification with the imaginary ideal-egos, teachers are interpellated by the rational, scientific, technological and bureaucratic regime of professionalism in a twisted way. As Žižek argues in one of his early articles, *The Subject before Subjectivation* (1988), while Althusser never succeeded in connecting his concepts of the ideological apparatuses and ideological interpellation, Kafka managed to link the two *avant la lettre*. In Kafka's universe, the gigantic and monstrous ideological apparatus interpellates the subject without identification or recognition:

> [The] Kafkian subject is interpellated by a mysterious bureaucratic entity (Law, Castle). But this interpellation has a somewhat strange look: it is so to say an interpellation without identification, it is not offering us a Cause to identity with – the Kafkian subject is the subject desperately seeking a trait with which to identify, he doesn't understand the meaning of the call of the Other (ibid., p. 95).

The ideological function of the Kafkian interpellation is to constitute the subject without subjectivation, without recognition. Through this confrontation with the ideological apparatus, the Kafkian subject emerges as someone who is supposed to know what is expected from her (the *subject supposed to know* in Lacanian terms), but she cannot give an answer (i.e., cannot

answer the proper question of the big Other – What do you want? *Che vuoi?*). The Kafkian subject 'does not know why he is occupying this place in the symbolic network. His own answer to this '*Che vuoi?*' of the Other (…) [is]: 'Why am I [a teacher, a master, a king (…)]?' Briefly: 'Why am I what you [the big Other] are saying that I am?' (Žižek, 1989, p. 126). The position of the subject who is supposed to know, interpellated by the giant, nonsensical bureaucratic apparatus, appeared several times while we were preparing with the teachers for the household visits in the settlement.

> [Gosia]: Well, I will call the parents in the settlement and say: I would like to come to you tomorrow. And they will ask: what for? After all, someone has to invite me.
>
> [Agnieszka]: Can we even do such things? I mean, even if the parents would invite us?
>
> [Dorota]: Now we need papers for everything. It is so tiring. We will need these papers for the visit.
>
> [Gosia]: Ah, we should teach and not write these papers.
>
> [Dorota]: Yes, nothing comes out of it. I have such a feeling… They [the government] do not trust us, because it is hard to monitor our work.
>
> [Gosia]: I remember, once parents invited me for dinner but I could not agree. It may end badly with the management.
>
> [Marta]: But this is your thinking. No one can formally prohibit you. These are social contacts…
>
> [Agnieszka]: I heard something else.
>
> [Marta]: But from whom? From the management?
>
> [Agnieszka]: *I don't know.* [my italics]

Later, when we talked to Teresa, the director of Nibylandia, it turned out that there is no formal regulation, only the parents' agreement was necessary. The everyday burlesque of how the teachers tried to navigate in the Kafkaesque universe of the education apparatus evokes the parable of the Door of Law in Kafka's *The Trial* (1925/2009), where a man from the countryside spends years waiting for the doorkeeper to allow him to enter, although the entrance was intended alone for him, as it turns out at the end.

Similarly, although the symbolic regimes of evaluation, accountability, appraisal, quality assurance, supervision were intended to serve the teachers, these nonetheless contribute to the alienation and restriction of teaching praxis – without purpose, under the shadow of the inaccessible, 'impervious big Other' behind the door, that was intended for entrance. In agreement with Žižek, this Kafkaesque universe

> is that of extreme alienation: the subject is confronted with an impervious Other whose machinery functions in an entirely 'irrational' way, as if the chain that links causes and effects has broken down. (…) No wonder Kafka's universe is that of universal-formal guilt independent of any concrete content and act of the subject who perceives himself as guilty (2000b, p. 225).

This alienation in the big Other also contributes to the further degradation and dishonor of teachers, and mostly to their infantilization, as unable to answer the question '*Che vuoi?*', that they are supposed to know. They grow *childish*, just like the man from the country in Kafka's novel, where he 'curses his misfortune, out loud in the first years, later, as he grows old, he just mutters to himself. *He grows childish…*' (1925/2009, p. 154 italics added). But this alienation in the big Other (the Lacanian ego-ideal) is not only characteristic of Kafkaesque professionalism, but also of the imaginary identifications (with the ideal-ego) of the teachers. While in the former case (cf. interpellation without subjectivation) the alienation occurs directly from the symbolic identification (losing the gaze of the big Other, which I try to impress and from which I observe myself), in the latter (imaginary identifications with the ego-ideal) the alienation is inscribed in clinging to the ideal image of the subject (i.e., clinging to the small other, the projection of the ego, by which the subject wants to appear in its fullness to others). I propose that this symbolic alienation is one of the most important characteristics of the education apparatus, which distinguishes it from other apparatuses, especially within the semi-peripheral dispositifs of urban poverty. The apparatuses of the dispositif are historically based on strong symbolic identifications, or, in other words: the apparatuses all *wink at* and exchange glances with their big Other *qua* symbolic order, as reified in master signifiers such as: for the Police it is the *Law*, for the Church it is *God*, for the Social Welfare Center it is the *State*, for the Hospital it is *Medicine*, for the NGO it is *Human Rights* and so on. Far from generalizing, these are only examples, but in the case of the School it is hard to identify a big Other. Obviously, as I will argue later, it has to be the *Pedagogical*, but nowadays *the pedagogical is drastically atrophying*[73].

8.3.2 The Atrophy of the Pedagogical

Pedagogy is dead, but it doesn't know it.[74] Of course, it doesn't mean that pedagogy is literally dead, but that it is in exile (is *unconscious* in Lacanian terms) and not without structural reasons. Evoking Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Lacan twists the father's assumption, that

> *if God doesn't exist*, the father says, *then everything is permitted*. Quite evidently, a naïve notion, for we analysts know full well that if God doesn't exist, then nothing at all is permitted any longer. Neurotics prove that to us every day (1988, p. 128).

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[73] Viz.: Ancient Greek ἀτροφία and ἄτροφος, meaning 'ill-fed', 'un-nourished'.

[74] This is a transliteration of Žižek's Lacanian interpretation of atheism: 'God is dead, but he doesn't know it' (cf. 2006a).

The same holds for the teachers' alienation in the big Other (Pedagogy), which alienation retroactively holds them captive, and constrains their praxis (without the *pedagogical,* nothing at all is permitted). Again, it doesn't mean that the teachers' praxis is not pedagogical *per se*, but that the pedagogical is alienated and disavowed – similarly to the case of the atheist, who 'thinks he knows that God is dead; what he doesn't know is that, unconsciously, he continues to believe in God' (Žižek, 2006a, pp. 91–92). This global trend, to which I refer as *the atrophy of the pedagogical*, is also covered by Dutch educational philosopher, Gert Biesta. His main argument concerns

> the remarkable absence in many contemporary discussions about education of explicit attention for what is educationally desirable. There is much discussion about educational processes and their improvement but very little about what such processes are supposed to bring about. There is very little explicit discussion, in other words, about what constitutes *good* education (Biesta, 2009, p. 36).

The educational apparatus and education discourse hence are confronted with the disappearance of the primordial pedagogical question: '*What is education for and why?*' Thus, when the teachers expressed during our working group meetings that, 'for the children everything is pointless', that 'they do not see the goal', and that 'the school is not meaningful for them', these statements were not only pointing to the impact of the atrophy of the pedagogical on students, but these statements also spoke to how education was not meaningful for teachers as well. But contrary to the mainstream critiques of neoliberalism and neoconservatism, which hold that the teleological questions of education have become ideological in the sense that they appear as taken-for-granted in the domain of 'common sense', I argue that the *par excellence* pedagogical question regarding the *telos* of education rather *got lost and disavowed within the complex hegemonic struggles over the apparatus and discourse of education*. And while this hegemonic field is composed of multiple antagonistic articulations, among those, however, dominant nodal points can be identified that have been conducive to the atrophy of the pedagogical. One of these is the hegemonic discursive formation of an evidence-based approach addressing the inputs and outcomes of education, promoting those 'best practices', competencies, learning paths, which can be derived from and scaffolded by scientific evidence about *what works*. The problem here is that a thing 'never "works" in the abstract sense but always in relation to a particular purpose or set of purposes. To say, for example, that homework is of no use (…) is a meaningless statement if we do not specify what it is not useful for' (Biesta, 2015, p. 80). The technologico-scientific discourse of 'what works in education' gives the impression that the directions, aims and means of education can be solely extracted from factual scientific evidence (league tables, big data, international comparisons). Besides

the critiques, which emphasize the problematic validity of such measurements (cf. Vajda, 2013), the main problem of such an approach to education is that it forgets *that it is an approach*, that it is value-laden, and, most importantly, *political*. The problem is, that

> what ought to be done can never be logically *derived* from what is. (…) [W]hen we are engaged in decision making about the direction of education we are always and necessarily engaged in value judgements – judgements about what is educationally *desirable*. (…) The need to engage explicitly with values in our decisions about the direction of education is easily overlooked, particularly in those cases in which the concepts that are used already appear to express values (Biesta, 2009, p. 35).

Through the example of 'educational effectiveness', Biesta shows that what is ignored within such a hegemonic discourse – that is overloaded with its disavowed values of its concepts – is the need for asking *par excellence* pedagogical questions: 'Effective for what? Effective for whom?' Hence, the main impact of such a discourse is not the hegemonic sedimentation of a pedagogical *telos*, but the displacement of it into the realm of the 'unknown knowns'. So again, I argue that within such a hegemonic formation, the absence of explicitly declared values regarding the purpose of education is not simply a means for secretly impregnating the discursive field of education with a hidden stream of a pedagogical purpose (even if it does), but more importantly: ignoring the teleological questions of education is effective precisely in overshadowing the very existence of these questions. This leads to such a predicament of education, where its means turn into its ends – e.g., when 'that targets and indicators of quality become mistaken for quality itself' (ibidem.) – and where the desired modality of education appears as *ab ovo good*. Such a discourse of education – just as with Debord's spectacle – 'presents itself as a vast inaccessible reality that can never be questioned. Its sole message is: "What appears is good; what is good appears"' (§12).

Another hegemonic discursive formation, conducive to the atrophy of the pedagogical, is what Biesta calls 'learnification', which thrives at the expense of the concept of education. For Biesta, the concept of 'learning' is individualistic and individualizing on the one hand, it removes the necessary relational character of education, and on the other hand it overshadows the content and the direction (what do students learn and what for) of the process that it denotes, which process is presented as a smooth 'path' designed to accommodate the learner's needs, contrary to the modality of education that Biesta proposes, which 'can and in a certain sense even ought to be difficult and challenging' (2009, p. 39). The concept of learning is unable to grasp the teleological challenge of pedagogy, and from this perspective it is

> shocking, how much policy – but increasingly also research and practice – has adopted the empty language of learning to speak about education. (…) [T]eachers end up being a kind of process-managers of

empty and in themselves directionless learning processes. (…) In this sense one could say that *the language of learning operates as an ideology, making what really goes on invisible and inaccessible* (Biesta, 2012b, p. 36 italics added).

These instances of the atrophy of the pedagogical (among others, like managerialism, marketization, accountability, or - not to mention - the neoconservative tentacle of 'control' which is not even worth mentioning as, in Biesta's words an 'uneducational extreme') clearly illuminate what I referred to as teachers' alienation in the pedagogical (in the big Other, the symbolic order of education), which Biesta tries to grasp with reference to 'the disappearance of the teacher'. This disappearance is inscribed in the global hegemonic struggle over the desired modalities of education, and if there is a dominant direction of this antagonistic field, then it is the emerging imaginary subject of the teacher, who develops prefabricated competencies, facilitates students' learning, and who 'has nothing to give but is just drawing out what is already there is, therefore [it is] a misrepresentation (…) that has contributed significantly to the erosion and disappearance of teaching and the teacher' (ibid., p. 41). This withdrawal of the teacher, which is part of the extension of the education vacuum, was not only

manifested in the inability of our working group to arrange household visits with the teachers, it also came out in the teachers' self-reflection about how they relate to their social environment. The teachers illustrated this alienation with crossed-out arrows and a straight line separating them and their students' 'way of life'.

[Marta]: My life situation is not compatible with the situation of the families at all. My values are not attractive to them. *I feel like from a different fairy tale.* [italics added]

[Me]: Do these two sides affect each other, what happens in the school and outside of the school?

[Marta]: For me it doesn't. I try to cut myself off. Here [she points at the picture] we painted a picture about ourselves at home. Here I am, totally lazy, I read books at home, I grow flowers, I watch TV programs, I meet with my friends, I cook. Here, I wrote that my hierarchy of values is badly perceived by children and parents because they have a completely different set of values. They have a different sense of value. I am perceived by them as the 'caretaker', who only demands. Or rather as the oppressor. And it causes me discomfort. I present my values and proposals for education [*wychowanie*], but there is no feedback.

[Dorota]: Here [points to the government], I have a very difficult relation because I cannot lead a life that I would like. It is because of financial reasons.

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[Me]: How would you depict it?

[Dorota]: I don't know. Maybe I will put an arrow on that side. I don't know. With the children, the relation is okay, but here I would draw an ass [*dupa*] somewhere, when it comes to politics.

Thus, the alienation of the teachers in the pedagogical is closely connected to the fissure in their relations with the social environment (parents, kids and politics as well), which is conducive to their isolation into a 'fairy tale' (the nightmare of neverland), where the horizon of the teleological questions regarding education are not only policed and controlled by 'external' agents, but are also disavowed in the vacuum around which contemporary education discourse is constituted. This consequently leads (1) to the disappearance of the teacher from the field of discursivity of the pedagogical *telos*, (2) to the denial of the teachers' crucial role of making judgements about the purpose of education, and finally (3) to the disappearance of teaching. As Biesta emphasizes, in the midst of the hegemonic struggle over education, teaching is more and more constrained, contrary to his proposal 'that teachers should teach – and (…) that teachers should be *allowed* to teach' (2012b, p. 36). It is in line with my previous argument that *if pedagogy is dead, then nothing at all is permitted.* Of course, this doesn't mean that
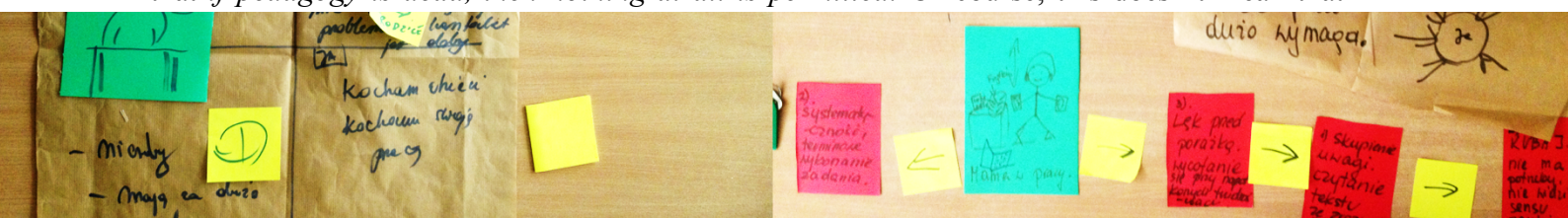
teachers are literally not allowed to teach – Biesta here refers to a specific understanding of teaching:

> for teachers to be able to teach they need to be able to make judgements about what is educationally desirable, and the fact that what is at stake in such judgements is the question of desirability, highlights that such judgements are not merely technical judgements – not merely judgements about the 'how' of teaching – but ultimately always *normative* judgements, that is judgements about the 'why' of teaching (ibid., p. 45).

Biesta argues for a conception of *good* education, based on *normative* judgements, against the hegemonic discourse of effectiveness, which is based on technical questions of competitiveness. Without a sense of purpose that is *constitutive* of education, the School hangs in a 'pointless' vacuum, since 'if we do not know what it is we are seeking to achieve with our educational arrangements and endeavors, we cannot make any decisions about the content that is most appropriate and the kind of relationships that are most conducive' (Biesta, 2015, p. 77). At the same time, however, it is important to see also that the formal, technological and rationalist approach to the 'science' of teaching has been embedded in a wider hegemonic struggle across academic discourses, dominated by positive science. As Labaree argues, the

'scientifization' of education was conducive to the strengthening of the 'psychologistic' and formal rationalist models in education: '[T]he implication is that laypersons should have no more say about how a teacher conducts a class than about how a surgeon conducts an operation; both cases are seen as technical matters of professional competence that are best dealt with by peer review' (Labaree, 1992, p. 149). This implication, again, conceals and mystifies the *political* that is irreducibly constitutive of the *pedagogical*, and renders it as an apparently technological question, which is easily answerable based on the calculations of the anointed apostles of education: *the policy experts*. The object of 'education policy' is one of the deepest wounds on the atrophying body of the pedagogical, which paradoxically promises an ideological suture of the fissure, *that it itself embodies*. According to Matthew Clarke, from the Lacanian perspective, the objects of education policy function as the Lacanian 'Sublime',

> as things that are at once elevated and elusive, as untouchable objects of inestimable value that serve as ultimate horizons, fascinating and capturing us as 'policy subjects' (…), whilst at the same time being perceived as constantly under threat (…) and hence in need of constant re-inscription (2014, p. 585).

In this sense, the sublime object of education policy is the apolitical mask on the innermost pedagogical questions and challenges of education. It is especially the case in the European semi-peripheral, post-socialist complex, where the hegemonic implementation of the 'post-socialist education reform package' as conducted by 'policy experts' not only overshadowed the political, post-colonial background of 'catching-up' with the West, but also disavowed progressive and transformative pedagogical theories and traditions that emerged within the Central-Eastern European context in the 20th century (Korczak, Loránd, Sztehlo, etc.). As Silova argues, the post-socialist epistemological rationality of education was not only conducive to the slight and quick implementation of the expert 'know-how' in the region, but also to the devaluation of local pedagogical theories and traditions, which is, I argue, also constitutive of the teachers' alienation in the pedagogical, and of the atrophy of the pedagogical in general. This epistemological rationality

> is based on the belief that Western theories are valid in another country until proved otherwise, while 'other theories are seen as limited, parochial, and only local' (…) [which] results in the ongoing (and uninterrupted) process of collapsing difference and divergence found in the post–socialist experiences into the universalizing accounts of educational convergence (Silova, 2014, p. 192).

In sum, the sublime object of education policy, based on 'scientific evidence' about what works and constituted around assumptions of progress, is part of what Rancière calls the 'integral pedagogization of society – the general infantilization of the individuals that make it

up' (1999c, p. 133), which consequently leads to the *infantilization of teachers*, rendering them as diligent conductors of education policies. *Without minimal anchoring in the political challenge of the educational telos, the problematization of the pedagogical and the pedagogical reading of the social is getting cumbersome.* When, during the working groups, I raised the question of what shall be the purpose of education, the teachers regularly came up with ad hoc and eclectic ideas:

> [Teresa]: Education reforms serve as a political tool to impress the people. I don't say that everything is written down somewhere, but when there is a change of power everyone wants to show off. And they show off, usually at our expense, forgetting that there is a kid somewhere. (…) And in this respect, I think it is dramatic in Poland. The most important, stability is missing.
>
> [Me]: So how should the school answer the present challenges of social reality? Because you know, we were talking about drugs, poverty, and so on…
>
> [Teresa]: To improve the number of hours with the main teachers of the class.
>
> [Gosia]: We should organize more classes after regular classes from different subjects.
>
> [Marta]: Or organize workshops from managing emotions, to teach how to discipline yourself in case of anger, anxiety.
>
> [Dorota]: To teach interpersonal relations, that used to be normal!
>
> [Marta]: To teach how to recognize emotions, to prevent them exploding.
>
> [Agnieszka]: For me to teach programming and economy from the kindergarten level.

I argue that the difficulty of 'hitting on' the education vacuum, that is the difficulty of challenging the pedagogical and reading the social in a pedagogical sense, is especially problematic in the context of urban poverty and the dispositifs of advanced marginality, which are oversaturated with social symptoms, inconsistencies and fissures in their discursive landscapes. I also assert that within the complex, ideologically overladen dispositifs of advanced marginality, the infantilization of teaching (*via* neverland syndrome and the atrophy of the pedagogical – characteristic to the educational apparatus in postmodern global capitalism) leads to the ideologico-discursive tendency of *cynicism*, which further fractures and dislocates the pedagogical horizon of teachers and of the educational apparatus.

8.3.3 *Cynical Pedagogy*

While both the cynical and the fetishistic accounts of ideology are rooted in Žižek's central dialectic formula of ideological fantasy ('they know it, but they do it'), in which the ideological mystification is on the side of doing, there is however a petite distinction that has to be made between the two. In both cases, the subject is aware (*knowing*) how things really are, but while in fetishism the ideological mechanism proves that in practice (*doing*) the

ideological 'Lie' is true, the ideological mechanism of cynicism provides the reasons for choosing practice *regardless of* what the subject knows – even at the expense of 'truth'. Of course, in a certain sense, both the fetishist and the cynical cling to the fetish – the former directly, the latter in a disavowed manner. One great example for the fetishist reason is Western Buddhism, that Žižek considers as pure fetish:

> it enables you to fully participate in the frantic capitalist game while sustaining the perception that you are not really in it, that you are well aware how worthless the whole spectacle is, since what really matters is the peace of the inner Self to which you know you can always withdraw… (…) on the one hand its [the fetish's] role may remain unconscious; on the other, one may think that the fetish is what really matters, as in the case of the Western Buddhist unaware that the 'truth' of his existence lies in the very social relations he tends to dismiss as a mere game (2009, p. 66).

While the fetishist clings directly to the fetish, the cynical keeps a distance and disavows it. An illuminating example for ideological cynicism is an anecdote that is used by Žižek several times. A friend visited Niels Bohr in a countryside house near Copenhagen and noticed a horseshoe above his entrance, the superstitious symbol that was supposed to keep out evil spirits. Bohr's friend was totally shocked: 'My God, I thought you are a scientist, do you really believe in this superstitious crap?' Niels Bohr's answer is the *par excellence* of ideological cynicism: 'Of course I don't believe in it; I only have it there because I was told that it works even if one doesn't believe in it!' (Žižek, 2006c, pp. 352–353) Thus, for Žižek, cynical reason doesn't simply consist of ridiculing an ideological fantasy, but also of reproducing it by deliberately 'doing' it *regardless of* 'knowing' it:

> The cynical subject is quite aware of the distance between the ideological mask and the social reality, but he none the less still insists upon the mask. (…) [Thus] even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, *we are still doing them*' (Žižek, 1989, pp. 25–30).

Again, to put it simply, while the classic, naïve account of ideology was concerned about how reality is concealed, the ideological function of cynicism in postmodern global capitalism is to prove the necessity of ignoring and concealing what is already known. Regarding education, one can take the example of contemporary attempts to render the school as a friendly place for learning. The problem with the ideal of this aspect of learnification, as Mihály (1999/2007) argues, is not that it cannot be implemented in the school, but 'that then [when really implemented] it is not a school. These are simply two different questions: whether I want to be with the child or I want to teach the child. One is a purpose, the other is some kind of a co-existence' (ibid., p. 63, translation mine). Attempts at rendering the school as a place for learning and freedom forget that teaching ('being taught by someone') is an irreducible

component of institutionalized education. Biesta, in his theoretical attempts to give teaching back to teachers, argues boldly that, 'rather than to think of the school as a place for learning we should think of it as *a place for teaching*. (…) [T]eaching, (…), and not learning, is what makes the school special and different from many other spaces and places' (Biesta, 2012b, p. 41). As argued before, the discourse of learnification largely contributed to the 'withdrawal' of the teacher, and the atrophy of the pedagogical, promoting a professional subjectivity similar to process-managers of individual learning. But teachers know very well that teaching cannot be removed from the School, it is – as Mihály argued – structurally and historically not possible. To sustain the unbearable fissure that this structural impossibility opens, the fetishist teacher clings to the fetish of the promoted teacher subjectivity (process-manager of student learning). The cynical teacher, on the other hand, keeps a distance and doesn't believe in this new professionalism, but acts as if she believed in it, while privately teaching her students in her style of thinking. As Silova and Brehm (2013) show in their research on private teaching in Central-Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, a large number of teachers 'use private tutoring as a way to re-claim autonomy of their classroom' (ibid., p. 20). And indeed, ideological cynicism is especially dominant in post-socialist, semi-peripheral countries, where cynicism was the predominant form of ideology during state capitalism ('I know how the things are going and that everyone else knows, so I pretend that I do not know, so I can do what I want behind the doors'). But while Silova and Brehm interpret this phenomenon as a site of teachers' resistance, they don't account for the ideological character of such a cynical position: even if the cynical subject keeps a distance in what she does, she is still doing it even more. This ironic distance of the cynic reason, which unveils everything as 'ideological' in a paranoiac manner, but still proves why to sustain the ideological regardless of what is known, is rooted in the alienation in the big Other (the Symbolic order), that is tendentiously characteristic to global capitalism, just like teachers' alienation in the pedagogical. This postmodern alienation in the Symbolic order (based on uncertainty, fluidity, unpredictability, insecurity, the constant need to choose), anchors the subject to the only reality which appears secure: what one knows and what one sees. In postmodern global capitalism, 'there is no symbolic order or code of accepted fictions (what Lacan calls the 'Big Other') to guide us in our social behaviour' (Žižek, 1999b, p. 3), but 'if one limits oneself to what one sees, one simply misses the point. (…) A cynic who "believes only his eyes" misses the efficiency of the symbolic fiction, and how it structures our experience of reality' (Žižek, 1997a, p. 3). To put it simply: today, alienation does not predominantly result from the constraint and normalization of social order, but also, and more tendentiously *from the apparent disappearance of it*, which however governs the subject in

more insidious, more subtle ways. According to Žižek, within this pseudo-post-ideological constellation, due to the collapse of the symbolic order, the big Other is more and more displaced to the Lacanian register of the Real, where it returns as the 'Other of the Other'. Thus, the cynic,

> while displaying cynical distrust of any public ideology, indulges without restraint in paranoiac fantasies about conspiracies (…). Distrust of the big Other (…) relies on the belief that there is an 'Other of the Other,' a secret, invisible, all-powerful agent who effectively 'pulls the strings' behind the visible, public Power. (ibidem.)

Cynical reason transposes the instability of the symbolic order to the imaginary threat of the 'Other of the Other'. By facing such an 'inexistence' of the symbolic order, it is harder than ever for teachers to make meaningful sense of the social. And it becomes especially problematic for teachers, who work at the front door of advanced marginality, where the inconsistencies of the symbolic order bellow for meaning. Of course, global capitalism produces those meanings which make its unbearable disasters sustainable for the subject – movies, commercials, donation campaigns effectively provide the fantasy scenarios for coping with the traumas of capitalism through imaginary identifications. As Kiss (2014) puts it,

> due to the traumatic shocks that became the constantly recurring basis of our lives, it is impossible to maintain the Symbolic order (…), while at the same time, these disasters also cannot be included in our everyday lives. The result is a 'post-traumatic subject' who no longer lives in his own stories and identity… (ibid., p. 146, translation mine)

Thus, in global capitalism, the emergence of its trauma, the return of the repressed is transposed into and framed within the fantasy scenarios of 'capitalist realism'. For those teachers, however, who confront the 'Real as extimacy' in their daily praxis (*qua* the return of the repressed, the Real class), the fantasy scenarios intended to displace the trauma (the education gospels of cooperation, child-centeredness, interactive classroom, the promises of social mobility, etc.) fall short. Let me be extremely normative here: in the daily confrontation with urban poverty individual learning is not an option; the newest information technologies make no sense, when the child has no electricity at home; underpaid teachers' professional development is a naïve dream; classroom cooperation is short-lived, if the child starves with hunger and falls asleep on the desk; and democratic decision-making is not an option, if the child is absent from class, because she is begging in the city. Even a 2007 UNICEF report points out the unsurmountable fissure between the prefabricated fantasy scenarios of education and its traumatic 'Real as extimacy' in the dispositifs of advanced marginality:

> Self-directed, project-based learning is not an option (…) where homes have no books. (…) Where Ministers and their agendas change every six months, where several parallel reforms descend on schools at once, where some prestigious schools are declared 'pilot' or 'model' and receive computers or science labs while others have no running water, reform becomes no more than externally imposed, piecemeal change, a source of fear and unfairness, rather than renewal and opportunity (UNICEF, 2007, p. 48).

One, hence, shouldn't be surprised that at the bottom of the pit, at the epicenters of urban poverty, teachers (especially in post-socialist countries) cling to the ideology of cynical reason: 'Of course, I don't believe in it [individual learning paths, self-directed learning, etc.]; I only do it, because I was told that it *works* even if one doesn't believe in it!' – to transliterate the joke in the anecdote about Niels Bohr. One of the ideological nodal points of cynical reason regarding the Polish settlement is connected to the problem of the Gypsy children's absenteeism and the families' mistrust in education, which is deeply rooted in the general mistrust in the penal and punitive dispositif. As Marczak (2016) notes, increased police interventions, institutional discrimination, the demolition of the settlements, and deportations deeply sedimented the Gypsy families' mistrust in public institutions, and the school is not an exception. Thus, Gypsy families 'believe that the only way to avoid mistreatment is dropping out of school (…) since they see it as a means of controlling their children's and their own lives and hindering children's participation in the economic activities of the family' (ibid., p. 395). Teachers both in Areszt and Nibylandia are well aware that 'this problem is related to how the majority of the society is discriminatory' [Oliwia], that Gypsy families 'do not relate to the education of their children' [Marta] and that they 'do not think that education is something good for the child's development' [Agnieszka]. While the fetishistic mystification would be to cling to cultural explanations, as the police officers do ('it is in their blood'), the cynical reason mystifies domination with ignorantly distancing what it effectively knows. So while teachers effectively know that there is an irreducible mistrust in education on the side of the Gypsy families, they pretend that they didn't know it: Mrs. Oliwia, for instance, first asks the absent student's friend whether she knows anything about the missing child, then calls the parents with a perplexed tone, almost surprised, that the child is not in school, and with this theatrical act she sets up the stage, where the parents can also pretend that they don't know, that Mrs. Oliwia is well aware why the child is missing:

> [Oliwia]: …so they say that he will come to school the next day. Sometimes they say that he is sick, stomach hurts. Sometimes it might be true, but more often I know, they lie. (…) Maybe you need to show them how to set the alarm clocks.

So regardless of what she knows, Mrs. Oliwia ignores it in her practice, while she deepens mistrust with her ignorant phone calls. Mrs. Agnieszka, who teaches the children of the Gypsy family that ended up in a corrective institution, also ignores what she knows in favour of ideological practice, even at the expense of truth:

> [Agnieszka]: I know everything what is happening with them, I have contact with their mother. Their biggest problem is coming to school on time. (…) The mother is not ignorant at all, she listens to me. Maybe it's just that she's alone with all these problems, there is probably no one else, who would care about it as much as she does.

Mrs. Agnieszka knows very well the situation of this family, she knows how they ended up captive in an institution for ex-prisoners, she is aware that they lost their supportive hinterland in the settlement and that the mother is trying to manage the lives of five children in this penal constellation. But still, when she addresses the mother, when she talks to her, she acts as if she didn't know it and tries to pretend that she is only guessing the causes of being late from school:

> [Agnieszka, in a conversation with the mother after school]: Maybe you are up till really evening hours, and it's really difficult for them [the children] to wake up in the morning and come to school on time. You know, children must go to sleep early…

In both cases, the discursive construction of the ideological mystification follows the matheme,

$$\frac{a \lozenge \cancel{\ni} \cancel{S}}{d}$$

where the hegemonic articulation (a | the school is obligatory and starts at 8:00 every weekday) crosses the field of domination and excludes the subversive signifiers ($\cancel{S}$ | what the subject is supposed to know in cynical reason), thus the articulation conceals and distorts ($\lozenge$) the state of domination. One can also illustrate, however, the particularity of cynical reason by reconfiguring the Lacanian matrix of discourses in an absolutely non-elegant way:

agent		other
S1 $\longrightarrow$		d
		$\lozenge$
$\cancel{S}$ (S2)	$\lozenge$	a
truth		production

What happens here is that the subversive remainders (supposedly known by the subject, in this sense S is almost similar to Lacan's S_2 in his analysis of the for discourses[75], the 'battery of signifiers', that is knowledge – *savoir*) fall prey to a master signifier (S_1), which fails to represent this knowledge to the state of domination (*d*) that it addresses ($\rightarrow$), and the loss of this process, or the surplus of it (its production), is the ideologico-hegemonic articulation (a), which not only mystifies domination (*d* $\Diamond$ a), but also mystifies what the subject is supposed to know (S $\Diamond$ a – a rather twisted formula of the Lacanian *phantasm*). What the mystification of what the subject is supposed to know (that is the ideological core of cynical reason) shows, is that ideological mystification can be effective regardless of what we know. We are captured by this cynical reason in our simplest everyday practices: for instance we, radical leftists know very well, that giving money to homeless people brings no real change for them, and that it is only a way to heal our conscience and invest into some *jouissance*, but still, we often act as if (in what we do it seems like) we didn't know it – we give a few nickels, regardless of what we know and enjoy (in terms of *jouissance*) its consequences, while we tell ourselves and others in a confidential low-key voice, that we really don't believe in giving money to the homeless.

Another ideological nodal point of cynical reason regarding the Polish settlement is connected to the undernourishment of the Gypsy children, which is very visible, since these children are smaller and thinner than their peers. Dorota, one of the teachers in Nibylandia, knows very well that the families can rarely afford meat, and prefer cheap foods like pasta, soups, fried and baked potatoes. She even raised the pedagogical obstacle of this situation during a working group meeting:

> [Dorota]:…if you have 1000 zlotys and 2 or 3 children, then what will I tell them about healthy eating, which is simply much more expensive? And I'm not talking about healthy eating, just about regular food…

But then, when it comes to pedagogical practice, she disavows this knowledge. Just as in the case when she gave a nutritional pyramid and its description printed on A4 paper to a parent, which satirically – as I saw it later – ended up in the family's wood basket as a sort of kindling for making fire. Yet another ideological nodal point of cynical reason is the false promise of the social mobility of Gypsy children. Mrs. Gosia, one of the teachers Nibylandia, who teaches one of the Gypsy children, Armando, knows very well that institutionalized education has little (if no) impact on the employment opportunities of the Romanian Gypsies:

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[75] Lacan differentiates between four discourses based on this matrix: the master discourse, the hysterical discourse, the university discourse, and the discourse of the analyst. See more in Book XVII, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis* (1969). I don't use all the registers that are in the classic concept (objet petit a, divided subject).

> [Gosia]: I know that the mother really cares, (…) but Armando is so exhausted [due to begging], he's trying very hard and he is eager [in learning], but I know, that he can do nothing later.

And it is not simple resignation or prejudice on the side of Gosia (as liberal educators would have it: 'but if you say, that he can do nothing later, you can be sure, that he will not even try'). I think it's much more mature attitude than clinging to the fetishistic illusion of social mobility, since the Romanian Gypsies are historically exposed to the structural lack of employment opportunities. And, as Marczak (2016) notes,

> [l]ack of school credentials does not fully explain Roma's exclusion from the job market because the problem stems also from discrimination in employment (…). Thus, formal education does not have much potential to improve the Roma's employment opportunities, (…) [who] see the social and economic status of ethnic Poles as unobtainable for Roma no matter what investments in formal education (ibid., p. 394-395).

However, when it comes to pedagogical practice, Mrs. Gosia acts as if she believed in the promises of the education gospel (the propaganda of emancipation):

> [Gosia]: We had a 'correctional' program (*program naprawczy*) in the first semester for Armando, (…) now he will have an individual program only for him, so maybe he can finish the third grade.

Such an intervention was, however, only possible through diagnosing Armando with special needs, which is another layer in this fantasy scenario of cynical reason. Of course, Mrs. Gosia knows that Armando has no disabilities, but in pretending that he had some, made the investment into the *jouissance* of an individual program possible, in which, nonetheless, Mrs. Gosia also doesn't believe:

> [Gosia]: …being a Rom is not a dysfunction, it was only circumventing the law, because the decision on individual teaching can be prescribed by the psychological and pedagogical counseling center only when there is some physical or intellectual dysfunction.

This practice is quite common in Central-Eastern European countries. In Areszt, for instance, the whole class, every single child is diagnosed with special needs, who need individual education, but then they are segregated into one class. As Marczak (2016) argues, such practices are deeply inscribed into the Polish education system: 'Polish educational policies and practices are still fueled by segregation, elitism and bureaucracy. Strong divisions between schools exist (…) keeping the *good* students away from the *bad* ones and often leading to the "white flight"' (ibid., p. 394).

These corrective technologies are not only characteristic to the education system but are inscribed into the deepest organs of the punitive dispositif of advanced marginality, which

enhances ideological processes through cynical reason. Even the representative of MOPS engaged in such ideological mystification once:

> [MOPS representative]: I have a big problem with the system, personally, because I, not me as the director of the MOPS, but 'me,' I am a supporter of a different kind of approach to helping people. I know, I have many years of experience, and I know that without building a system to support education and children's development, we will stand in one place and we will not solve social problems.

The process, in which the above examples (the promotion of school attendance, healthy meal, social mobility and individual learning) turn into technologies of control, correction and punishment through cynical reason is constructed around the penal modality of the dispositif of the settlement in Poland. Mrs. Oliwia, the teacher of the segregated class in the Areszt, several times expressed her doubts regarding the pedagogical technologies of discipline and punishment, but at the same time, she thinks that this is *what works* with 'these' children, regardless of what she thinks about such techniques:

> [Oliwia]: However, the principle of penalties and prizes works here: familiarizing students with rules, writing down these rules on the board, class regulations: we are quiet during classes, we do what the teacher asks, if we want to say something we rise a hand, we respect each other, we speak Polish, we don't stand up without permission, we are clean, we eat during lunch time, we take care of school equipment. (…) We also have prizes for complying with these rules, children get stamps in the shape of flowers for, for example, raising a hand. At the end of the lesson I tell the children how much flowers they received and for what. At the end of the month, the child who has the most flowers gets a small gift. This system really works.
>
> [Lena, social worker]: But you mentioned that punishments are better than rewards.
>
> [Oliwia]: It depends in which case. In the case of classroom work, yes. In the case of behavior, it is rather positive reinforcement, that is, giving these stamps of flowers. (…) But I think that Lena will be happy, because I have a secret information that the children will attend regular classes from next year…

Here again, the classic formula of cynical reason dominates pedagogical practice: 'Of course, I don't believe in the pedagogy of penalties and prizes, but it really works, even if I don't believe in it.' One shall, however, interrogate the innermost reason of cynicism, namely that '*it works*', with the questions of 'Works for what? Works for whom?' From the ideologico-critical perspective it works for the teacher in the first instance for keeping distance from the traumatic encounter with the 'Real as extimacy', that bothers the subject so mercifully in postmodern global capitalism, due to its closeness. And from this perspective it is most importantly a question of class domination, since those who are hunted the most by the Real of global capitalism, who work to the closest of its disasters and inconsistencies, for instance teachers in the discursive infernos of urban poverty. The 'post-traumatic subject' of the teacher

clings to cynical reason, in order to avoid confrontation with the 'Real as extimacy'. Far from blaming teachers at all, this is deeply embedded in historico-structural reasons, which I tried to explicate above. I argue that the fear of the traumatic encounter with the 'Real as extimacy', and hence the discursive investment in constructing fantasy scenarios through cynical reason, was one of the main obstacles of organizing household visits with the teachers. I was also too obsessed with the idea of visiting the settlement, and I couldn't recognize this post-traumatic distance, although the teachers expressed it several times:

[Agnieszka]: I do not feel competent. I have no experience. I cannot visit households. I could see various things over there and I do not know how I would react to them. If a person is not prepared for it, then such visits may still be harmful…

[Gosia]: I also don't feel comfortable with this, you know… *exposing oneself to poverty and problems that you want to hide*… (…) to notice poverty and through the prism of a child for whom nothing can be done later. [italics added]

[Marta]:… but the problem will not disappear when I close my eyes.

At one point in the working group meetings, teachers also expressed their perceived class position with drawing pictures of their social status and the children's:

[Marta]: I'm at home. [pictures on the right] I have my books, flowers, music, peace and quiet. I can cook, walk, I'm with friends, in my world. Backpack and mountains. Life at home is very good. And this is a child with a computer, coca cola, fries. [picture on the left] They eat a lot of carbohydrates, sweets.

[Gosia]: I am also at work all day, then I come back and I have to settle everything. I drew myself a bit like at work. [picture in the middle] I have to settle everyone, a bit like a sergeant. I have moments of peace at home, but these are only moments. I start reading books five times from the beginning because I forget what happened in them. I have little time for myself. I think I don't know how it is, to have time for myself.

In sum, I was so keen on organizing the household visits that I didn't take the traumatic aspect of confronting the 'Real as extimacy' into account. Actually, I was offering another fantasy scenario for teachers [to displace the Real by confronting it], who were trying to avoid the confrontation with the 'Real as extimacy' in their daily praxis through cynical reason. This cynicism of them unsurprisingly unveiled that I was the ultimate cynical object during the working group meetings, as a well-paid researcher. My fantasy scenario was: 'Of course I know that you don't want to go to the settlement, but believe me, *it works*, even if you don't believe in it.' This cynicism (almost the pervert cynicism of the 'expert') of mine led to very unfortunate moments, like: 'Well, I did not want to go there, I understand that it is necessary for your

doctorate, we have to think about it, so I will do it with your help…' [Agnieszka] Confronting the 'Real as extimacy' is traumatic not only for the teachers, but also for social workers:

> [Lena]: The first 18 months was mainly struggling, getting deeply hurt about situation with this naïve type of feeling that maybe you should share half of your wardrobe with the Roma, and then you come to the point that it doesn't change anything, and then it is deeply depressing. We finished with drinking wine twice a week to talk out all this bullshit that we experienced.

Hence, what the avoidance of 'hitting on' the traumatic 'Real as extimacy' conceals is the class character of this distance, that poverty is really 'about us', that the Real class cuts through dramatically and irreducibly the Symbolic order, even if (and even more if) we try to disavow it. Unsurprisingly, the poor, the part of no part, have less illusions about class domination, and know very well that everything else is just an ideological excess. As Dika told me once in the settlement, one shouldn't be misled about their 'Gypsyness':

> [Me]: What do you think, why is it, that you have to live like this and others not?
>
> [Dika]: I do not know… I think it is because we are poor and not because we are Gypsies.

Later I talked to one of the activists, Kuba, about this:

> [Me]: I talked to Dika and he told me something very interesting and I would like you to comment on this, that he thinks that the way they are treated by government, institutions is not because they are an ethnic group, not because they are Gypsies but because they are very poor.
>
> [Kuba]: I think the same. This ethnic issue is also important, but in the first place it's about poor people. Same thing happens with Polish poor people living like that…

* * *

In sum, drawing on my experiences with both the fetishistic and cynical reasoning inscribed in the dispositif of the settlement in Poland, I argue that interpretive demystification is difficult, short-lived (if not impossible) with regards to the ideological mechanisms of postmodern global capitalism. The complex ideologico-discursive mystifications I tried to explicate above show that ideology can be effective regardless of what the subject effectively knows, especially in places of urban poverty. While the fetishist proves that by the end of the day the Lie is the truth (like in the case of air pollution and begging), the cynical proves why to choose ideological practice, even at the expense of what she knows. Of course, I agree with critical Marxist scholars that through ideological mystification the historico-structural constellation of reality is concealed and is hardly accessible. And I also totally agree with Cernusakova, Grill, and Škobla (2016), who argue in their article with the descriptive title, *When Seeing Means Myopia,* that in education

[l]ittle or nothing is said about structural conditions such as miserable housing, lack of clean water and sanitation, lack of health services, the absence of paved roads and the non-existence of public transportation for the Roma inhabitants of some poor settlements. (…) But the problem lies in how some teachers, educators and others (…) explain the causes of the phenomena of poverty and marginalisation that they have encountered in the schools and beyond. (…) The marginalization of Roma (…) is rooted in a complex set of political and economic structures… (ibidem.)

Of course, drawing on Žižek's account of ideology ('they know it, but they do it anyway'), is not an argument that 'we all know the historico-structural complexity of dominations, but still, we maintain it.' It is to say that, while I agree that social structures are effectively concealed, still, there is a more primordial level of ideological mystification, which renders interpretive (discursive) demystification quite challenging, and hence transformative meaning and knowledge is not a guarantee any more for ideological demystification, since 'beyond the field of meaning but at the same time internal to it – an ideology implies, manipulates, produces a pre-ideological enjoyment structured in fantasy' (Žižek, 1989, p. 140). And the ideological function of fantasy and fantasy scenarios is to 'compensate' for the failure of ideology with enjoyment, since if on the discursive level ideology successfully mystifies domination, then it effectively maintains the ontological fissures, inconsistencies, for which it pretends to be a remedy. This is what Žižek means when arguing that, '*fantasy is a means for an ideology to take its own failure into account in advance*' (ibid., p. 142). It is also in this sense that the 'Gypsy' is the means for the dispositif of the settlement of taking its own impossibility ('order', 'homogeneity', 'progress' etc.) into account in advance. The primordial impossibility (social negativity) inscribed in the dispositif takes a positive presence in the figure of the 'Gypsy', against which the struggle of the dispositif is conducted. This way, the figure of the 'Gypsy' and the imaginary place of settlement become the 'fetishistic embodiment of a certain fundamental blockage' of the social (ibid., p. 143). Which, however, makes the interpretive demystification very difficult, since the fetishist feels satisfied in clinging to the fetish, and the cynical feels satisfied in keeping an ironical distance from the fetish. I assume that this is also one of the most important reasons for the failure of organizing household visits. Eventually, I had to recognize that my primal assumptions about the educational potential of heterotopias of advanced marginality didn't take the ideological dimension of enjoyment and fantasy into account, and that I only focused on the discursive, 'symptomal' reading of reality. I had to acknowledge that *the pedagogical potential for transformative teacher learning is not necessarily guaranteed by the confrontation with the traumatic* 'Real as extimacy' *(e.g. urban poverty), but is inscribed in the deepest organs of the dispositif itself, that is inherently cut*

through by the Real. This involved a shift from focusing on the encounter with the heterotopia of urban poverty which I also understand as confronting the 'Real *qua* extimacy' to the encounter with the geometric organ of the dispositif, which I understand as confronting the ultimately dislocated character of the social, that is confronting the 'Real *qua* impossibility.'

Beyond the failure of organizing household visits there were three excesses, or leftovers of my research, that forced me to recognize the pedagogical character of the dispositif of advanced marginality, and to reformulate my research method and my position as a researcher as well. First, since the interpreters of the meetings with institutional representatives and teachers were social workers and activists, I unconsciously constituted new discursive flows, links and streams within the dispositif. I first recognized this hidden stream, when one time comrade Lena couldn't resist stepping out from her position as an interpreter (which she herself decided to do), and intervened in one of the interviews with the MOPS representative:

> [MOPS representative]: We also conducted a pilot program with one of the families [the family who ended up in a corrective institution], which at some point decided to leave the settlement.
>
> [Lena]: Now it is about the […] family living at [the corrective institution]. They lived in […] first and as I told you, that was wonderful there as compared to [the corrective institution].
>
> [MOPS representative]: It depends on for whom it was great, because for the people who worked with them probably not.
>
> [Lena]: Ah, I mean… in order to work with people, one should have some basic interpersonal competences and should like and respect these people.
>
> [MOPS representative]: Did you come here to criticize my employees?! These are ideas of the city. Our role is to consult these ideas, because NGOs do not have professional social workers and specialists in social work. There are specialists, I do not say that they have no knowledge or ideas but they are not professionals. They don't know the system, they do not know how it works, it must be directed by us.

This moment made me realize that the dispositif itself is crisscrossed with its own antagonisms, and I started to pay more attention to these confrontations, especially when during the process the interpreters, comrade Lena and Kuba, became less interpreters of the research and more participants in it, especially in the working groups with the teachers. From the very first moment they – the teachers and the social workers – realized that they work with the same group of children, and the group became very open for dialogue and sharing. During the very first meeting, after the introductions, they already started talking about particular children:

> [Kuba]: So, do you work with Narcisa?
>
> [Dorota]: Yes, but Narcisa has reached school maturity only now. Finally, she began to feel like she wanted to learn. She speaks very good Polish, so if she had practiced at home she would get a lot better.

[Teresa]: I have one more observation… I began to wonder whether she can hear well?

[Lena]: Oh, she can't, she has some problems with hearing.

Then, they also had very interesting debates about education. The social workers and teachers engaged in dialogues which are quite rare in the context of schools.

[Teresa]: It is the story about the only Roma girl who finished this school […]. She visited me during summer break and she told that now the family will take her to Germany to get married, and they will force her against her will and she wanted to escape. Finally, she got married and escaped several times but she is not allowed to learn and go to school anymore.

[Marta]: Here is a clue of the problem! We try to educate the children but, in the future, they will be forced to behave like this. (…) We hurt them, because they will be forced to get married in Roma society where women's voice is without a value. It changes when women become grandmothers but now Larisa is 15 years old, she wants to be visible, expresses her opinions and is very active, but what then? What if she wants to go to high school?

[Kuba]: I wouldn't agree with that we do harm to them, we show them other possibilities. In many discriminated groups, it is women who are a part of the community that is emancipated through education, and among this group of Romanian Roma we also see that women want to go to work, they want girls to learn, they now have more power and decisive willingness to change the situation…

[Teresa]: I'm only observing that this girl has a tough life. This girl, she cried when we met during this summer break knowing what her future is going to look like. We showed her a different life, a little bit of freedom and then she hears 'Stop, you need to become a mother and a wife now, you need to dress differently, look differently.' It seems to me that at the moment these girls are suffering terribly.

[Lena]: Of course, but cultures also change and maybe she is not going to force her daughter to get married, remembering her own story and she will be stronger.

[Marta]: I am still curious how this strength will translate into specific capabilities of these women? What is changing in the Roma culture, that she will have her own words regarding marriage as a woman?

[Lena]: It depends from family to family and from marriage to marriage. We cannot generalize that they don't have the right to choose. She can gain this voice for example by knowing how to read and write and dealing with administration for example to understand reality, and it will influence changing her position in the family, it makes her a person who can read and understand things.

[Marta]: They deserve a lot of help. We have only two hours in school but it's not enough, especially that at home nobody is able to help them.

These discussions are exemplary regarding the transformative potentiality of the School, which I located in the detached character of it, conducive to unlocking, liberating the world which allows for holding a future open without a destination. And not only in the Nibylandia, but also in the Areszt, the conditions of possibility for a cooperation between the school and the NGO started to emerge:

[Lena]: We have recently written a draft to the European Commission, which would set up a two-years program for Roma children who drop out of the education system or never go to school and never went to school. The project would consist of a year of Polish language writing and reading lessons for children from the age of 14, for those who are already married or pregnant… I think that without your help it will be difficult for us too.

[Oliwia]: I do not know if I will be needed here…

[Lena]: It would be more about a consultative cooperation.

[Oliwia]: I think I would need regular help also from the beginning of September, because it is really important to reach the children also at home…

In sum, as an excess, or a by-product of the research, new links started to emerge within the geometric organ of the dispositif. I was thinking at that time, when I started to come to terms with this excess of the research, that this might be close to what Harvey advocates in *The Ways of the World* (2016), that the task today is 'to devise a geopolitical strategy of inter-urban linkage (…), armed with a keen geopolitical sense of how to build alliances and linkages across space in such a way as to mitigate if not challenge the hegemonic dynamic of capitalist accumulation' (ibid., pp. 156-157). The second leftover that provoked the reformulation of my research method was a conversation with the MOPS representative about the theory of social work and the new programs of the social center:

[MOPS representative]: Social assistance, in theory, has three methods: individual intervention, that is, saving a single person; group work, therapeutically, with people who have similar problems; and the method of environmental organization – how to better organize the environment for the people, so they will function without our help. What you are were mentioning is working with the third method. We are the best in that in Poland.

[Me]: How do you do it?

[MOPS representative]: In a small area of the housing estate there is a problem, let's say, such as a large number of single mothers. We promote a leader, who tries to organize all the institutions in this area, such as a school, a priest, a foundation from the region, an association and we make so-called local partnerships. Sometimes formal or informal, because sometimes institutions do not want to join a formal partnership. (…) Through the cooperation of institutions, it is easier to help individual people and see that, for example, a child has a problem at the school and whether the teacher or the headmaster knows about it, and how to deal with it. These are local ties, people do it in the interests of members of the local community. They organize small parties, holidays, picnics, get to know each other, it fosters the building of a sense of security, and lonely uninvolved people get involved.

This method of reshaping the institutional flows, what I'm tempted to call the displacement of the dispositif, became largely influential in reshaping my methods, especially after confronting the third excess of my research in Romania, Brașov County, where I visited

the local school in the village and met Irene, the headmaster. Irene showed me the room for gymnastic lessons, which is kept open during the summer holiday as well, because it functions as an open place for the community:

[Irene]: Here, I ask them to find… few hours here, in silence, to find themselves. Like sometimes there is violence, domestic violence, then they can come here, alone or with children. Just to have some peace. They have no shoes, clothes sometimes. It's very hard.

[Me]: In the 21st century people living like this… how is it even possible?

[Irene]: Possible because, let me tell you why, because, let's say, I by myself represent the educational system, ok? I have to hold hands with that lady from the public authorities, and with policemen, and with doctor, and with priest and go all together in there (to the poor area). We do not do that… I wish… you know… to make a team and go there and explain every department what is going on over there. If there were serious NGOs I would cooperate with them, but in the past ten years it was only a show. The problem is that I can't do that by myself without that lady [social worker], the priest, the doctor…

[Me]: What is your institutional list for cooperation?

[Irene]: The church, the hospital, the public authorities, like the police, this is the most important… but here you already have seen that social worker is never there… People know here each other, but what you saw is a surface. Communism follows us, in stereotypes, our concept about life, we don't care about anyone.
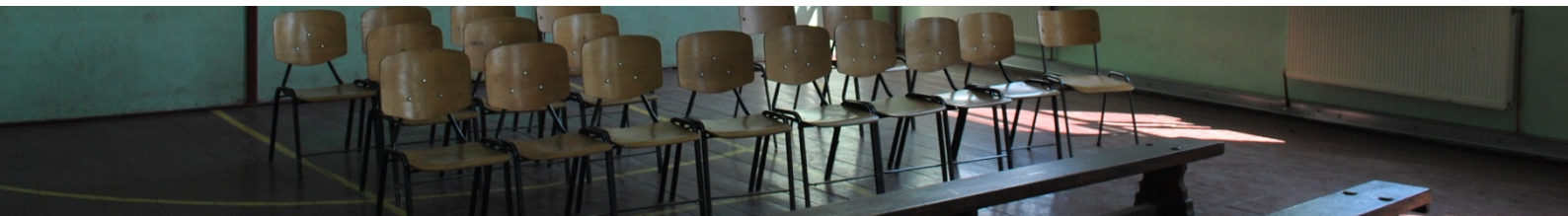
[Me]: If you would be a decision maker, what would you change?

[Irene]: Our thinking is the biggest problem. In Sibiu [where she received the master degree] everything was purple, but you know, later it turned out, it is not like that.

This conversation became a decisive moment in the research, that made me turn more seriously toward the *dispositif* of advanced marginality. In Poland, I was focusing my attention on the settlement as an educationally meaningful place (heterotopia, Real *qua* extimacy) for teacher education, while approaching its respective dispositif as merely an informative circumstance or modality. After Romania, however, I started to consider the *dispositif of advanced marginality itself as educationally meaningful for teachers' transformative learning* (Real *qua* impossibility). Based on this reconsideration, I fundamentally reshaped the modality and methodology of the research that I conducted in Hungary, after the Romanian research trip.

9 THE HEGEMONY ANALYSIS OF A GHETTO IN HUNGARY

'Curiouser and Curiouser'

> Hope, that very slight but constant impetus toward tomorrow that is communicated to us day by day, is the best agent of the maintenance of order. We're daily informed of problems we can do nothing about, but to which there will surely be solutions tomorrow. The whole oppressive feeling of powerlessness that this social organization cultivates in everyone is only an immense pedagogy of waiting. It's an avoidance of now. (...) A mind that thinks in terms of the future is incapable of acting in the present. It doesn't seek transformation; it avoids it. The current disaster is like a monstrous accumulation of all the deferrals of the past, to which are added those of each day and each moment, in a continuous time slide. But life is always decided now, and now, and now.
>
> <div align="right">The Invisible Committee: Now</div>

Drawing from the world-systems analysis, the post-socialist political and economic predicament of Hungary shows similarities with Poland and other semi-peripheral European states as well, particularly with regards to the extreme extension, displacement, and sedimentation of the far-right imaginaries, especially after the economic crisis in 2008. However though, as related to the psychoanalytic characterology of the *European complex*, the interdiscourse of the political landscape – at least in Hungary and Poland – is dominated by the nodal points of the main political actors and the *commedia dell'arte* of conflicts between them, which effectively mystifies the structural and economic background of this Western puppetry. The dominant discussions about what authority figures do 'talk' about politics is a clear sign – at least for Lacanians – of the infantilization and pedagogization of society. In the Lacanian political universe, clinging to the theatrical scenes of main political figures is rooted in the subjects' desire in finding and then worshipping authority figures who will take care of them, as an ideal parent: who will be in charge instead of them, who can solve difficult situations and make things 'okay'. In 1969, Lacan formulated this thought in front of hundreds of protesting students with the – since then notorious – statement: 'Revolutionary aspirations have only one possibility: always to end up in the discourse of the master. Experience has proven this. What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will have one!' (Cited in Stavrakakis, 1999, p. 12). In contrast, the 1989 'revolutions' were partly based on the rejection of the traditional authority figures by embracing the modern authority of the expert. But the experts have failed as new masters, especially after the 2008 financial meltdown, and as Žižek argues, 'today's populism reacts to the fact that experts are not really masters, that their expertise doesn't work. (...) Against the background of this fiasco, the traditional authoritarian master is making a comeback, even if it is a clown' (2018). And even if it is a clown, the new-old authoritarian master is making a comeback in political analysis as well, and, as Hungarian political scientist Gábor Scheiring argues (2016a), analyses of the European predicament are dominated by the

popular stance of tracing the symptoms of the political (e.g., the alleged erosion of democracy) back to the maneuvers of authority figures as Orbán or Kaczyński. But such an interpretive framework forgets that *authority figures are themselves symptoms of the prevailing structures*, and hence Scheiring asserts that neither the frameworks of 'transitology' nor that of liberal modernization are capable of explaining the historico-structural depth of the semi-peripheral political situation – it cannot be derived from the maneuvers of political actors alone and from the resulting dynamics of the social. '[S]tudies focusing on actors' decisions alone do not say anything about the development of the interests and preferences of actors, and how structures and institutions shape individual decisions' (Scheiring, 2016a, p. 9). In order to understand the predicament of Hungary and Poland – as I argued before in detail – the key is to analyze the semi-peripheral position, the dependent development and the class relations in the global division of labour and production.

Just like in Poland, Hungary has successfully aligned with the culture of global capital after 1989, and the political climate became characterized by the narratives of catching up with the West. But despite the promises of the catching-up narrative, because of the historically and economically structural character of unequal exchange, 'while exports and imports nearly doubled' during the subsequent period after the transition, 'the country's shares in GWP [Gross World Product] remained virtually constant, and at much lower levels than the country's shares in world trade, (…) steep export and import growth failed to generate a growth in GDP relative to GWP' (Böröcz, 2012, p. 23). The transition was in no sense a revolution (as the first democratically-elected prime minister, József Antall, famously said, 'You should've made a revolution!'), but the re-integration of Hungary into an inferior position in the world system. Just like in Poland, the year 1989 was the beginning of the hegemonic sedimentation of a neoliberal, capitalist, bureaucratic, bourgeois democracy. On the one hand, the technocratic elite managed to convert its political capital into economic capital, and while the property vacuum sucked in foreign investors (that was conducive to the increasing foreign ownership), domestic ownership also dramatically increased at the expense of public ownership, and 'a fairly sizeable propertied middle bourgeoisie emerged between 1993 and 1996' (Eyal, Szelényi, & Townsley, 1998, p. 155). On the other hand, the overnight implementation of global market rule led to drastic social inequalities, the evaporation of almost two million of jobs, the collapse of the industry and agriculture, the polarization of society, etc. Thus, the transition reengineered both the politico-economic position of Hungary and the country's ideologico-discursive landscape as well, which became conducive to what I call the *emerging European complex* and the rise of *advanced imaginality*.

The Symbolic level (revolutionary-antagonistic imagery) became overdetermined by the proliferating multiplicity of struggles and new antagonisms, and the disavowal of class politics, as I similarly argue in the case of Poland. As Ágnes Gagyi and Márk Áron Éber (2015) argue, the conflictual character of the social has been overdetermined by what they call 'doubling' since 1989, that is based on such divisions as Eastern and Western, nationalist and liberal, right and left. This 'doubling' not only started to overshadow Hungary's semi-peripheral geopolitical position in the world system, but rendered the category of class as irrelevant for social analysis.

> When sociology recommenced analysis after 1990, the situation did not raise the necessity of a theoretical reconsideration in the face of Western science. In this context, class was understood as a sociologically irrelevant ideological constraint, from which sociology could finally free itself. (…) Many dealt with the transformation as pieces of a puzzle that had already been solved in the West. The dominant narrative of 'catching up' with the West tended to erase concern with contemporary social conflicts (Gagyi & Éber, 2015, pp. 601–602).

Péter Csigó describes this semi-peripheral epistemological stance as a 'comfort position', which refers to the uncritical translation of Western models and the misunderstanding of their real hegemonic position: '[t]he comfort position of '89, conceals the incompleteness and fallibility of Western democracies (…) the fact that the 'West' can also misunderstand itself, that canonized models of democracy can distort the processes of democracy' (Csigó, 2016, p. 111, translation mine). This comfort position was also conducive to the disavowal of class politics and the rise of nationalism in Hungary, similar to the case of Poland where critical scholars attribute the rightward turn to the reluctance to engage with the politics of distribution and production after 1989. In Hungary, the economic restructuring after 1990 'was accompanied by a normative European discourse of recognition that favored liberal cosmopolitanism and downgraded engagement in national interests. Economic subordination coupled with symbolic attacks on national worth easily resulted in the conclusion that "the nation is under attack"' (Gagyi & Éber, 2015, pp. 605–606). As Eszter Bartha (2010) argues (drawing on the estimations of Zsuzsa Ferge), the proportion of the losers of the transition was around 45-50%, who have been abandoned and betrayed by the liberal elite since then: 'most of those who were poor in 1992 (...) remained poor after fifteen years and only 7% managed to get better' (ibid., p. 172, translation mine). In sum, the political resignation from articulating the extreme class grievances that resulted from the regime change led to the failure of leftist politics and to the strengthening of the Imaginary register of the European complex.

The Imaginary level (conservative-corporatist imagery) thrives effectively against the failure of the Symbolic register. Thus, the proliferation of nationalist, far-right and

neoconservative politics in Hungary is not simply the success of the right-wing fantasy scenarios in terms of channeling the disillusionment and anger of the betrayed classes into a prefabricated nationalist sentiment, but more importantly the failure of the Left in articulating the frustration that stems from the high rates of inequality, growing and deepening poverty ratios, the low level of employment, the precarious condition of the middle class, low life expectancy, etc. – all deeply embedded in the post-socialist geopolitical position of the country. Just like in Poland, the Hungarian far-right became successful in at least three aspects: (1) it has embraced the politics of (re)distribution (e.g., the reduction of utility costs); (2) it plays with nationalist sentiments as part of an identity politics, and thus defines and provides a community (even if an illusionary one); (3) paradoxically, it embodies a perverse dimension of the Western ideal, not only through reclaiming the whiteness of the community 'as an asset easterners wish to deploy to assert their claim to equality with the West' (Ost, 2016a, p. 3), but also through engaging in struggle against the imperial center, against political dependency, that threatens the sovereignty of the state. This idea mimics the Western catching-up narrative inasmuch as it evokes the historical memories of opposing the political dependency imposed by the Soviet imperial center:

> Interestingly, both PiS and Fidesz believe they are in the forefront of a struggle not only against political liberalism but against economic liberalism. (...) PiS and Fidesz proclaim the need for a 'strong state' to galvanize 'the nation' in order to 'end dependency' and 'modernize' 'national capacities,' against 'neo-colonial' efforts promoted by the West and the European Union (which they wish neither to leave nor to strengthen). Despite defining themselves as right-wing parties, they have thus always gotten some support from leftists as well (ibid., p. 1).

This struggle is used as a tool for the legitimation of extreme measures, for instance the restriction of democratic institutions – '[e]viscerating the Constitutional Court, (...) turning public media into a government mouthpiece, restricting opposition prerogatives in parliament, unilateral wholesale change of the Constitution (...), official tolerance and even promotion of racism and bigotry, administrative assertion of old gender norms' (ibidem.) – which, however, is acceptable for a significant minority in return for the political and economic promises and prices of perverse redistribution, an illusory community and a one-man struggle against the imperial West. The political landscape is characterized by a medley of *neoliberal* (brutal welfare state retrenchment, decreasing social expenditure, repositioning the national bourgeoisie), *neoconservative* (growing influence of the Catholic Church, promotion of the traditional family model, and values in education) and *étatist* (centralization of education, healthcare and nationalization of the pension system) interventions since 2010 (cf. Szikra,

2014). And, as I argued before, this extension and displacement of the Imaginary register of the European complex is *advanced* in the sense that it is ahead of us. It is not a failure, it's our common European future, and the answer to the question whether capitalism could thrive without the background of democracy is simply: yes, it already does. This new modality of the emerging European complex requires new conceptualizations, and I find the definition of Andrea Pető and Weronika Grzebalska (2018) with regards to the new form of governance in Hungary and Poland quite accurate. As Pető and Grzebalska argue, this new modality cannot be described simply by the concept of *neoliberal Centaur state* (disciplinary downwards, humane and liberal upwards). They introduce the concept of the '*illiberal polypore state*', in which they compare the new form of governance to the parasitic fungus (polypore) which develops and proliferates on rotten boles, slowly digesting and incorporating the decaying body of the dead tree into itself, in order to finally become a fully independent organism. As an analogy,

> in the first stages of regime transformation, illiberal elites in Hungary and Poland have appropriated and divested resources from already existing policy, institutional and funding infrastructure of the European liberal democratic project rather than attempted to erect a new one. Contrary to popular belief, neither FIDESZ nor PiS are interested in leaving the European Union or rejecting its basic tenets and mechanisms. Rather, they wish to exploit the funding and political opportunities the EU offers, while at the same time pursuing their own political agenda of building an illiberal international… (Grzebalska & Pető, 2018, p. 3)

Similarly to the polypore, the illiberal states thrive on the decaying, rotting body of the liberal democratic project and proliferate on the basis of three interconnected projects: building a *parallel civil society* (attacking and labelling NGOs as external threats to the country, while pulling loyal organizations into power position), *securitization* (the identification of discourses and figures as 'dangerous' to the sovereignty of the nation, locating the enemies within and outside of the borders) and *familialism* (a nationalist project of emphasizing the rights and interests of the traditional family model above any other group or category) (cf. Grzebalska & Pető, 2018; Pető, 2017). However, I'm tempted to add a significant process to this list, which characterizes the 'carouse' of the Hungarian polypore state, namely the shift from welfare toward what Wacquant calls 'workfare'. The obligatory 'work first' programs are part of a wider trend in Europe since the early 2000s and Hungary was not an exception, with its low employment rate in introducing such measures. The post-2010 reforms are special however, 'due to the inordinate scale of cuts, the nearly total replacement of active labour market policies with a punitive public works programme and the fact that its principles have been included into the new constitution' (Szikra, 2014, p. 492). One of the government's main fantasy scenarios,

namely to establish a 'workfare society' (munka alapú társadalom), is based on a punitive public works programme, *which forces the urban and rural precariat to sell their labor force for an extremely low price at an extremely high extent of alienation*. Those who fall out from these programs (mostly Roma people) are immediately excluded from social assistance. 'This loophole is blatantly misused by some racist mayors who have mainly excluded the Roma from this programme' (ibid., p. 493). The other end of the government's pervert class politics is characterized by a mutual dependence between itself and the national bourgeoisie. As Scheiring explains, at the root of this dependency one finds the polarization of the economic elite: the rise of the illiberal regime is partly the result of the struggle of the national bourgeoisie against the obstacles set by the interests of international capital and the Hungarian technocratic elite as its ally. 'This is a kind of mutually constitutive relationship, since the national capitalists also did not arise out of the blue' (Scheiring, 2016b, p. 29). And it holds both in the case of Hungary and Poland, that the illiberal polypore state is still a *capitalist* state in the last instance. As Tamás Krausz, Hungarian Marxist historian put it,

> the entire system in its essence, in spite of all appearances, is acceptable for multinational financial institutions and international capitalist organizations, as it meets their basic expectations. The anti-Western populist rhetoric is directed inwards, to the social basis. While acting out the jumbled idea of national liberation for internal political reasons, the system serves the financial interests of the EU and the IMF in accordance with its conscious power aspirations (Bartha et al., 2012, p. 55, translation mine).

From what has been described so far as a hybrid (neoliberal, neoconservative, étatist), polypore state, that proliferates through building a parallel civil society, securitization, familialism and workfare, it might be evident that such a regime functions through cementing meanings, anchoring hegemonized nodal points and fixing an apparently sutured discursive landscape (from the refugee crisis up to the anti-abortion mantras). Such an expectation would seem adequate due to the regime's definite and strict modalities. I argue, however, that *advanced imaginality is effective precisely through the deterritorialization and the detotalization of meaning*. I referred to this structuring function and distinctive logic of Capital in hegemonic struggles as that which brings *consistency into contingency*, that is effective in its divergent, dispersive and decoding flows regarding signification. I assert that the new regimes of advanced imaginality undertake a *via media* between the totalization and detotalization of meaning, continuously loosening the allegedly solid discursive landscape on its own. The climax of this logic, as I argued elsewhere (Tóth, 2017a), occurred at the end of 2017, when the Hungarian intelligentsia found itself at an *impasse*: whether or not to express solidarity with a far-right party. Such historical ruptures, when the everyday flows of territorialization are

disturbed by hysterical attempts to overcome a political deadlock are exceptional moments. Especially in the gloomy semi-periphery, where things are usually obvious and self-evident, where contradictions are still waiting to be processed at the borders of the notorious Hungarian common sense. The question was, whether one should support the strongest opposition party, Jobbik (a far-right, anti-democratic party), in its protest for democracy, and engage in solidarity against the governing party, FIDESZ (a far-right, anti-democratic party)? I think these moments of undecidability tell a lot more about who we are rather than when we think that we actually know something. I personally find these exceptional times, when such dilemmas emerge, extremely intriguing – when the solid discursive landscape is torn apart into fragments and perplexed subjects are wandering desperately for the redemption of some certainty. I think these moments of undecidability also tell us a lot more about the new regimes of advanced imaginality, rather than the moments of temporary fixity. These are a few of the occasions when people engage in dialogues that they couldn't have imagined before. Thus, not only does the current political predicament (who are we at this specific historical and geopolitical moment) glimmer through the unstable stages of this social daze, but also the hysterical quest for fixation, for stability arises – *the temptation for meaning*.

During the third trimester of 2017, the State Audit Office (SAO)[76] began to investigate the funding of a far-right party in opposition, Jobbik[77]. The SAO announced that Jobbik was expected to pay a fine of 331 million forints (1,055,890 euros) for receiving illegal party funding. Additionally, Jobbik's party funding would be reduced by half (cca. 330 million forints). This fine made it almost impossible for the party to run in the next election in 2018. The investigation concluded that Jobbik received billboards for its outdoor campaign at a suspiciously discounted price in the spring (an in-kind contribution equivalent to the total of 331 million forints). The funding came from a legal person, that is prohibited by the provisions of the Party Code effective from 1 January 2014. The contributor was Lajos Simicska, a former,

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[76] The State Audit Office is a body governed by law, which operates independently of government bodies. It is the main financial and economic control body of the Parliament, which performs its task under the Parliament. It controls the management of public funds as well as state and local government assets, including the finances of the parties that manage budget funds. The SAO only makes a finding on which a fine is imposed, which is to be paid into the State Treasury. Perhaps there is no other body in Hungary that can punish, but which has no appeal against its decisions.

[77] The names of parties in Hungary (that have parliament fractions) are the greatest scams of our times. The Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) is a far-right platform for the old national oligarchy. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) is playing neoliberalism on the right side of the political centrum. The Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP), which forms an alliance with FIDESZ, is anything but Christian. The Another Politics Is Possible (LMP) is its own anti-thesis. Better (Jobbik), whose name also means 'more to the right,' is a neo-fascist, chauvinist and ethnicist party, indeed, but you wouldn't say it is better in any sense.

discredited oligarch of FIDESZ. Before he stood behind Jobbik, Simicska had been a good friend of Orbán for decades, and also a key figure in building the economic empire of the national bourgeoisie. On the one hand, thus Jobbik could advertise at a criminally low price at Lajos Simicska's advertising locations. But on the other hand, the legal investigation of the State Audit Office was more than problematic. In sum, the corrupt far-right government tried to undermine its corrupt far-right opposition with antidemocratic means, issuing an irrationally high fine through the investigation of the SAO. Or as Bálint Misetics put it:

> Here an essentially hegemonic interest group is opposed to a privilege of the most controversial and most dangerous part of the opposition, which privilege, by the way, is only possible because a corrupt capitalist, who has a high responsibility in the extreme power the FIDESZ has gained according to his own admission, changed sides from the former [FIDESZ] to the latter [Jobbik] (Misetics, 2017, translation mine).

Gábor Vona, president of Jobbik at the time, interpreted the situation as a clear sign of the loss of democracy, which threatened the party's participation in the following year's election. Vona later announced that they were going to hold a peaceful demonstration to fight against Orbán's dictatorial regime, which opposes all 'European standards'. It is not that odd to hear the articulation of democratic values and European standards from Jobbik, since the party started its rhetorical shift towards the political centre years ago. This campaign[78] included dogs, the sparkling colors of the rainbow and so on. When Jobbik announced the demonstration, it emplaced a deadlock on the stage of political theatre: should one express solidarity or not? People argued that one shall stand with Jobbik because what FIDESZ is doing with Jobbik today might be the destiny of another party tomorrow. That is a threat to the multi-party system. Three 'centrist' parties, LMP, Momentum and Együtt indicated that they will participate at the protest. All three parties have stressed that they will protest for democracy and not for the Jobbik itself. As Péter Juhász, the Co-President of Együtt argued on public channels:

> I obviously reject the politics of Jobbik, but I came to protest against the FIDESZ. It should be understood that what is happening to them [Jobbik] is the same that usually happens with the Roma and the gay people, this is what human rights demonstrations are about.

I consider this political deadlock, the public debate around this issue, and this particular statement that compares the rights of a far-right party to the rights of the oppressed, not only

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[78] One that is not specific to Jobbik, similar tendencies of alternative fascisms appear around the globe, as the so-called 'alt-right' manages to put on unprecedented and unexpected masks, like the feminization of fascism or 'lipstick fascism', the leftist mask of the pro-working-class fascism or the mask of the trendy, young hipster fascist.

the beginning of total insanity, but as an ultimate end to those grounds from which at least a viable critique would be possible. This statement in itself is a clear indicator of the loosening tectonics of the social, and here lies the real power of the hegemonic logic of detotalization of meaning, so characteristic to illiberal polypore regimes. Because what is characteristic of such open wounds of the social that this statement represents (and of which it is a product as well) is the immanent need to take a position/action in this undecidability, *the temptation for a meaning* – Macron or Le Pen? Trump or Hillary? Israel or Palestine? Protecting refugees or borders? EU or Exit? Through such hegemonic strategies, where the symbolic order of the social is constructed through these pseudo-choices, the real dilemma is not what to choose, but what the dilemma itself tells about us. The real dilemma is what we are today, how we are constituted and interpellated as subjects, and what we can learn about the structures that actually do walk on the streets.[79] For instance, how ideology functions effectively through mystifying a state of domination as a right[80] (e.g., neo-Nazis right to have an opinion). The classical liberal attitude toward defending free speech, the right for opinion, promoting dialogue instead of violence etc. falls short in this respect. Here, I agree with Žižek, that contemporary liberalism and postmodernism are to a large extent responsible not only for the emergence of the new regimes of advanced imaginality, but also for normalizing the horror of neo-fascism as a democratic opinion. As Žižek argued in a recent lecture (2017a):

> We need more dogmatism. There is a very good sense of dogmatism, which is I think one way to measure the relative progress of societies, how certain moral norms are simply, dogmatically accepted. For example, I wouldn't like to live in a society, where you have to debate again and again why women shouldn't be raped. I want to live in a society, where this is dogmatically accepted, so that if you get some crazy guy, who says that 'women really like it, they are just too hypocritical to admit it,' you don't even argue, the guy disqualifies himself, is perceived as an idiot. When we start to debate things, which should be absolutely clear, is always a critical point. We shouldn't debate everything.

In such exceptional moments, when the solid discursive landscape is torn apart into fragments, when a viable critique is almost impossible on the grounds of the presented dilemma, I assume that one shall search for different 'shores', from where the dilemma itself appears to be the problem, where a pseudo-choice appears to not be the dilemma anymore. Because what is at stake here is not only the level of pseudo-choice that the contemporary dilemmas

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[79] As opposed to the anti-structuralist graffiti on the Paris walls in May '68: 'Structures do not walk on the streets!' 'Les structures ne défilent pas dans la rue!'

[80] Besides presenting domination either as inevitable and necessary (e.g., women must earn less, because they are weaker), or simply as not domination (e.g., blaming the poor for their poverty).

prefabricated by illiberal polypore states directly represent (as in the example corrupt state vs. corrupt far-right party and so on), but moreover what they all too often conceal and exclude: increasing poverty, brutal inequalities, structural oppression, discrimination, etc.

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And while the post-socialist political predicament of Hungary is characterized by the emergence of the new regime of advanced imaginality and the development of the new form of governance that Pető and Grzebalska called the illiberal polypore state, this structural landscape of political struggles again thrives against the primordial background of the Real class. That is, the spectral population of poverty and advanced marginality, those excluded from any structural locations within antagonisms, or what Hungarian sociologists János Ladányi and Iván Szelényi (2004) defined, following Oscar Lewis' category, as the *underclass*. The underclass refers to those social groups, which not simply constitute the bottom layers of society, but are being submerged and trapped *under* society. For Ladányi and Szelényi, the existence of the underclass is primarily the result of structural exclusion, i.e., that in a given social structure, a social group has no place (the part of no part). From among all the political consequences of the Hungarian advanced polypore state, the one regarding the spectral population stands out: 'the lack of efforts to protect the most vulnerable from the effects of the crisis. The "able-bodied" poor have been increasingly punished for their own situation: homelessness became criminalized and social assistance withdrawn for an increasing share of long-term unemployed' (Szikra, 2014, p. 496). The post-socialist, semi-peripheral position of Hungary is cut through by the deepening of poverty and the widening of the social strata threatened by poverty and impoverishment.

> Certain signs of poverty are sometimes so unbearable that they are able to raise public awareness for a while. However, indifference and distancing are more general. The public is tired of being constantly faced with society's failures: the begging, homeless, human wrecks (Ferge, 2008, p. 5, translation mine).

In 2014, nearly one million people (approximately 2.5 million people including their families) worked in public labor programs, were registered as unemployed jobseekers, passive unemployed or unemployed without receiving social benefits. While in 2011, the lowest income quintile (2 million people) included 685,000 people under 18, in 2014, this number grew to 800,000 (Ferge, 2014). '[M]ore than one million people are at the margins of the labor market. (...) About 3.5 to 4 million people have family members who are at the margins of the labor market. The situation is particularly difficult for those with no other relatives in their households than those at the margins of or excluded from the labor market: nearly one and a half million people' (Bakó, Cseres-Gergely, Kálmán, Molnár, & Szabó, 2015, p. 3, translation mine).

9.1 The Megaspectacle of the Ghetto

As argued before, the Real class is not only displaced across Europe; it is also emplaced and condensed into slums, shantytowns, settlements, ghettos – into different territorial structures of advanced marginality, closer and closer to the manifold centers of capitalist production. As András Vigvári argues in his research on spatial inequalities in Hungary (2016), neighborhoods of relegation cannot be interpreted anymore with the traditional geographic categories of 'urban' and 'rural'. '[T]here are certain regions that cannot maintain the number of their idle inhabitants and therefore the "useless population", is pushed out of these spaces to more resourceful regions, such as bigger cities' (ibid., p. 50). Due to the increased migration from underprivileged rural areas to bigger cities, rural poverty and urban poverty become jointly present modalities of advanced marginality, that results from the historico-spatial consequences of uneven development from the 1900s, intensified by the neoliberalization and re-integration of semi-peripheral states into the capitalist modes of production:

> The uneven regional development in Central and Eastern Europe has created a spatial and social process, through which we can speak not only about the continuous suburban expansion of the major cities, but also
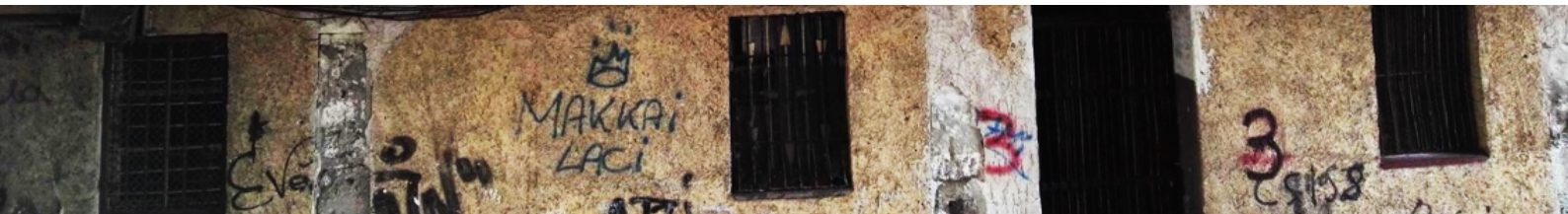
> about the continuous migration process from cities to the rural areas and vice versa, depending on the economic cycles (…). I argue, therefore, that the urban-rural fringes in (…) Hungary do not only mean the annexation of rural areas by the big city, but it also includes the flow of rural practices generated by spatial exclusion, back into the city (ibid., pp. 51-52).

Thus, the condensation of the Real class in neighborhoods of relegation that are at the heart of production is spatially structured by the economic cycles of uneven development, similarly to the construction and destruction of the settlement of Romanian Gypsy families in Poland. For Vigvári, these places are 'micro-containers' of macro-structural mechanisms, and following Wacquant he also advocates an ethnographic approach for gaining access through these micro-sites to underlying hegemonic structures. Taking these considerations into account, I continued the ethnographic research in a hybrid ghetto located on the outskirts of one of the biggest cities in Hungary. Similar to the settlement in Poland, the ghetto was situated not far from the center of the city, close to main transport nodes, but hidden between non-residential areas – barracks and railway lines. But unlike the settlement of the Romanian Gypsies, the neighborhood of relegation in the Hungarian city consisted of two four-story blocks, that was

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built during the Horthy era as part of a social housing programme in 1936 as a response to the housing crisis. The purpose of the emergency housing programme was to mitigate the housing poverty of thousands of people living in the most underprivileged peripheral regions of the city after the economic crisis. The newly-built blocks soon became overcrowded, often 6-8 people were living in a single flat ($26m^2$), with extremely poor infrastructure. Detached from factories and institutions, the ghetto has been almost invisible for the citizens from the very beginning. During state capitalism, an increasing number of dwellers could afford to move to better living conditions, but due to austerity measures in the 1980s, more and more poor families started to move in from rural areas and the blocks became overcrowded again, and Gypsy families started to be overrepresented in the ghetto. After 1989, half of the flats were privatized, while the other half remained the property of the state, which contributed to a semi-ownership structure (characteristic to post-socialist housing problems in Hungary), where flats became extremely devalued. Thus, the new owners became trapped in the ghetto, since they couldn't sell their flats, while the tenants had to recognize that the local government slowly took its hands off the

property, leaving it to rot slowly (Gyáni, 1992; Ladányi, 2004; Vigvári, 2016). The class composition and function of the ghetto, however, has not changed since 1936. As Ladányi (2004) argues, (1) due to its character as an enclosed, hidden and excluded estate, the social composition of the ghetto is both historically and spatially fixed, and characterized by the extreme condensation of the underclass (the Real class); and (2) its territorial character as a transitory place also hasn't changed, and functions as a 'bridgehead' that consists of links and flows between the urban precariat and its rural hinterland. Moreover, the ghetto functions as a sluice also for those displaced by the processes of gentrification from other regions of the city. It is thus a transitory place between the urban precariat who are displaced from the city and the rural precariat aspiring to move to the city. The neighborhood has 600-650 inhabitants living in 280 households.

On the one hand, this particular place of advanced marginality is only one materialization of the increasingly spreading spatio-structural inequalities in the country and also in Central-

Eastern Europe. According to a study conducted by one of the Social Sciences College of Eötvös Loránd University (2016), this specific hybrid ghetto is not unique as compared to other neighborhoods of relegation: '[o]ur results show that the socio-spatial processes of exclusion, that are visible across the country and in the other ghettos of the city, are even more concentrated [here]' (ibid., p. 62, translation mine). So, it is important to emphasize again, that this particular hybrid ghetto in Hungary is only one materialization of the structural inequalities that expose hundreds of thousands of people to drastic deprivation in Hungary. According to a report of Habitat for Humanity, in 2015, 840,000 people had serious trouble paying the costs of housing maintenance, 946,000 people had problems paying for the utilities and couldn't properly heat their apartment, half a million households were indebted, and 2.5 million people lived under drenched roofs, between drenched walls and in the freeze of untighten windows (Átol, Kováts, & Kőszeghy, 2015). But since the structural logics of exclusion are concentrated and condensed to a large extent in this particular case, the hybrid ghetto in question has specific modalities in terms of its territorial characters as a place of advanced marginality. Similar to the Polish settlement, it is neither that of a hyperghetto, nor an anti-ghetto, rather a third instance

(hybrid) in-between the two. Just like the settlement in Poland, it shares the basic territorial characteristics of advanced marginality: lack of income and employment security, fragmentation, erosion and degradation of wage labor; disconnection from macroeconomic trends. Most of the dwellers of the hybrid ghetto cannot anchor themselves on a long-term basis in the labor market,

> as they mostly get seasonal, casual jobs that are extremely sensitive to changes in economic cycles (growths and decreases). The [dwellers], as the 'bottom segment' of the labor market, form a 'reserve army of labor' who, if needed, can be immediately put to work, but if there is no demand, they have to look for other opportunities. The informal structures that criss-cross the settlement are forced to adapt to these structural features both in terms of housing and livelihood, and this is a reason of the high importance of illegal activities, including drug trafficking (Vigvári, 2017, translation mine).

However, the majority of the dwellers are not engaged in these criminal segments of the black market. The dwellers are mostly employed in seasonal, unskilled jobs not because of the low level of education, but more importantly because of the territorial stigmatization, which immediately results in dismissal once an inhabitant reveals her address, especially if she is a

Gypsy. And with regards to the social bonds and the perception of the space from within, the hybrid ghetto shows a complex picture. While Wacquant describes the sites of advanced marginality with the dissolution of strong social bonds (from *place* to *space*), fear, isolation, the dreams of escape and the loss of a supportive hinterland, the hybrid ghetto in Hungary mixes different characteristics of the hyperghetto, the anti-ghetto and the 1970's American ghetto. On the one hand, there are strong kinship networks within the ghetto, supported by a quasi-stable hinterland in the rural peripheries. The internal community is also crisscrossed with stronger and weaker social bonds, also partly due to the extreme physical proximity of the households. On the other hand, however, the large fluctuation and the division of the ownership structure doesn't contribute to forming strong social bonds. Moreover, the extensive kinship network and the physical proximity of the flats often become a restraining burden for a large proportion of the dwellers (cf. ELTE ARTSZ, 2016; Vigvári, 2016). There is also a division between the two blocks, since a gas explosion that occurred in one of the buildings caused significant damage to it. This created a special constellation in which – as János Ladányi told me during a private conversation – one can observe the formation of another ghetto within the ghetto. The damaged building is inhabited by families with even lower social status, and also, according to my observations, the local black market, the ghetto's own economic enclave is also situated in this building, that is completely dark after the sunset, without public lighting. So, while this hybrid ghetto shares some features with the 'traditional' ghetto as places rich in mutual aid, it also bears the characteristics of the hyperghetto: a lack of strong identity (except what the territorial stigmatization depicts), lack of a cultural heritage, and persistent fear regardless of the social bonds and kinship networks within the ghetto. The public spaces within the ghetto are considered to be dangerous by a large number of inhabitants. In this sense, the hybrid ghetto floats its territorial character continuously between being a place and a space – between 'communal "places" bathed in shared emotions and joint meanings supported by practices and institutions of mutuality' and 'indifferent "spaces" of mere survival and relentless contest' (Wacquant, 2008, p. 241). Contrary to the Gypsy settlement in Poland, which provided a shelter for the community, the dwellers of the hybrid ghetto in Hungary are dreaming about escaping from the burden of the place – from the extremely bad housing conditions, the everyday consequences of territorial stigmatization, the non-stop frustration due to overcrowdedness, and so on. At the same time, the inhabitants very often emphasize that while they live in the ghetto, they are not 'identical' with it, they are not one of 'them'.

> [T]he neighborhood no longer offers a shield against the insecurities and pressures of the outside world. (…) It has mutated into (…) a danger-filled battleground for the daily contest (…) for finding the means to

escape. This weakening of territorially based communal bonds, (…) fuels a retreat into the sphere of privatized consumption and stimulates strategies of mutual distancing and denigration ('I am not one of them') that further undermine local solidarities and confirm deprecatory perceptions of the neighborhood (ibid., p. 271).

Another factor that undermines local solidarities and social bonds is the exclusionary logic, characteristic to ghettos with heterogeneous ethnic composition, and in this sense the hybrid ghetto in Hungary is close to what Wacquant conceptualizes as the anti-ghetto. First, the ethnic composition of the hybrid ghetto is relatively heterogeneous (Ladányi, 1989, 2004): one can find Hungarian and Romanian Gypsies, and non-Roma Hungarians spread across the ghetto. Surprisingly, the basic division within the ghetto is not constructed along ethnic categories, but via the division between 'natives' (people, who have been living there for a longer period) and 'immigrants' (cf. Vigvári, 2016). In sum, the dominant exclusionary logic of the hybrid ghetto is not determined by ethnicity in the first instance, but as in the case of the anti-ghetto, 'it is rooted in class inequality, inflected by ethnicity (…) and partially deflected by public action' (Wacquant, 2014, p. 1692). And finally, similar to the Gypsy settlement in

Poland, the hybrid ghetto in Hungary is also deeply embedded in the interinstitutional projects of the police-and-penal apparatus, public institutions, independent organizations, artists, researchers, 'philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind…' While the inhabitants of the ghetto are excluded from the labor market, from public institutions, social services (there is often no public lighting, no garbage disposal, cable internet installers and the ambulance refused several times to enter the area, etc.), they are also included in the institutional *variété* conducted through the respective dispositif of the hybrid ghetto. Again, what I called the 'dispositif of advanced marginality', *is the primordial distinctive modality of the semi-peripheral hybrid-ghetto*: the geometry of the arrangement of apparatuses, where the ideological constellation of the discursive landscapes of urban poverty is constituted.

* * *

As I pointed out before, the ghetto is situated on an isolated territory, with its spatial borders delimited by barracks, storages, police and military facilities. Besides the dwellers and

those who have economic interests in the economic enclave of the ghetto, almost nobody enters this area, not only because of the territorial stigmatization ('urban inferno'), but also because the street literally leads nowhere else than the two blocks. Due to increased drug trafficking in the ghetto, the government intensified police control in the area, and at the time of the research at least two or three police officers were posted on the corner, and sometimes five or six of them in front of the two blocks. Once, when I was entering the street, the police officers were checking the documents of a 12-year-old child from the ghetto.

> [Police officer]: Ain't you supposed to be in the school?
>
> [Child]: It is Saturday, asshole!

If one enters the neighborhood, the spectacular image of a prison-like settlement appears, that reminds the spectator of images of devastation from the Second World War. The blocks and the public spaces are in terrible condition, the area is covered with rubbish, disposed syringes here and there: '[t]he terrible history of modernity continues. There are and there will be lagers. There is massacre, drugs, starvation in the world of the poor. Just like in the ghettos of the rich super-powers. The way out is already closed' (Tamás, 2017). The constellation of

the territorial characteristics of the hybrid ghetto evokes Wacquant's concept of 'hyperincarceration', which he understands as a shift from the notion of 'mass incarceration'. Mass incarceration suggests that confinement is interwoven deeply and broadly throughout the social, which, as Wacquant argues, is a mischaracterization. He argues, with regards to the contemporary context of the United States, that

> the prevalence of penal confinement in the United States, while extreme by international standards, can hardly be said to concern the masses. (…) [T]he expansion and intensification of the activities of the police, courts, and prison over the past quarter-century have been anything but broad and indiscriminate. They have been *finely targeted*, first by class, second by that disguised brand of ethnicity called race, and third by place (Wacquant, 2010a, p. 78).

Of course, the hybrid ghetto in Hungary is not literally a prison, but, taking the extended penal-and-police apparatuses that occlude the neighborhood – especially after the intensification of police control – the process of hyperincarceration appears as a modality of the ghetto. The very atmosphere of the street makes one feel as if someone was continuously watching, which suddenly disappears, when entering the blocks. There is always something

going on in the corridors, the communal life is especially vivid during the afternoons. A few neighbors are chatting in bathrobes. There are apartments on the ground floor and the second floor which function as local shops: one can buy cigarettes, vegetables, alcohol, bread, etc. through the kitchen windows which open directly to the yard. The blocks echo the sound of playing children. There is a luxury jeep in the backyard, which belongs to the local drug lord. In the darkest corners of the stairway returning customers are injecting some unknown 'designer' drug into each other's forearms. On the first floor, the local NGO has a community place and the social workers are preparing the afternoon activity for the children. The leader of the NGO, Ágnes is having a fight with a journalist because of incorrect information that was published in an article about the activity of the NGO. I start talking to one of the inhabitants, Klára, a single mother of three. We became sort of friends during the time of the research. She tells me that she is nominated for the 'citizen of the district' prize, but she cannot deal with it at the moment, because she received information that the municipality wants to demolish the blocks and she has absolutely no idea where to go. She lives in the other building, that was damaged, and I help her carry home two bags full of food:

> [Klára]: I'm not going to let the children out, because the needles are all over the floor, everything, and so many things, and I do not want them to pick them up.
>
> [Me]: I suppose this has become more serious in recent years.
>
> [Klára] I remember, when the baby was two years old, we were living upstairs on the 3rd floor, I could let her out, down the hallway, and back, I could let her out to the corridor, because it was a different life. She is eight now.
>
> [Me]: And what about this big number of cops?
>
> [Klára]: I don't really care, I've just told the cops, that finally, I feel safe now [laughs]. I do not know, I grew up here, but I want to get out of here. Because of the environment, because wherever I go… we should not have our place here. Not just us, many people. It is sad. At that time, when my mother was alive, it was a different world. Now it is another world. You have to escape from this neighborhood. Because if you live here, KO [kick out]. But it is very difficult to move out for such poor people, as we are. That is why the mayor should do something. to give some families somewhere a room and kitchen. Anyway, please tell them [the journalists] that we do not need these videos, TV stuff only now, and whatever they're standing here with a microphone, but also when people nicely cooperate, live together.
>
> [Me]: I see, because they always show bad things about the blocks.
>
> [Klára]: Yes. And there are good families here, good people there. Whether they are Roma or not Roma, they are the same people here as anywhere else.

Incredibly brutal social realities appear as we walk through the blocks. Then, the burden of tears and hopelessness gush out from behind every single door. People complain that they

have nowhere else to move if the house is going to be demolished. There is a young woman smoking cigarettes on the second floor. She says that she is an illegal squatter, with three children. She starts crying. A few drug addicts pass by, some of them are dancing. One of the inhabitants says that drug addicts are more afraid of us than we are of them. It is important to see that the neighborhood has its own social layers, even if it is at the deepest bottom of the social structure:

[János Ladányi, sociologist]: You see, the ghetto has its own ghetto. It was the back of the building, which was used as a ghetto during the Second World War. Only Gypsies were living over there.

[Me]: So, you say, that there is a ghetto *within* the ghetto?

[Ladányi]: Yes, it is also stratified vertically. Because how can you define the ghetto? That it is homogeneous inwards, it is homogeneous with respect to the average social status of the inhabitants. It is homogeneous inwards and heterogeneous if you look from inside. If you ask someone where the borders of this neighborhood are, then she will tell more precisely than the best sociologist with the best computer program. She will know exactly...

[Me]: Where the ghetto ends...

[Ladányi]: And it will be the same, compared to what I as a socilogist would think. You walk out from

inside, and when it breaks, it breaks very spectacularly, then there is the end of the ghetto.

But while spatial exclusion, combined with territorial stigmatization, clearly demarcates the spatial borders of the ghetto and isolates the 'problematic population' from the normal flow of the everyday life, the neighborhood is also included in its immediate environment, and can be also characterized by openness, with regards to its economic activities, institutional interconnections, etc. Ladányi (2004) argues that this hidden, isolated neighborhood – 'urban terra incognita' (Vigvári, 2016) – became more and more visible after 1989, with all its social problems arising from spatio-structural inequalities. And especially after the 2008 economic meltdown, which coincided with the influx of new 'designer' drugs, both the visibility and the stigmatization of the ghetto started to intensify. The multitude of media reports, interviews, newspaper articles constructed such an accumulation of images about the hybrid ghetto, that its representation escaped from its material reality and became an enlarged, refashioned and reimagined accumulation of its representations – the *megaspectacle* of the hybrid ghetto. As Kellner argues, megaspectacles condense films, television shows, internet content, cultural life

into a focus point of a fantasy scenario, which retroactively reshapes its source through its ideological mechanisms.

> Megaspectacles fixate attention on events that distract people from the pressing issues of their everyday lives with endless hype on shocking crimes, sports contests and personalities, political scandals, natural disasters, and the self-promoting hype of media culture itself. (…) These megaspectacles divert attention from the actual causes of inequality and injustice and the social and political movements that attempt to address them (Kellner, 2003, pp. 93–96).

What Kellner forgot to add to his conceptualization of the megaspectacles that divert the attention of the subject, is that at its purest, it does it by effectively *pointing to the object that it wants to hide* – similar to the process I described earlier as when it's darkest under the candle. Thus, unlike in the case of the settlement in Poland, where the ideological process of stigmatization took good care of keeping the Gypsy settlement hidden, in Hungary the fantasy scenarios are prefabricated by the active and reflective recycling of material reality and its spectacular images.[81] On the other hand, the megaspectacularization of the hybrid ghetto corresponds also to the ideological construction of a hyperreality, since its spectacular images of crime, drug distribution, environmental degradation conceal that these images lie (sic!) everywhere, and are *particularly concentrated among those who are most interested in concealing their own crimes, their own drug addiction, their own brutal degradation of the environment* – that is, *a fortiori*, the national bourgeoisie, the (inter)national (financial) oligarchy and the domestic managers of global capitalism.

This particular mechanism of ideological mystification is captured brilliantly by Hungarian poet, Sándor Csoóri: 'An old proverb reproaches us for not seeing the forest for the trees. Today's proverb should, however, teach us that due to a vertiginous multitude of realities we do not see the real, which would help us to live' (2003, translation mine). In sum, the ghetto is not simply stigmatized through megaspectacularization, but retroactively it materializes as its stigma *qua* materialized appearance. As a consequence, inhabitants start hiding their addresses, stop inviting friends and family members to their households, withdraw into complete isolation, and start blaming their own neighbors for the situation (Kovács, 2016). The fragmentation of the local community as a consequence of stigmatization serves the interests of the local authorities and helps maintain the status quo. On the one hand, territorial

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[81] I assume that this difference in ideological strategies has a historical background with regards to the depth of historicity of the respective ghetto: the historicity of the ghetto in Hungary has deep roots in the social, unlike the Polish settlement, thus one cannot get away with simply trying to hide it, as in the case of the Gypsy settlement.

stigmatization through megaspectacularization can be understood as the dominant ideologico-discursive mechanism

> whereby state authorities create 'social waste dumps': territories where governance is woefully absent, in which structurally accumulated urban ills must be largely dealt with by the inhabitants themselves, who are simultaneously (and incorrectly) viewed as responsible for creating these very same hardships (Chelcea & Pulay, 2015, p. 351).

On the other hand, this ideologico-discursive manoeuvre also legitimizes the local authorities to take extreme measures, that are 'necessary' and 'required' by the uncontrolled situation. The extreme measures that the 'situation required' reached their peak at the time of my research. The local municipality received major government funding for the demolition of the two blocks. The municipality had been continuously pushing those residents out who lived in the flats owned by the municipality and whose contracts had expired. After receiving funding for the demolition, the predicament of the neighborhood became extremely unstable and hopeless. Although it is the duty of the local government to ensure the future housing of the inhabitants, the quality of the fulfilment of this duty is not regulated. Hence, the residents either started to receive an incredibly low bid for their flats or were offered an exchange flat usually in even worse conditions than that of the hybrid ghetto:

> [Klára]: I never had a debt. Should I go under the bridge? There are some who have debt and still they were offered an apartment. Even those with five to six properties in the block. This is simply housing mafia.

This process is a clear instance of gentrification, where the 'useless' population and poverty is displaced in the city under the ideological tagline of urban revitalization. As Neil Smith (2002) argues, the process of gentrification became a general urban strategy in neoliberal global capitalism, not only in the reengineering of city centers, but also suburbs. The neoliberal Centaur state became a decisive actor of the housing market, which is more than ever affected by the influx of global capital and global production.

> [A]s gentrification near the center results in higher land and housing prices, even for old, untransformed properties, districts further out become caught up in the momentum of gentrification. (…) Above all, it is geared to the historical patterns of capital investment and disinvestment in the landscape. (…) Gentrification as global urban strategy is a consummate expression of neoliberal urbanism. It mobilizes individual property claims via a market lubricated by state donations (ibid., pp. 442-446).

On the one hand, the institutions surrounding the ghetto have great economic interest in buying the land on which the two blocks of the ghetto stand. On the other hand, the process of gentrification masked as revitalization functions as part of the megaspectacularization of the

ghetto, in the sense that by envisaging the eviction of the 'urban inferno' it promises social security and order, while diverting the attention of the public from wider spatio-structural inequalities and exclusionary logics. The ideological logic of gentrification masked as revitalization is cynical at its purest: the local authorities know very well that the process of capital investment only displaces poverty, but they still act as if it would be implemented only for the sake of all, thus rendering the ideological object (the megaspectacle of the hybrid ghetto) as a fetish to which the local people could cling, and believe that its elimination would bring fullness and order. As one of the municipal representatives (member of the far-right party in opposition, Jobbik), who supported the process of 'revitalization' told me:

> [Jobbik representative]: these people will stay in the city and, according to the 'snowball principle', they will create such concentrated areas again. Every district has a shameful territory. They will leave this district, and I assume that there will emerge new areas. So, we do not solve the problem, we just decompose it and displace it. But I'm convinced, that these people do not even want to live a normal life.

Moreover, this punitive intervention of the Centaur state is carried out in the guise of apolitical claims, which address the bad condition of the building when it comes to public

rhetoric. Liviu Chelcea and Gergő Pulay captured similar mechanisms in their ethnographic research of one of the ghettos in Bucharest, where 'when state-led infrastructural developments were finally introduced to several underserved areas (…) it was rendered as a technical, apolitical issue' (Chelcea & Pulay, 2015, pp. 351–352). The process of stigmatization through megaspectacularization in which the Centaur state mystifies spatio-structural inequalities is conducted through the hegemonic articulation of three ideologico-discursive nodal points within the discursive landscape of the dispositif: the drug market, environmental degradation and the ethnitization of poverty.

The drug market. The territorial stigmatization of the hybrid ghetto is to a large extent conducive to the exclusion of the inhabitants from the formal labor market, and to the infiltration of the black market and illegal activities. As argued before, the neighborhood governs its own extended economic enclave, which provides minimal basic income for the poorest families. As sociologist András Vigvári told me one time when we were visiting the ghetto:

[András Vigvári]: This neighborhood has its own microeconomics. It is a very powerful community that is difficult to find nowadays. They are helping each other. (…) And this has a kind of a cohesive power. (…)

[Klára]: I was working at a hostel for homeless people before, but my little son became very sick. If you're wondering what I've been doing… I went to the market for vegetables. And I started to sell it here. It's not a crime! There are people who make money this way!

Dealing drugs is only one and a less distinctive economic activity in the ghetto, even if the territorial character (open and closed, accessible and hidden at the same time) is favorable for such illegal activities (cf. Alacsony & Földesi, 2016). The parallax is that the local market of psychoactive substances thrives regardless of the permanent presence of police officers in the neighborhood. As the leader of the local NGO said:

[Ágnes]: Absolutely absurd! Drug dealing runs smoothly, while there are dozens of policemen out there. Meanwhile, a fortune is spent on the permanent presence of police officers. It is like an open drug market.

This social theater is, however, quite effective in the megaspectacularization of the hybrid ghetto. The presence of drug addicts is very visible in the area, as they are lying and sitting all
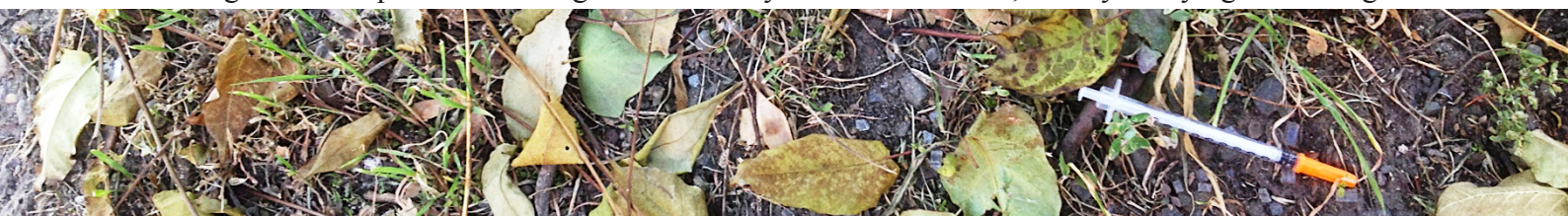
over the streets in a psychedelic daze. Combined with the intensified presence of police officers, whose uniforms are also quite visible, and spiced up with media report with titles like 'Drug Invasion,' 'New Designer Drug Wreaks Havoc,' 'Police Arrest Dealer Who Sold New Designer Drugs,' a particular modality of urban poverty becomes effectively enlarged, refashioned and reimagined, and finally accumulated into one representation of the megaspectacle of the ghetto. This process is not only conducive to the rise of social insecurity, but further contributes to the stigmatization of the inhabitants:

[Katalin, resident]: We are under the same label. Now they [police officers] think, I'm a junkie. Only because I live here. I go to the doctor, I tell him [the name of the street]. 'Oh my God' – he says. For example, the police officers told me last time that I look like a drug addict. They checked my documents in front of my house! How can a police officer say things like that? 'Because everyone is a drug addict who lives in [this street]' – he says. And he says such things to a working mother!

(…)

[Police officer]: Listen, when we are there, my only question to the citizen in the street, is to show us the documents. If I see, that the citizen is from another place, then I'm sure that she came to buy the drug. After thorough control of the clothes, it turns out anyway. (…) There was such a record, that when the

intensified police controls began, we controlled 1800 people within 72 hours there. There was a huge police presence at that time. The neighborhood was blocked from all sides, it was really hermetically sealed. No one really came out of it without being checked.

[Me]: And can I ask you, whether you think that the demolition of the buildings would solve this problem? How do you see?

[Police officer]: I think it will solve it in every way. The area itself will be physically destroyed. Right now, the business is booming. It is clear that when this building will be demolished all together, that will be the solution.

While on the interpretive, discursive level the hegemonic articulation of the 'drug problem' mystifies the ultimately dislocated, historical and contingent character of poverty, and accumulates particular images of the dazed, stumbling human wrecks into the megaspectacle of the ghetto, on the level of ideological fantasy it plants fear towards those who are the least harmful (the new designer drugs literally kick out the users) and then immediately dissolves this fear with the spectacular 'biodécor' of police uniforms, while the economy of the drug market remains undisturbed. As with most of the fantasy scenarios of postmodern global capitalism, there is nothing false in this hegemonic articulation. Of course, the accumulation of
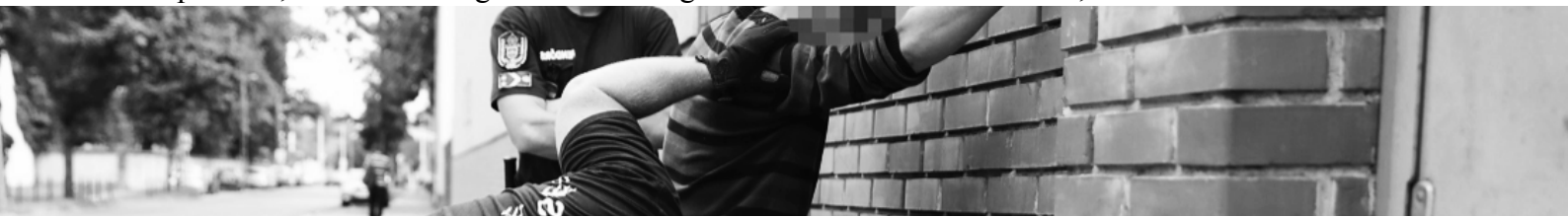
the images of the 'useless population' is a 'Lie', but one presented in the guise of truth: there is nothing false in emphasizing that the drug market is a dominant problem in the economic enclave of the ghetto. As one of the pastors of the Methodist Church who worked with the families in the ghetto once pointed out while we were visiting the neighborhood together, that if society would really face the predicament of the poor without illusions, then it would get seriously ill.

[Methodist Pastor]: It has never been good, to be poor. We know it (…) from experience that poor people can rarely count on solidarity. Solidarity between the poor does not really work either. And one shouldn't be surprised. (…) One shouldn't be outraged by the fact that the poor put their hand on everything that can make money. One shouldn't make a moral question out of it. Of course, it is bad, that s/he is a supplier of a wealthy junkie, but s/he makes a living this way, he or s/he cannot go anywhere else. (…) One of them said, that s/he earned more one night than s/he would normally have a whole month. And then I said, I cannot make here a counter-argument. Her penury was so deep… *We all know, what kind of misery people live in, and in a normal world society would get seriously ill with this.* [italics added]

It is possible to see the penury of these people, it is also possible to understand it, but it is almost impossible to *imagine* it. And ideological fantasy is effective precisely in hegemonizing and filling in this void of imagination.

Trash. Just like in the case of the Gypsy settlement in Poland, the environmental discourse as an antagonistic discursive field constituted an ideologico-hegemonic nodal point in the case of the Hungarian hybrid ghetto as well. Because of the public utility debt that the two blocks accumulated, the local government suspended waste removal services in the neighborhood, which instantly led to the hyperaccumulation of trash between the two blocks. Then, using spectacular images of the emerging waste dumps, municipal representatives started to point to the irresponsible inhabitants. The residents tried to organize the waste collection amongst themselves with the help of the local NGO, but it turned out to be an almost impossible enterprise on such a small territory with the household waste of more than 600 inhabitants.

> [Klára]: I was collecting garbage during the whole summer. But I became tired, and there was literally everything in the trash, from the dirty diaper to…

Moreover, due to the 'emerging drug problem', the local government also decided to

build a fence around the blocks before demolishing them, which retroactively also contributed to the accumulation of garbage:

> [FIDESZ representative]: The amount of trash there is inhumane.
>
> [Jobbik representative]: It is not a solution to constantly get rid of the trash from municipal money. So, I'm saying this is a problem that, I do not know how to say, normal people do not live like that. Whoever minimally respects the minimum rules of coexistence. (…) I do not know how to put... this is typical, as the proverb goes, 'the wind blew the trash to one place.'

Unlike in Poland, the master signifier of trash here doesn't float over the environmental struggle but becomes divided between the signifieds of household trash and human trash. Thus, the fantasy scenario points not to the environmental degradation in the first instance, but to the people, who are in a chain of equivalence with their environment, being social trash. The accumulation of the particular images of the 'waste dumps' and 'human trash' contribute to the construction of the megaspectacle of the hybrid ghetto, which appears not only as dangerous, but also as dirty and infectious.

Ethnitization of poverty. A further ideologico-discursive strategy for constructing the dirty, infectious spectacle of the hybrid ghetto is depicting a Gypsy mask on a socio-economic problem, even though the ethnical division is not characteristic to the ghetto at all. As Vigvári once explained,

> [Vigvári]: …the ethnical division is not characteristic to the ghetto at all. I have not experienced such tolerance, like in this neighborhood. As our research showed, that the main division is along the lines of natives and immigrants. (…) It is called immigrants, regardless of the recent vocabulary of the FIDESZ, in 2015 when we conducted the research there was none of this circus yet. (…) But if you are going to research an average Hungarian village, then the whole theme of the decaying community is always ethnically articulated, and for me it was the only terrain where it was not ethnically depicted.
>
> (…)
>
> [LMP representative]: Nowadays, poverty is affecting a wide range of social groups, not only Gypsy people. So, you do not have to be a Gypsy to find yourself in a social situation which is unacceptable for the middle class. Thus, non-Gypsy people living in these areas are also labelled as Gypsies by the society.

Despite all of these, the accumulation of the images of poverty acquire a darker color, which Başak Akkan, Mehmet Baki Deniz and Mehmet Ertan (2017) call the 'Romanization of

poverty', which refers to the ideologico-discursive racialization of the underclass by comparing it to the imaginary figure of the 'lazy, dirty, trickster Gypsy'. In the process of ethnitization the label 'Roma' or 'Gypsy' shifts from the ethnic category toward the category of low social status. Akkan, Deniz and Ertan argue that inhabitants of the stigmatized territories 'hold a common "stigmatized spatial identity", regardless of their ethnicity, which determines the processes of poverty and social exclusion in different spheres of life' (2017, p. 73).

> [Jobbik representative]: I'll give you an example. Anyone who has not seen her parents working, will not work. But I remember situations that despite someone being a non-Roma, he was dirtier and lazier than a Gypsy. *I swear he looked like a Gypsy.* [italics added] (...) They are illiterate, so it is difficult to integrate them into the labor market. (...) They have different habits. They apparently live in a parallel society.

It is not a surprise then, that contemporary sociological analyses try to define the category of 'Gypsy' as referring to those people who are regarded by the society as Gypsy (Ladányi & Szelényi, 2004). As Ladányi argues, the key for understanding this problem lies not in the racial dimension, but in class relation.

One of the biggest problems with the 'Roma problem' is that it is based on the ethnitization of poverty: because the 'Roma' is nothing less than the ethnitized poor, regardless of which ethnic group one 'actually' belongs to. This stupidity comes from the various romologists. (...) And that's a complete misinterpretation of the real problem. Hundreds of years ago, some people came from India, but this is about as important with regards to the current situation of the Roma as if we were to derive the problems of today's Hungarian society from 9ᵗʰ Century Levedian roots (Ladányi, 2009, pp. 45–46, translation mine).

Ladányi reminds us that the ethnitization of poverty is always embedded in the socio-economic predicament of a region, especially in semi-peripheral countries, where a huge gap is wedged between the poor and the extremely poor: 'about seven percent, living in conditions similar to Third World poverty' (ibid., p. 51).

* * *

Particularly characteristic to the ideologico-discursive nodal points of the hegemonic field of the hybrid ghetto (drug market, environmental degradation and the ethnitization of poverty) is that they are embedded in a discursive landscape that is perplexed and puzzled in its main character. While the basic ideologico-discursive modality of the dispositif in Poland

was characterized by the orientation of the subject providing minimum enjoyment in meaning (Help wisely! Struggle for clean air!), and by the interpellation of the subject with relatively precise directions of subjectification, the megaspectacle of the hybrid ghetto in Hungary functioned, to a larger extent, through the dissolution and detotalization of meaning. Of course, the accumulated layers of the megaspectacle provide a minimum ideological articulation for constructing its hegemonic nodal points, and for subjectification, but it is dominated by the constitution of a puzzled landscape. In this sense, the dispositif of the hybrid ghetto resembles the modality of the polypore state, which undertakes a *via media* between the totalization and detotalization of meaning, continuously loosening the solid discursive grounds of its own.

Thus, in ideology, the mystification of domination can operate effectively not only through the fixation of meaning and the exclusion of the subversive signifiers, but also through the sedimentation of basic nodal points (minimum meaning for the survival of the discursive landscape) and the dissolution of meaning, creating an insecure and unstable world. In Wittgensteinian terms, it leads to the linguistic disease of the permanent lack of clarity which enables perplexity and alienation in the symbolic order. For Wittgenstein, 'philosophical

problems arise when language *goes on holiday*' (1986, §38), by which he understands the metaphysical use of language as opposed to its everyday use. Wittgenstein compares this metaphysical environment to frictionless ice, where the environment is perfect for problems to be solved, but precisely because the lack of frictions – the lack of the mud of the everyday context of language – one is not able to walk, i.e., to *use* language.

> [I]t is difficult as it were to keep our heads up, – to see that we must stick to the subjects of our every-day thinking, and not go astray and imagine that we have to describe extreme subtleties, which in turn we are after all quite unable to describe with the means at our disposal. We feel as if we had to repair a torn spider's web with our fingers. (…) We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground! (1986, §106, §107).

But one is also unable to walk if the symbolic landscape is fragmented to such an extent that it would remind us of the symbolic structures of icebergs, ravines and avalanches. The ideological detotalization and dissolution of meaning constitutes the same linguistic disease, when the Symbolic order becomes alien to us and we cannot express ourselves due to the

constant relegation of all certitude to extimacy. In Lacanian terms, it is as if the Real order (which can be encircled within the Symbolic order as the immanent ontological rupture, which subverts meaning) would have superimposed the Symbolic order, in such a way that 'the Real has become the foundation of our everyday lives, inasmuch as our everyday strategies are not related to the Symbolic order, but to its irreducible, everlasting, and insurmountable disruptions and fragmentations' (Kiss, 2014, p. 147, translation mine). Thus, as argued before, the linguistic disease in postmodern global capitalism does not result predominantly from the constraint and normalization of the Symbolic order, but more and more tendentiously from the apparent disappearance of it as its fissures, ruptures and inconsistencies overrule the discursive landscapes. As argued before, paradoxically, the new far-right regimes of advanced imaginality thrive precisely and effectively against the background of postmodern narrativization, fragmentation of the symbolic, fluid identities, etc.

> Here we should look for the roots of the recent impasse of narrativization, i.e., of the 'end of large narratives'. In our era, (...) global, all-encompassing narratives ('the struggle of liberal democracy with totalitarianism', etc.) no longer seem possible in politics and ideology. (…) [T]he fact that 'the big Other

doesn't exist' (as the efficient symbolic fiction) (…) the failure of symbolic fiction induces the subject to cling more and more to imaginary simulacra, to sensual spectacles which bombard us today from all sides (Žižek, 1997a, p. 3).

* * *

As the ideologico-critical analysis shows, the hegemonic landscape of the hybrid ghetto is structured by both the punitive, disciplinary modality of the Centaur state and the logic of Capital as materialized in the megaspectacularization of the ghetto, conducted by the semi-peripheral regime of neoliberal urbanism (cf. N. Smith, 2002) through the process of gentrification masked as revitalization and 'regeneration'. The influx of international and national corporate production and the large state investments thrive in the region against the background of the punishment of the poor and the extension of the police-and-penal apparatuses. And the main strategy of this semi-peripheral regime of advanced marginality is not only the ideological hegemonizing of discursive nodal points (e.g., the megaspectacularization of the ghetto), but, as argued before, a part of its governmentality is the lack of strategy, the conduct of no-conduct, the fragmentation of discursive anchor-points, which however governs the subject in more insidious, more subtle ways. As the leader of the local homeless center argued: '[t]he whole thing is typical to the situation in Hungary. The strategy is that there is no strategy, no concept.' This is also characteristic to the biopolitics of the regime of urban poverty:

> [Ágnes, social worker]: They [the local government] let it [the ghetto] erode and perish. This has been the strategy for many years. Let the massive debts accumulate in the apartments so that public utility suppliers will sooner or later terminate the contract. Now, the electricity has been switched off in one of the blocks, there is no public lighting. The next is going to be the water.

Another instance of the conduct of no-conduct can be captured in the midst of intensified police control. While the local municipality multiplied the police presence in the neighborhood in order to reduce the rate of criminal activities, the police officers are punished if they worsen the statistics, which renders their presence as bio-décor for the ghetto:

> [Police officer]: The root of the problem is not solved, it's just like treating a symptom. The point is, that if I arrest one, two, three, or four, all in vain, and we generate problems for our colleagues, and we generate enormous procedural costs. The nature of the work is rather demoralizing. (…) I had to take a lot of drug owners to preliminary detention. Day by day. I even took them, when we were told to improve the statistics. Since there is plenty of money 'pumped' into it. The point is, that actually I was punished by my superiors. (…) There is a lot of paperwork with this you know. Not to mention the procedural costs. (…) The surveillance system costed also a lot of money. Clearly, the mayor expects us to generate no problems in this district.

This absurd, almost Kafkian governmentality is channeled not only through the police-and-penal apparatuses, but also through a multiplicity of other apparatuses, which are interlinked into what I called the dispositif of advanced marginality. The modality of the dispositif of the hybrid ghetto is structured by different churches (Lutheran, Calvinist, Methodist, Catholic, Korean Christian) and their missionary practices, researchers, journalists, legal aid experts, a multiplicity of artists, the social service center, the leaders of the revitalization programme, teachers, headmasters, the waste rationalization managers and big corporations longing for charity:

> [Katalin, resident]: The most insane are these Koreans, who come without any notifications, and start dancing between the blocks. They always give lollipops to the children. Then they preach…
>
> [Feri, Katalin's son]: They took me to the police station and left me over there…
>
> [Me]: Why would they do that?
>
> [Feri]: Because there was one, he was arguing with me, and I punched him.
>
> [Katalin]: They locked one of my children into the toilet. [laughs]

Another symptomatic example is the involvement of the employees of the revitalization project in the everyday life of the families in the ghetto:

> [Katalin]: These workers came here and they told the children to break the walls. Because they cemented the doors and the windows of these flats after the evictions, and it's money for them, if they have to do it again.
>
> [Me]: Of course.
>
> [Klára]: And then they told the kids that, when they leave, it is safe, go and destroy what they did till its fresh. But not a little bit, but really. For money...

Just like in Poland, the inhabitants have had enough of the multiplicity of civil organizations, artists, researchers and sociologists, not only because they make no real change, but also because it is the 'intruder' who benefits from this work. As Gagyi and Pulay note,

> representatives of groups or organizations experimenting with different modes of intervention in the poor neighborhood have to make great efforts to create their own visibility and thus to demonstrate their significance. In the absence of the institutions of participatory decision-making, this is mostly realized not through relationship between the given organization and the targeted local population, but rather in the relation between the wider audience (or press) interested in social exclusion (2017, p. 90, translation mine).

The condensation of the multiplicity of apparatuses structures the discursive landscape of the hegemonic field to a large extent. The dispositif of the hybrid ghetto is characterized by three additional modalities besides those outlined above. First, a dominant articulatory direction is connected to *middle class and upper-middle class imaginaries*, which results from the social

class composition of the apparatuses. The social actors in the neighborhood constitute their discursive practices along the norms and expectations of good behavior, disciplined attention, correct use of language, especially with regards to the programs organized for children. These expectations, however, often lead to mutual alienation and further social exclusion, if the apparatus is forced or itself decides to leave the neighborhood. The Social Service Center itself decided to exclude the inhabitants of the ghetto:

[Social Center representative]: We had to make a quite tough decision 3 years ago regarding how low we want to define the level of social service. By this I mean, how much we will lower the rules and standards here in the house, and it was not an easy decision. If I want to convince a mother or a parent to come here with her four-year-old child or just a little student, then it [the ghetto] will not fit.

On the other hand, there are cases when the apparatus is forced to leave, like in the case of a missionary group of a Calvinist congregation:

[Calvinist presbyter]: There were some harder cases when we were tested, (...) and you know, you go home with quite weird thoughts, when you come [to the ghetto] with good intentions and then people throw things at you... a table, a chair. We were actually beaten up. (...) Then we, practically, had to run away...

(…) Well, we went there to preach, so we tried to educate them.

The middle-class imaginaries of the religious apparatuses fulfil the role of the mediator in the midst of the growing culture of charity between the poor and donors, on the other hand, their imaginaries are combined with the narratives of 'catching-up' (progress, success, hope), which show similar imaginary patterns with the post-socialist catching-up discourse:

[Calvinist presbyter]: We wanted to bring there [to the ghetto] successful Gypsy people, who could simply show them [the children in the ghetto] the way to progress, how to be useful for others… repeating old grievances leads nowhere.

The middle-class imaginaries are especially characteristic to the practices of the local NGO. The flat in one of the blocks that is used by the NGO as a community space was arranged and renewed by the social workers in cooperation with the 'Gypsy Mission' of the Calvinist congregation:

[Alíz, social woker]: Our aim was to start working together with organizations and create a program that help children in catching-up.

[Ágnes]: An important part of our activity is organizing outdoor programs for children: excursions, sports activities, creative camps. We also involved the Social Circus, who introduced the use of juggling tools to children. These programs are of great importance because young people in the area are heavily disadvantaged.

As part of the processes that I previously called NGOization and circusification, the social workers make serious investments in enjoyment (enjoying poverty), where the surplus enjoyment means enjoying the enjoyment of the poor. Reengineering the immanent spaces of the ghetto and representing them as places for fun and colorful games eliminates the already weak modality of the ghetto as subversive in potentia:

[Vigvári, sociologist]: If we look at it analytically, each of these organizations create these representations at some level. [The local NGO] also creates these images that are shown on their Facebook page. We see happy kids, they smile and do some kind of creative activity. They construct an image according to their class position, (…) projecting that a regular child usually does creative things with clay on Saturday, for example.

The local NGO is aware of such critical voices, since they have been working with Vigvári for quite a long time, but they ease these critiques by directing attention to the psychological needs of the children:

[Alíz, social worker]: Our aim is not to improve their educational outcomes, or to educate them, to stop them from cursing, it is not our direct goal to produce works of art with them in clay sessions. But they live in constant stress, unimaginable for us. They live a very vivid life, they are full of frustrations, it is a terrible violent environment in which they are forced to live. It is also the same with those children who are nurtured by loving, caring parents.

The second dominant modality of the dispositif is this *psychopatologization of social problems*, that is materialized in the displacement of the signifiers, like epidemic, asylum, infection, disease, 'concentratum' – in relation to the hybrid ghetto. 'For me, it is an infected environment.' 'The ghetto is not different at all, as compared to a psychiatric institution or an asylum.' 'We prefer psychotherapeutic games for the children in the concentratum.' Just as in the case of gentrification, where the biomedical language of 'regeneration' 'applies to individual plants, species, or organs – a liver or a forest might regenerate – and insinuates that the strategic gentrification of the city is actually a natural process,' (N. Smith, 2002, p. 445), the psychopatologization of the consequences of poverty diverts attention from the social states of domination towards reactionary imaginaries about psychological remedies.

And finally, the third dominant modality of the dispositif is *the institutional merger between the apparatuses and the local political regime*. The leaders of the most dominant

apparatuses in the dispositif are by hook or crook connected to the power games of the local government, and the two schools are especially affected with regards to this modality. The mayor had been the director of one of the schools for almost a decade before taking his seat in the government. At the time of the research, one of the vice mayors was the director of this school, who is also one of the best friends of the mayor, the previous director:

> [Olga, headmaster and vice mayor]: He is not only my colleague, but he is also my best friend. Friends are very important, yes, and the opportunities that one can find here. The concerts, the theater, the museum… and we went to the forest together. So, we lived a very, very lively life.

Good mates are important in the neighborhood within the game of brotherhood capitalism, and it was known by one of the parties in opposition, which – for strategical reasons – decided to nominate the deputy director of the other school for representative position in the local government:

> [LMP representative]: I can absolutely imagine [him] as a local candidate, it is not a problem for us.
> [Me]: I know, but he is also responsible for the heating in the school…
> [LMP representative]: But he would be able to hold that positions as well.

It is of utmost importance to acknowledge the conflictual character of the dispositif, which conflict emerged as the hegemonic struggle for the management and representation of the hybrid ghetto and the political processes connected to it, especially after the local NGO started to take part in the struggle connected to the revitalization of the area in order to represent the interests of the inhabitants of the ghetto. As the leader of the local pensioner's club told me, the interinstitutional field is crisscrossed with its conflictual modality:

> [Viola]: I remember when Margit [one of the volunteer social workers] worked in the ghetto and wanted to meet the children after school and the director told her to get out of there, because she was not a Methodist.
> [Me]: Good God.
> [Viola]: Sinking, sinking, sinking. Lívia [one of the teachers] has also left the school and started to work in the other school… I think she was a very good teacher and she loves children very much.

And the diverse links of conflicts flow in every direction of the discursive landscape between the apparatuses, between the schools, between the local NGO and the Calvinists, between the Methodists and the local government, and so on:

> [Péter, director of the ghetto school]: That woman [the director of the other school, the vice mayor] has a very bad opinion about us…
> [Pál, teacher in the ghetto school]: That is a school for droid-education. Children are hypnotized over there.

(…)

[Olga, the director of the other school]: There is a huge difference between the two schools. There is no discipline over there. On the one hand, we can integrate those who are here because there are not so many Gypsy children as in [the ghetto school], because for their integration it is substantial, that they are not in majority, and that is very important. (...) I broke my relationship with the [the local NGO] because, and here I speak as the vice mayor, because they regard the local government as an enemy of [the ghetto], and I think that's not the case.

And consequently, due to the inherently conflictual character of the dispositif, the subversive potential is consumed by the hegemonic field between the apparatuses.

[Vigvári]: My criticism does not primarily concern the activities of these organizations, but that the organizations often fight with each other for taking the lead in this whole situation. There is always one, in this case maybe [the local NGO], who functions as a gatekeeper. Often, however, the communication with similar organizations are eliminated because of this, at the expense of working together in a mutual co-ordination.

* * *

It is important to acknowledge, again, that the dispositif of the hybrid ghetto is pedagogical in character (e.g., punishing the poor, the megaspectacularization of the ghetto, the displacement of upper-middle class imaginaries, the psychopatologization of social problems) and conflictual in modality. Taking these primordial aspects of the dispositif into account and also concerning those excesses of my research (e.g., the Romanian trip) that forced me to rethink my methods, there are three important aspects of the research that I reframed in Hungary. First, while my 'base' institution in Poland was the local NGO and I made comradeships with social workers, in Hungary it was rather the ghetto school that functioned as a 'base' and where I could make comradeships with teachers. Second, while in Poland I was involved in social work related to the Gypsy settlement, in Hungary I had the opportunity to work in the ghetto school on a voluntary basis, as the head teacher of the sixth grade. And third, while in Poland I organized working groups solely for teachers with the help of social workers, and regarded the dispositif of the settlement as merely an informative circumstance, in Hungary, I started to consider the dispositif itself as educationally meaningful for teachers' transformative learning, and I organized working group meetings in the school, that were completely open for

the public. Thus, my research activities not only consisted of talking to the representatives and actors of apparatuses for the sake of mapping the discursive landscape of the dispositif, as I did in Poland, but I took great effort to take the advice of the Romanian headmaster seriously ('I have to hold hands with that lady from the public authorities, and with policemen, and with doctor, and with priest … to make a team and go there and explain every department what is going on over there…'), *to confront the school with its respective dispositif* in order to encounter its ultimately dislocated character (Real *qua* impossibility).

Just like in Poland, the aim of my ethnographic research was to capture this ideologico-discursive landscape of the dispositif of the hybrid ghetto and do 'mapping work'. I started to cooperate with the local NGO, I participated in their activities (child programs, resident forums). I spent six months in the deepest organs of the dispositif of hybrid ghetto, taking fieldnotes, taking photos, conducting interviews, recording conversations. In order to map the discursive landscape, I was in personal contact with the Methodist Church, the police, the Calvinist congregation, three representatives of the local government (FIDESZ, LMP, Jobbik), the social service center, a local activist group, sociologists who conducted research in the
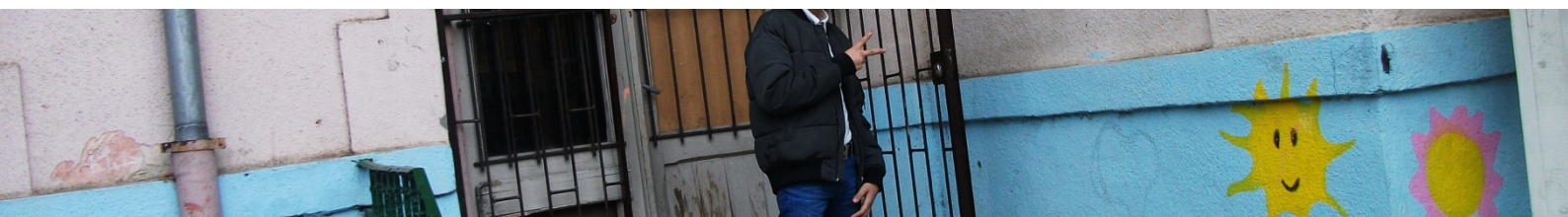
ghetto. I made interviews with the representatives of these apparatuses, and I also recorded conversations during the everyday encounters with these actors. In the meantime, I was working in the ghetto school, where I focused my attention on discussions and conversations with and among the teachers. I recorded unstructured individual interviews with them, and the daily conversations in the teachers' room. A huge proportion of my data consists of the audio recordings of the working group meetings that I organized in the school, and which I will discuss later in this section. As I argued before, the opportunity that I had to work in the school put me in a different researcher position than in Poland. Being a colleague in the first instance was conducive to a stronger reciprocity between the teachers and myself.

The ghetto school is situated just two corners from the ghetto in a historically working-class district. Already from the end of the 1960s, most of the students of the school came from the local industrial worker families, but from the mid-1990s, due to privatization and the displacement of production, the families moved away, and more and more children started to attend the school from the ghetto and other places of urban poverty. The school has been maintained by the Methodist Church since 2004. At the time of the research, almost half of the

students came from the ghetto and almost all of the rest also lived in other spatial settings of urban poverty. The biographies of the students from the smallest to the oldest are extremely traumatic, bearing all the structural symptoms of advanced marginality, misery and penury. Let one of these biographies stand here, in order to get a minimum sense of the spectre of poverty, even if it is impossible to imagine it:

> [Viki]: The whole thing started when I was seven. My mother invited her friends and they got drunken. My dad came home from work and my parents started fighting and the situation got worse and worse. My mother took a knife in her hands and tried to stab my dad and she made a cut on his back, and then my dad was taken to the hospital. That day the police also came and mom's two friends were arrested, but my mom was not taken away. And then, each day was worse. My dad came home from work in the evenings. My mother was beating me every day, and I didn't tell it to anyone. I was eight years old, when she tried to kill me. My sister went away from home and everyone was against me. At the age of 12, I tried to commit suicide.

All of the 80-90 students of the ghetto school would tell similar or even worse biographies, if one would be interested, which is not too common. Even from such a quick snapshot one could extrapolate the incredible structural burden that both the teachers and the students are exposed to in the daily pedagogical work. As the director of the school, who was inaugurated just a few weeks before I started the research, told me after a few months:

> [Péter]: You have seen this all, we are working at the very bottom of the society. We [he and the teachers] are aware of the European directives, but here… this is a totally different reality. I mean… you've seen it. How should I relate to those standards in the midst of poverty?

And indeed, as I argued before, in the daily confrontation with urban poverty even the most 'innovative' educational strategies and best practices can easily transform into farce. While the main principles of contemporary European politics of education promote equity, inclusion, lifelong learning, multiculturality, active citizenship etc. not only as achievable goals but also as inherent pillars of teacher education, those teachers who work with the children of the Real class at the epicenters of urban poverty, very often find achieving the aforementioned directives a ridiculous, if not hopeless enterprise. Especially in those countries, where the politics of education explicitly go against Western imaginaries, like Hungary and Poland.

9.2 Educational Exclusion and the Ghetto School

Some contend that the post-1989 era in education started even before the economic-political transition with the Public Education Act of 1985 (Kozma, 2009a). As I argued before (cf. Tóth et al., 2018), just like in Poland, the post-socialist history of education is a story of the *stabilization of neoliberal capitalism*. The Public Education Act was modified in 1993, and the

new elite and the experts reached a total consensus on the principles of autonomy, freedom and plurality. As a result, one of the most decentralized education systems emerged from the gloomy Central-Eastern European semi-periphery, which provided great autonomy for teachers and schools, and supported alternative pedagogies and private institutions. But as an effect of these interventions, the foundations had already been laid for one of the most diverse, vertically and horizontally stratified, and hence extremely selective education systems in Europe, with exemplary diligence in conserving and reproducing social inequalities:

> While the elite of the transition and their experts – probably well-intentioned – created the new education system on the basis of freedom in Hungary (…) they in fact set the school to serve the interest of Capital. The ultimate winner of this continuing structure is the capitalist market and the elite, who have interests in the reproduction of social inequalities (Mészáros, 2013, p. 87, translation mine).

The education sector during the times of the 'happiest barrack' was slightly different from those in other Soviet bloc countries before 1989. Decentralization and integration had been on the political agenda since the beginning of the 1970s. In the mid-'80s the Hungarian Parliament adopted a law that expanded autonomy and political space for alternative initiatives, thus largely contributing to a diversity of institutions (Halász, 2011). The 1990 reform of the Public Education Act made the establishment of private schools as well as schools set up by foundations possible, and the 1993 reform destroyed the state monopoly on schooling, promoted further decentralization, and created more space for alternative solutions and autonomy. This act remained almost unchanged until 2010, since there was a consensus on the basic principles (E. Kelemen, 2003; Mészáros, 2013). But this consensus was reached by the elite, the technocracy and the experts. It is not completely true that there was no consultation at all, but subsidiarity has never been a strength of the Hungarian political acropolis. Obviously, the idea of self-governing, autonomous schools could have been the first step toward a radical democratic horizontal governance, but the political vacuum after the fall of dictatorial regimes raised the diverse interests of competing groups of experts, technocrats and new policy-making think tanks (Kozma, 2009b). Thus, pedagogues could never really become part of the debate about education (Kotasek, 1993), despite the vivid activities of their interest protection groups. While workers' movements and self-management, councils and unions, were strengthened and expanded in Hungary throughout the 1980s, Yugoslavia, and especially Poland, where '[r]oundtable negotiations between Solidarity and the communist regimes in 1989 reaffirmed the rights of worker self-management' (Orenstein, 2001, p. 27), the elites weakened the political cooptation of these interest groups after 1989 and 'maintained their own power (…) by dislodging and restricting new forms of political representation' (Bockman, 2012, p. 314).

Despite the restrictions, several attempts were made in Hungary to foster debate with the new forms of interest protection groups after 1989. The 1993 Education Act established new local interest reconciliation bodies and forums (Halász, 2011). But the overall experience of these attempts at political cooptation were twofold. First, there was a general lack of culture for dialogue because education policy in Hungary was accustomed to central instructions rather than the negotiations with local bodies (Kozma, 2009b). Second, for that reason, the forums' impact fell short of expectations (cf. Halász, 2010).

The political negotiations in the post-socialist acropolis established a laboratory for neoliberal reforms within education from 1989 on. In the legislative fever, more than 150 government regulations in education were declared from 1990 to 1999 (E. Kelemen, 2003). Thus, since the mid-'90s, teachers have had enough of legislation; they became 'sick and tired' of reforms (Halász, 2010; Mészáros, 2013) – but not because they thought the education system was at its best. After 2006, teachers were still tired of reforms, but one-third of them still thought education needed more reform. As I argued before, this contradiction between the unbearable reform-dumping and the continuous need for reforms is a basic dichotomy of neoliberalization in education, and not exclusively in Hungary. The key elements of the neoliberal discourse are the narrative of an *omnipresent crisis* in the education systems and the continuous promotion of the need for reforms and modernization. The neoliberal, post-socialist education reform package was based precisely on the narratives of 'crisis,' 'danger' and 'decline' (namely, any deviations from the Western agenda). In Hungary (as in other post-socialist, semi-peripheral countries), the promises of education inscribed in the post-socialist education reform package[82] were a continuation of the pre-1989 belief that education is conducive to national growth and, on the other hand, the beginning of (an endless) attempt to catch up with the core countries, where 'upward mobility' became a synonym for 'development,' 'progress,' 'hope' and 'salvation' (Hopkins & Wallerstein, 1977). The coordination of the implementation of the post-socialist reform package was constructed through transnational negotiations with intergovernmental organizations. In Hungary, the multilateral dialogue with these international organizations was vital to survival because of the drastic fall in GDP after 1989, and the increase of the budget deficit and external debt, which also had a huge effect on education (Halász, 2011). Thus, the first decade of the post-socialist era was characterized by bilateral and multilateral negotiations with international organizations, and the outsourcing of the national

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[82] It is important to note that the post-socialist reform package had a different composition in each country. For example, a full-fledged accountability regime has never been established in Hungary.

credits to the international platform (Halász, 2011; Kotasek, 1993; Kozma, 2009b).

But, as discussed above, these processes also contributed to huge inequalities. While the experts believed that competition between the institutions would contribute to the quality of education, it contributed to *huge vertical and horizontal selectivity*. Hungary is currently facing the greatest segregation and selectivity an education system can achieve in Europe, reproducing inequalities from a very early age (Mészáros, 2013). Twenty-seven years of neoliberal interventions and the incredible amounts of money invested in research and development processes and think tanks have made very little change; Hungary is still facing bad cost-effectiveness, fragmented control, no appreciation for teachers, growing inequalities and segregation of Roma children, while the country provides a cheap workforce for multinational corporations in the semi-periphery and in the global auction workforce. Just as in Poland, the failure of neoliberal post-socialist reform packages opened the doors for a hybrid neoconservative regime in education as well. Since 2010, the far-right government had been constructing and implementing various neoliberal and neoconservative education reforms: first the centralization and nationalization of the education system; then the introduction of a teacher appraisal and school inspection system; and finally, the inclusion of chauvinist and ethnicist discourses in the national curriculum, and so on. I cannot provide here a detailed presentation of these hybrid (neoliberal and neoconservative) processes, because the number of systemic reforms is huge and the changes introduced since 2010 are more than eclectic.[83] The introduction of a normative value system with the New Education Act in 2010, emphasizing the word 'upbringing' as opposed to 'education,' was the first step toward a new philosophy of educating 'good' citizens. In this new approach, the state is the basis of good education; thus, total centralization and control are legitimate *per se,* just like bringing back the school inspection system, abolished in 1985. The government also makes a strong reference to commonwealth as a break with pluralism, presenting education as a public interest for preserving norms and values. These norms and values are often deduced from the Horthy era and are characterized by the reactivation of an ideologico-discursive field based on the '*fight among nations,*' emphasizing the need to restore the nation's lost cultural supremacy.

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[83] To mention just a few changes: the elimination of organizational, professional and economic autonomy; the suspension of quality management; implementation of teachers' external, administrative control; the liquidation of teacher training systems and professional services; the centralization of the curriculum; the elimination of the textbook market and the introduction of new, centrally approved textbooks; the promotion of segregation; the complete shutdown of school improvements; the centralization of the public institutions; the introduction of a compulsory kindergarten from age 3; the reduction of the age limit for compulsory education from 18 to 16; the regulation of the local curricula of schools, which could differ from the state curriculum by only 10%; the introduction of daily physical education.

But still, the flagship political strategy was the centralization and nationalization of the education system after 2010. Since the mid-'90s there has always been huge pressure on municipalities to organize their institutions with very a low budget and all their failures in the education sector increased the demands for centralization as a tool which could solve both institutional problems, inequality, and exclusion (E. Kelemen, 2003). From 2010 the government started to elect headmasters loyal to the regime, while dozens of schools were closed or migrated – Nyíregyháza, Szombathely, Kaposvár, Érd, Bonyhád, and Budapest were loud from demonstrations in 2010-11. Merging institutions contributed to the already huge white flight, with more families choosing schools in bigger cities, especially from regions with a larger Roma population, like Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (Magyar Progresszív Intézet, 2012). Thus, the children of the poor remained in the decaying learning environments of eroding rural or suburban public schools. And even if (as sometimes) these environments could create the conditions for education, the reduction of the compulsory school age to sixteen, the relocation of vocational training's starting point in 9th grade and the reduction of time allocated for general subjects (literature, math, etc.) strengthened the selectivity of the system and increased the number of early school leavers. Since then, due to the increasing drop-out rate, the early school leavers have already been forming an army of public works laborers. On the other hand, the initiatives, which would offer opportunities for the marginalized, became a parking trajectory for 'problematic' students, whose exclusion is called by the government 'exclusion with love' – i.e., that exclusion, if based on Christian love, is for the sake of the excluded. It is important to acknowledge that educational exclusion and segregation has been an increasing problem since the 1990s, but there has never been a genuine political attempt which would have tried at least to mitigate the systemic factors of exclusionary logics in education. As Kende (2018) argues, there have been initiations for fostering inclusion for introducing regulations that could prevent institutional logics of exclusion, however

> these rules were easily circumvented. (…) [I]nterviews with school principals and school maintainers revealed that there was a wide variety of practices that still guaranteed the advantage of the free choice of school for middle- and upper-middle-class parents (ibid., pp. 150-151., translation mine)

After 2010, the far-right regime replaced the (neo)liberal concepts of equity and 'equal opportunity' with the conservative rhetoric of 'catching-up', which led to the intensification of exclusion. The logic of 'catching-up' was summarized brilliantly by Zoltán Balog, Calvinist pastor and politician, who served as Minister of Human Resources between 2012 and 2018. He understands segregation with pedagogical support as the preparation for integration: 'There is

a learning phase in which, if the most disadvantaged children are in the majority, and if it is limited in duration and pedagogical support is also provided, then it is a preparation for integration' (2017). It is not surprising at all that the European Commission even launched an infringement procedure against Hungary in 2016 concerning the increasing segregation and exclusion in education.

* * *

The ghetto school in Hungary is deeply embedded in this broad semi-peripheral context, where structural inequalities combined with a significantly selective educational system result in the emergence and maintenance of those institutions of the poor, which are not intentionally segregative, but whose function is to 'recycle' the useless 'child-trash' thrown to the waste dumps of the educational system and the society as well. As the director said one day:

> [Péter]: Our school is the textbook-example of how an institution should not exist. In principle, the stratification of the entire Hungarian society should appear here: the children of rich parents, middle-class families, etc. Our school, however, is attended almost exclusively by poor Gypsy children. (…) One could say that [our school] is a 'natural' segregatum. This means that no one of us wants this: this is how we inherited the school.

Unlike in Poland, where the two schools are relatively detached from the intimidating closeness of urban poverty, the school in Hungary is not only physically close to the ghetto and other places of urban poverty, but its daily (pedagogical) life is deeply structured by the dynamics of advanced marginality, that irreducibly infiltrate the whole institution. This indomitable penetration of the social and its symptoms results in a peculiar configuration of the pedagogical. Zsóka Alacsony and Judit Földesi (2016) argue in an earlier research of the school, that even the dominant hierarchical relations of the ghetto are replicated within the school.

> [Pál, teacher]: We face life-to-death struggles on a daily basis, trying to set up meaningful programs for the children for 3 hours…
>
> [Péter]: …it's like a pub fight. One man stands up and everyone else, even the one who drinks in the corner, starts to get angry. It spreads like waves through the classroom.
>
> [Magda, teacher]: The biggest problem is that this situation always escalates… They start to rage, then suddenly a chair is flying, the bench is flying. Then we take an hour of managing aggression in the classroom…

In such an environment, the construction of the meaningful field of the pedagogical is refracted in a particular way. Those pedagogical problems, that would count as extreme in a middle-class environment, are interpreted with a quite different modality. A good example is the daily problem of smoking inside and outside the school:

[Rozi, teacher]: What we are saying, is that it is a paradox, that smoking appears to be the biggest dilemma, while this is one of the smallest problems for us.

[Péter]: Practically, yes. Even though, we're still in primary school. So, you really have to see that this is brutal. For example, 16 years is the average age in the 8th grade. And if I kick them out of school, then the education system will lose them immediately. I see this a much bigger problem than smoking. Of course, it's very bad to smoke. So, I'm not saying it's good to smoke…

As being a school for the Real class, at the bottom of society and of the educational system, it really functions as a 'last fortress', where the students cannot fall any deeper. On the one hand, this confronts the teachers with a pedagogico-ethical dilemma on a daily basis:

[Pál]: Here, if we were to work completely legally, and we would document all the absentees, grades, we could get rid of all the kids tomorrow. Do you know, what kind of a moral dilemma is it for us?

On the other hand, the ghetto school, as a 'last fortress', also functions as a protective place, which provides support and security for those, who live in extreme social insecurity:

The [school] is a supportive environment for students and parents alike. (…) Since the social relations of the families are limited, and since they have no access to basic services and are excluded from the labor

market, thus in some respects the protective atmosphere of the [school] is the best available choice for them (Alacsony & Földesi, 2016, p. 66, translation mine).

As I argued before, this detached character of the ghetto school – which also comes from its structural position both within the educational system and as a part of the dispositif – hence, turns into its positive condition. It is not only a condition of possibility of a protective environment, but also, as I argued with Masschelein and Simons, its separation is also a condition of possibility to unlock the world in order to expose the students to the risk of education. The constitutive parallax of the ghetto school is that while it is a segregative institution at the margins of society, it is still the most protective environment for the children of the poor, which implies a transformative potentiality that arises from the structural position of the school. As the social worker of the ghetto school argued:

[Vera]: It's very important to give a stability to a child, that yes, this is what you can expect every day, this is the school, and I think this is what we are doing here… I do not know how to say well … that, for example, I feel many times, that they don't know how to relate to you talking to them in a 'normal' fashion. You raise your voice sometimes, but there is a partnership, they do not experience at home.

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In a way, thus, the ghetto school is the redeemed promise of the far-right regime ('exclusion with love') without its cynical, obscene tone. Yet, the ghetto school is completely exposed and attached to the structural mechanisms of the dispositif of the ghetto (megaspectacularization, displacing poverty through gentrification, punishing the poor), that in itself is uncapable of mitigation. The local government's initiation for demolishing the ghetto endangered the very existence of the school:

[Rozi]: If they evict the ghetto, we will lose these kids. This is a very big problem.

[Nóra]: We will lose 50% of our students. We do not know when.

[LMP representative]: I do not understand the local level of the government. It is very interesting that there are a lot of teachers in this regime. The mayor was a school principal. One of the vice mayors was also a teacher, the other one is a headmaster, and the other vice mayor was a librarian. That is why it was very strange for me that they very strongly supported this.

[Péter]: The maintenance of our school is based on fear and this is the most exciting thing. We're the 'storage' for them… The school inspector asked, why would someone maintain such an institution like ours. And then I just told her: okay, terminate the contract, just check one week later the other schools in the district, ask those teachers what would they say to the idea of placing our students in their institutions.

Besides the daily pedagogico-ethical dilemmas, the paradoxical entity of the ghetto school (protective storage, segregative safe place) appeared also as an undecidable question for the teachers:

[Péter]: This is a horrible dilemma for us: we work on something that we ourselves and educational researchers working with us consider as something that should not be allowed. (…) Even if we do our job well here, we are basically serving an unjust system because we allow other schools to exclude the children, who end up here. According to the law, the [school] is a perfectly just institution, but not according to our own standards.

9.3 The Wonderland of the Pedagogical

Just press control + c.
Where is that?
Control!
There is no control!
Ah, I see, there is no control.
The kids have smashed the keyboard, some of the buttons are missing.
Press escape then!
Fuck, it doesn't work either!

A significant pedagogical problem of the ghetto school is that most of its activities are structured around the management of its constitutive paradoxes, which drastically limits and corrupts the free time and space of education. It is one of the most important dilemmas for the teachers, namely, how to teach their subjects effectively, how to promote social mobility through education as a means of fighting poverty – or at least mitigating disadvantages. As a ghetto school, working at the margins of the society, *the institution has relatively more freedom* in structuring its own educational activities, but the continuous failure that is deeply encoded in the structural coordinates of the school leads to continuous experimentation, that ends up in pedagogical eclecticism and instability. Previous research in the school (Mészáros, Lukács, & Szondi, 2017) argues that one of its main findings is that the school appears at first glance as a non-traditional institution, which however follows a traditional approach to education, while it should implement alternative methods. I assert that one shall turn this statement upside-down and ask: To what extent the pressure for experimenting with and implementing alternative frameworks of schooling is conducive to the instability of the institution, which retroactively crashes into the secure grounds of traditional methods? I argue that the dominant narrative of a permanent educational crisis (in the educational system as well as in the ghetto school) and the pressure for implementing an alternative framework (especially after the inauguration of a new, young and dedicated headmaster) leads to a special instance of the atrophy of the pedagogical (teachers' alienation in the big Other). While in Poland, the atrophy of the pedagogical was structured around the disavowal of the pedagogical question regarding the telos of education, in the Hungarian ghetto school, the pedagogical was atrophying due to the permanent, hysterical engagement with the pedagogical challenge of the *telos* and *ethos* of education (continuously knocking on the Kafkian door of the big Other). On the one hand, this permanent struggle of coping with the social pressure of the mantra of alternativity leads to constant attempts at the restructuring of the pedagogical practice in the school, which manifests, for instance, in the need for immediate operationalization of any idea, even if it is a pedagogical dilemma. This way, important dilemmas are often dissolved through the question 'What if?':

[Rozi]: Can we talk now about how the children could take better care of the tools in the school?

[Magda]: What if there was a closable door?

[Feri]: Yeah, but you know, the other door was hacked so many times.

[Péter]: A computer has already disappeared.

[Feri]: Yes, computers have been stolen already.

[Bori]: What if there would be a fence?

[Péter]: And the other one, forgive me, but I was thinking about it. There is no window on that little storage. What if we would turn it around to have its back in the foreground?

The immediate operationalization of even the slightest concerns leads not only to the disintegration of the problem, but also to the rediscovery of the easiest, most secure traditional pedagogical answers. On the other hand, the permanent pressure for the quick restructuring of the pedagogical field leads to the centralization of the processes, because in such a continuously disintegrated environment infiltrated with the crisis narrative, it seems like that there is no time:

[Péter, director of the school]: Now, I want to talk about how I imagine our operation from the next week. The biggest innovation I want to bring to this school is from the point of view, that the impact of
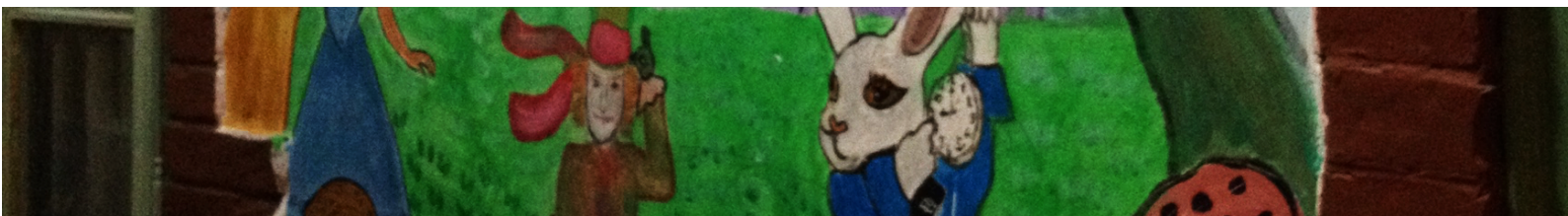
teaching is minimal here. I have a feeling that kids have learned relatively little. That is why I want the school to become a 'developer school'. I would like every student to have a mentor who works with them three times a week individually.

[Me]: I would like to strengthen the voice of the teachers here, because they have drawn attention to an important problem. Namely, (…) for such a project you need to know where the child is in the learning process. And you want to start this 'developer school' model without any diagnostics behind it. And I think, it's not possible to do individual development, or to start it, if we do not even know what the kids know.

[Péter]: There is a problem with this, so let me say… so we introduced the previous thing also without any preparation. And if we do not start something else now, then I'm telling you that this year is lost.

[Feri]: But we cannot know…

[Péter]: Coming up now with great professional argument is not the best idea right now, I mean, you should not be preventing it… I know you are not preventing it, but you should rather help how to do it.

[Feri]: Well, wait, I know what is going on. I see what is going on in the classes. I just I say that the faster you change, the bigger we can fall, during the year you cannot make such a radical change.

[Péter]: We're after the Christmas holidays.

[Nóra]: But in the middle of the school year, Péter!

Throughout the year a large quantity of quick reforms was introduced in the same manner, from the individualization of learning, mixing classes, changing head teachers between classes, introducing knowledge competition games and new forms of punishment for bad behaviour, etc. In a certain sense the reform-dumping in the school mimics the modality of post-socialist educational reform-dumping and produces similar effects. On the one hand, the '*accumulation of pedagogical instability*' distances the teachers from the social context of the school, captivating them by the daily influx of the disintegrating pedagogical field. As the school's social worker told me:

> [Vera]: What I miss very much, I think, is having a holistic vision of the system. And a little bit of insight into the child's life. That, I know this and that problem. So, to see it within the system, but also to look at it individually.

On the other hand, the accumulation of pedagogical instability leads to the intensification of conflicts between teachers, structured around the naïve questions of who is the better teacher:

> [Pál]: Bori, your certifications have an incredible value…
>
> [Bori]: Come on, you do not have a qualification at all.
>
> [Pál]: Yeah, I just work eight hours a day, not like my qualified colleagues.

The permanent pedagogical failures inscribed both into the structural position of the ghetto school and into the accumulation of pedagogical instability, end up in the disavowal of the social environment and the symptoms of urban poverty regardless of their visibility within the school, which retroactively projects the failure of the pedagogical onto the children. This is conducive to the strengthening of such articulations, which – as Béla Janky argues in analyzing the connections between the culture and economic status of the poor – alleges against 'the lack of capitalist work ethics, the lack of self-discipline and planning, the inclination of violence and, in general, of crime, the inability to formal learning, parental irresponsibility and unreliability' (Janky, 2016, p. 93, translation mine). This results in the continuous restructuring of disciplinary techniques, often pointing to particular children who should be dismissed from the school:

> [Bori]: All of them are smoking in the toilet. And so, I'm planning to take them to a medical exhibition, then we should go to the anatomy department. We should go to an exhibition where there are organs. You need to terrify the kids, otherwise…
>
> [Me]: I understand… but this addiction is so deeply connected to deprivation, you know…
>
> [Bori]: Well, in the 8th grade I saw a couple of counter examples for that. So, there are those who are serious about their future. Finding a profession, further education, and there are two or three kids who have the wit for that.

[Nóra]: Now my problem with the school is discipline. So, I want to do something about it. Because we cannot really get away with the situation, if we cannot solve the problem of discipline.

[Péter]: First, what I would like to do, I want a disciplinary wave in the institution. I do not care if this is going to bother you or you'll be bothering the kid, it will mean an immediate dismissal for anything.

[Zoli]: Like in the animal kingdom for example. In the horde of the wolves, the alpha male is in disciplinary position.

[Rozi]: What if we made a list, but not about the problematic children, but about who should be helped. Children who need help, so to make it more positive. So, those who are in trouble. It's not a hunting list. These are the children with the parents who were incarcerated.

(…)

[Péter]: Yesterday Márk [a student] said something that is unacceptable. So, I tell you honestly, that I almost immediately dismissed him ... Instant dismissal. So, this is something I will not tolerate in this school. I love kids, but I do not tolerate this. So, I sent Márk to copy-paste sentences. He was the first to open the door to this new way for many other similar students. He copy-pasted for one-and-a-half hours in one place. He was sitting in one place copying a text. I cannot imagine anything worse than that. This is an absolute anti-humane thing. But he did copy it, and after that he did some tasks. We will have a copy room. So, there will be a place, where you can send them.

[Feri]: You're perfectly right.

[Bori]: I propose, that Emília [another student] should be immediately dismissed.

But the most drastic instance of transposing the failure of the pedagogical onto students was when the director created a list of those students who allegedly were responsible for the disfunctions of the educational process, and read it in front of the whole school:

[Péter]: There is a list. I do not really like lists, but now I will read those who have so many faults that they are on the edge of being dismissed. From the fifth grade Eliza is in a position. In the sixth, Geri, Dani, Pisti are the ones who are in trouble…

I argue that the accumulation of pedagogical instability, the pressure for constant change, the malfunctioning of 'alternative' pedagogical techniques, which escalates into the strengthening of the traditional frameworks of schooling is not a failure of the ghetto school or the teachers in the first instance. I assert that *the pedagogical fails in advance against the background of advanced marginality in which the school is perplexed by the tasks imposed on it, namely to mitigate in itself the complexity of structural problems channeled through the*

dispositif of the ghetto. As one of the students asked me (and I think this is pedagogically the right question): 'How shall I change if the circumstances do not [change]?' Alleging the ghetto school against the lack of adaptive, alternative frameworks of schooling, overshadows how its pedagogical modality is part of and structured by the discursive totality of its respective dispositif. As one of the teachers, Nóra, once summarized in the teachers' room:

> [Nóra]: I feel that the spaces, where it is possible to move are getting narrower. I do not know whether you've read Orwell's 1984. In the beginning, there is one such thing, that they define what kind of words they want to create, to create a new language [*Newspeak*]. 'A,' 'B' and 'C.' Do you remember that? And 'A' was sort of the basics that can be said, 'B' might have been related to arts, and C to politics, but it is very well sorted out, what words can be used. And what I feel in education, is that there is a text that can be used in, but it gets narrower. A lot of things… such as poverty, you cannot really talk about such things.

But the ideologico-hegemonic construction of the discursive field of the dispositif is not only effective through the fixation of meaning, but also through the detotalization, the dissolution of meaning, which is also characteristic of the hegemonic far-right regime and to the logic of Capital, as I argued before. This results in a discursive landscape analytically similar to Alice's Wonderland, characterized by the breakdown of symbolization into nonsense. As Martin Grotjahn, discussing the regression of the Symbolic order in Wonderland argues,

> [w]ords assume more and more their own meaning and finally have lost their object cathexis like in a schizophrenic psychosis. What in the beginning of the story seemed to have been a re-discovery of an old childhood enjoyment, to ridicule intelligence, logic, time and space, becomes later a world of its own, again resembling a psychotic break with reality or at least presenting the scars of such a break (1947, p. 37).

In Wonderland, Alice is confronted with the traumatic dissolution of the signifying chain (which is indeed how schizophrenia is defined by Lacanians) and the extreme detotalization of meaning, where – in the midst of nonsense – a meaningful field is possible. I assume that it is best exemplified by Humpty Dumpty in Caroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871/2009):

> 'When *I* use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.'
> 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.'
> 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master – that's all.'
> Alice was too much puzzled to say anything… (ibid., p. 190)

Being puzzled due to the breakdown of the signifying chain is close to the Wittgensteinian linguistic account of illness, as being perplexed by the lack of clarity. The ideologico-critical backside of such a perplexity in the breakdown of the signifying chain is what I called the 'temptation of meaning', drawing on Žižek's argument in Astra Taylor's film, *Examined Life*:

When something horrible happens, our spontaneous tendency is to search for a meaning, it must mean something. (…) Even if we interpret a catastrophe as a punishment, it makes it easier in a way, because we [then] know it's not just some terrifying blind force, it has a meaning. (…) So, I think meaning is an escape from meaninglessness. Paradoxically, meaninglessness comes before. Meaning as such is a defense, and I think it's the duty of a philosopher to allow us not to get rid of meaning, but to see it as what it is: a defense, a fundamental lie of the human condition (2008).

As I argued before, by facing the 'inexistence' of the Symbolic order, it is harder than ever for teachers to make meaningful sense of the social, especially for those teachers who work in the midst of advanced marginality, where the inconsistencies of the symbolic order bellow for meaning. This characteristic of the symbolic field of the school, which reminds one to Alice's Wonderland, can be captured by the metaphors connected to the institution both by the teachers and other agents of the dispositif (which mimics the specific modality of the dispositif that I called earlier psychopatologization): 'mental hospital,' 'asylum,' 'house of fools'. What is particularly interesting is that these metaphors are articulated less with bad connotations and more with a kind of obscene attraction to it:

[Ágnes, social worker, leader of the local NGO]: It is very important that I now perceive the [school] as a house of the madmen, and I'm sorry, I say this many times, it is similar to the [ghetto] and our community space in it as well.

(…)

[Péter]: There was a group of artists here and special educators, and we were trying to analyze how the school looked like, and they said that it was like a psychiatry in the 70s.

[Feri]: Mental hospital.

[Péter]: Or a mental hospital. Just to compare it…

[Bori]: Yes, there is sort of a mood here.

(…)

[Pál]: This is practically impossible to refer to this institution as a school. So, it looks like an asylum. You have seen it, it is in a terrible physical condition also. We are trying to create a positive message for the kids and look around! So, let's wake up, I say! How does this building look like?! They [students] come in and they feel it, the walls tell them, that this is what they deserve…

(…)

[Vera, social worker]: When I was a family counselor, I called [the school] a small house of fools…

This particular modality of the ghetto school which reminds one to Alice's Wonderland (especially to the tea party with the Mad Hatter) is further 'twisted' by the Kafkaesque motifs of how such an institution at the margins of the education system is exposed to the 'non-sense' of state bureaucracy. The multiplicity of administrative and controlling practices of the

bureaucratic regime in education collapses into farce in the midst of urban poverty. One day state bureaucrats came to the ghetto school for a comprehensive environmental control. We led them round the school with the director, and they wanted to check the toilets. As we opened the toilet door, a concentrated cloud of cigarette smoke started to pour out. As the bureaucrats started to take notes resignedly shaking their heads, the director brilliantly restructured the very coordinates of the situation.

[Péter, director of the school]: Now look at this! I'm so upset, that these kids are smoking here. Can you imagine? Little kids…

[State bureaucrat 1]: Please calm down, we…

[Péter]: It is simply disgusting! These kids are even not 14 years old yet and they are smoking in this…

[State bureaucrat 2]: Look, we just…

[Péter]: Awful! Awful! Look at it! It's simply unbearable!

The director of the school brilliantly enacted the perspective of the bureaucrats and the school finally got away with a simple 'written warning'. But what such (regular) confrontations with the bureaucratic regime show is how the structural position of the ghetto school is constructed. On the one hand, the Centaur state and its educational system relies on it as a 'last fortress,' that catches the 'fallen-out'; on the other hand, the authorities cannot allow themselves to fully legitimize such an institution. The best way to hide that a system relies on such institutions is to show a dissatisfaction, a general disagreement and rejection of such institutions, while keeping them 'alive'. During the time I was working in the school, it was constantly under the threat of closure for ridiculous reasons. Once we received a 'serious warning' for not having printed out the description of ingredients of a chemical – that children were using during art classes – on a separate paper (sic!). Thus, with regards to the ghetto school the way Žižek interprets the bureaucratic regime is more than adequate: 'The intense rush of bureaucratic engagement serves nothing. It is the performance of it's very purposelessness that generates an intense enjoyment – ready to reproduce itself forever' (Žižek in Fiennes, 2012). The regular confrontations with this 'purposeless regime', however, further contribute to the disintegration of the symbolic field, since they expose the teachers engaging with the theater play of 'order' and 'control' creating the imaginaries for the authorities, where none of the children smokes, while behind the scenes, as I argued, smoking is the least significant problem for the teachers. Simply speaking: the bureaucratic regime doesn't appear as a big Other, it doesn't provide a meaning, but further intensifies the dissolution of meaning.

The disintegration and fragmentation of the Symbolic order and the extreme alienation in the big Other could potentially constitute hysterical subjects, strictly in the Lacanian sense –

i.e., a divided subject, who doubts, provokes and questions her relation to the big Other, desiring for its answer: 'You're saying I'm this, but why am I this? Am I really that?' Or as Alice asks, beginning her adventures in Wonderland 'Who in the world am I? Ah, *that's* the great puzzle!' (Carroll, 1865/2009). This hysterical temptation of meaning was characteristic in the school, regarding the process that I tried to encapsulate by articulating it as 'the accumulation of pedagogical instability.' The specific reaction to the disintegration of meaning is what Julia Kristeva called 'abjection' (1982), which refers to our answer (vomit, diarrhea, sobbing, frustration) to traumatic alienation in the Symbolic order, e.g., the traumatic encounter with a corpse, that reminds us to our own materiality. In the ghetto school, the backstroke of hysterical abjection (temptation of meaning), was 'melancholia' understood not primarily in psychoanalytic sense, but in the way it is depicted in Lars von Trier's movie *Melancholia* (2011). The film illustrates the different strategies by which a family tries to come to terms with the fact that a newly-discovered planet called Melancholia, which entered the Solar System, will inevitably destroy planet Earth. While everyone goes insane, trying to escape from the inevitable, one of the members of the family, Justine, withdraws to an almost poetic inner peace, and simply accepts the inevitable (comes to terms with the Real). Facing the disaster of urban poverty, few of the teachers followed a similar strategy, which the mainstream literature would call 'burn-out', but melancholia has nothing to do with such concepts. In melancholia, the subject is not depressed, demotivated or ineffective, it is rather resigned *and* active, hopeless *and* impulsive. The melancholic subject is extremely frustrating for those who are hysterically searching for a meaning. In von Trier's movie, for instance, one of the members of the family, Claire, invites the rest of her family together for a completely typical breakfast in the midst of the apocalypse. These different reactions in the school to the disintegration of the meaningful field resulted in the strengthening of the conflict between the teachers. For the director, the melancholic subjectivity was unacceptable, considering the quest for the constant reconstitution of meaning on which he tried to base the school:

> [Péter]: The most difficult problem I faced in this semester, is the so-called lack of discipline, as I named it. So, some of the colleagues do not develop. There is such a lack of motivation compared to those who work so much. Most of us work very hard in this institution, and everyone knows it.
>
> [Feri]: We tried to signal that there is serious work here and we look forward to the serious work of everyone.
>
> (…)
>
> [Péter]: It is often the case that most of our time is meaningless. Do not be angry, that I'm so 'down-to-Earth', but I see only one aspect, which is creating the right circumstances. I have to say that I must be

pretty ruthless here. I expect disciplined behaviour not only from children but also from my colleagues. What does it mean? This means that (…) I expect my colleagues to work harder.

The problem with the melancholic teacher, especially in such educational environments which are exposed to the accumulation of pedagogical instability, is not that she avoids work as such, but that she separates from the hysterical flow of reforms and doesn't contribute to the continuous restructuring of the pedagogical field – thus, it *seems* like that she doesn't work. There was one teacher, Ilona, who decided herself to occupy and retreat into one of the hidden corridors of the school and start teaching the children individually:

> [Ilona]: I was very excited about it. I said, that in this structure I cannot teach. I thought, this was not a solution…
>
> [Me]: And did it work out here?
>
> [Ilona]: Maybe…
>
> [Me]: And what was your concept with this self-exile?
>
> [Ilona]: Well, it was… it's so weird to talk about it. I saw that there was a gap between the 4th to the 5th grade. And I thought that now if they have to start the 5th, then they would collapse, so I will help them. I thought it wouldn't work out, it doesn't work, I am nothing, but I'm trying.

As compared to the multiplicity of other initiations in the school, I consider Ilona's intervention outstanding. She confronted a certain impossibility of education through the structural failure of the school (meeting the expectations of the education gospel), and detached herself from this structure, but not from the school as such. She realized, that there is a gap between the primary level (grades 1-4) and the lower secondary level (grades 5-8), which is materialized also in an architectural sense, since the two levels are separated into two different blocks of the building connected with a passage through the teachers' room. Ilona created a 'middle ground' with occupying this passage and structuring her pedagogical praxis beyond classroom education. In this sense, I argue, that melancholia is the 'gateway drug' to enacting the transformative potentiality of education, even if Ilona's example is an exception (since we know from Lacan, that *the exception is the rule*). The melancholic modality also appeared in the narratives of other actors of the dispositif:

> [Social Center representative]: Until you have to deal with such day-to-day responsibilities, that for instance you need to decide whether a child can stay in the settlement in woods for that night… you confront your impotence on the daily level.
>
> (…)
>
> [Ágnes, leader of the local NGO]: It is difficult for us to work with teachers, they are soured into the impotence of their work, there are really no conditions ... Indeed, it induces this. So, exclusion does this

with the adults working there too. It should not be like this, so many problems condensed in one place can generate very big problems.

(…)

[Methodist Pastor]: There are loads of dilemmas when we feel impotent. And here it is the same. Shall I tolerate a child who always destroys everything, is having fun in torturing others, letting girls into prostitution, etc. or should I tell him, it was enough Józsika, let's try to find another place for you?

For the director, melancholia was not an option, and he tried to introduce capitalist work ethics combined with a managerial style of exploitation, namely motivating the teachers through scholarships to work more and harder. It is, to a certain extent, connected to the modality of the dispositif, characterized by middle class and upper-middle class imaginaries. The school, just as other apparatuses intended to structure its discursive practices along the norms and expectations of good behavior, disciplined attention, etc.

[Péter]: So, you need to see, that I try to bring extra things and this is just the beginning, to have regular meetings. I haven't even talked about the scholarship yet. This is thirty thousand forints (approximately 100 euros) each month for a colleague who is working the hardest on the school's progress.

(…)
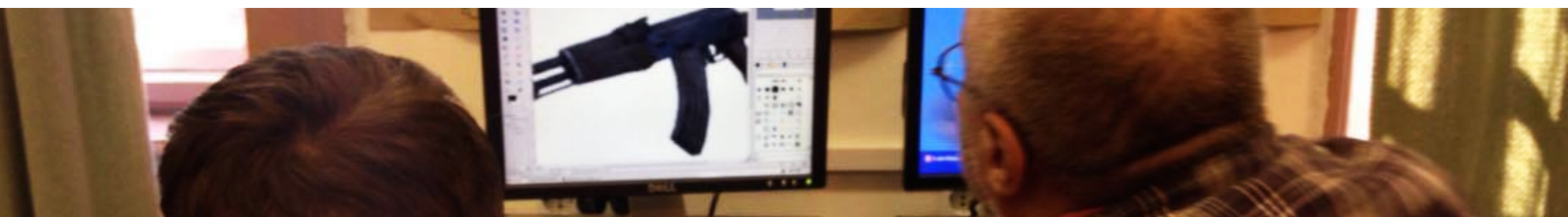
[Nóra]: So, should I be ashamed of myself? Maybe I am, who should be ashamed.

[Péter]: I only said, that someone has to be ashamed, because others are working so hard, screaming all day, and there are those sitting in the teachers' room. That's what I meant. When are you sitting here? I've never seen you here.

In sum, the daily struggle with the structural failures of the ghetto school based on middle-class imaginaries not only distances the teachers from coming to terms with the points of structural failure as such, but it also superimposes the structural 'crack' in the pedagogical fabric with the fantasy scenario of progress, hope and salvation. This creates such a tension between the 'cracks' (the Real) and the fantasy scenarios (the Imaginary) that smashes (disintegrates, deterritorializes, decodes) the Symbolic order with the continuous collapse of the signifying chains. This leads to an 'insanity in meaning' similar to Alice's Wonderland, where different reactions (abjection) to the disintegration of meaning doesn't provide an escape from non-sense.

> [Pál, teacher]: For example, I'm on the edge of a mental breakdown. Look at Dini [a student], he is exposed to a thousand different of impacts, there are the Korean Christians, social workers, jugglers, and nothing changes for him… this is what he told me. Colleagues are also impotent.

I talked to Pál several times about my research, and how I was trying to position the school within the dispositif of the ghetto, and later he helped me in organizing the working group meetings. We managed to set up seven of those meetings in the school and each of them (each lasting three hours on average) required a huge effort: contacting the representatives of the apparatuses (sometimes personally), motivating the teachers to attend the meetings, finding a date and time that was suitable for everyone and, most importantly, coming up with a guest for each meeting. Unlike in Poland, where the structuring principle of the meetings was organizing household visits with the teachers, in Hungary a working group meeting was based on fostering discussion among those apparatuses which were interlinked in the geometric organ of the dispositif of the ghetto, and also on having guests who were, by hook or crook, relevant for the flow of the discussion. We managed to invite parents; sociologists, who conducted research in the ghetto; a coach for interinstitutional cooperation; representatives from the local government (FIDESZ, LMP); the leader of a suborganization of the Methodist Church; and a local activist from the neighborhood. The permanent participants of the working group meetings were: the director of the school, three teachers who were accompanied by two-to-three colleagues in a fluctuating manner, the school's social worker, the school secretary, two social workers from the local NGO, an artist who worked in the school on a part-time basis, a representative from the local government (who became a permanent participant from the 4th meeting), and Pál, the teacher who helped me organizing and moderating the meetings. The meetings always started with the introduction of the participants, a brief report from each apparatus regarding their recent activities, and then a non-structured, but moderated, discussion between the participants based on the agenda they themselves created online before the meeting. The moderation was a key element in this process, especially when the confrontations built up to earthquakes in the tectonic arrangement of the discursive landscape.

9.4 The Gaze of the Dispositif

The aim of the meetings was to squeeze out and hit on the 'gaze of the dispositif'. As Nietzsche wrote in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), 'if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee' (Aphorism 146). But how does an abyss gaze? Against the Foucauldian notion of the gaze, which refers to the (self-)regulatory mechanisms in power relations (e.g., surveillance), for Lacan (1973/1998) the concept of the gaze has nothing to do with the eye,

since it is not the gaze of the subject, but the gaze of the Other (i.e., the Symbolic order). The gaze of the Other is not the surveillance of the Symbolic order, but – at least for Lacan – the point of failure in it. Lacan exemplifies the gaze with Hans Holbein's painting, *The Ambassadors*, which at first glance makes the spectator feel that she is in control of her viewing of the picture, from which two wealthy ambassadors are looking back at her, surrounded by a celestial globe, a portable sundial, a lute, flutes, a hymnbook. The point of failure appears at the bottom of the picture which appears as a transformed stain, completely irreconcilable with the painting, if looked at from the front. If, however, one looks at the picture askew, then one begins to see that the stain is, in fact, a skull staring at the spectator. In this way, the symbolic structure of the painting (wealth, life, power) is irreducibly cut through by the Real, the materiality of death and the inevitable decay, which 'reflects our own nothingness' (ibid., p. 92). The gaze is not equivalent with the Real, it only points to the Real. For Lacan the gaze is 'behind' the picture, in the sense that the skull fails to appear in plain view, and hence only 'encircles' the subversion and impossibility of the meaningful field:

> Lacan does not ask you to think of a gaze as belonging to an Other who cares about who or where you are, who pries, keeps tabs on your whereabouts, and takes note of all your steps and missteps, as the panoptic gaze is said to do. When you encounter the gaze of the Other, you meet not a seeing eye, but a blind one. (…) The horrible truth (…) is that *the gaze does not see you*. So if you are looking for confirmation of the truth of your being or the clarity of your vision, you are on your own; the gaze of the Other is not confirming; it will not validate you (Copjec, 1994, p. 36).

At the moment one sees the skull, one is confronted with an irreducible fissure in the symbolic field and the constitutive lack of subject, thus the 'moment of seeing' starts with losing the gaze. Similar to Holbein's picture, the dispositif of advanced marginality also appears as a solid meaningful totality in the first instance, but there is always a blurred stain on its geometrical organ, which cuts through it. Only with a slight shift in perspective could the rigorous modalities of the dispositif immediately appear as farce – as, for instance, how the apparently smooth and powerful local regime turns out to be scaffolded by pointless, incomprehensible and unnecessary bureaucratic paperwork.

Thus, the pedagogical aim of interrogating the points of failure of the dispositif was to loosen the gaze, and confront the teachers with the contingency of the construction of meaning in the hegemonic landscape, 'to allow us not to get rid of meaning but to see it as what it is...' (Žižek in Taylor, 2008). It is also the acknowledgment, again, of the *par excellence* pedagogical character of the dispositif of advanced marginality (the Real as impossibility). The dispositif, as I argued before, is not only *pedagogical* in its dominant modality but also *pedagogically*

meaningful for teacher education insofar as its symbolic field is ultimately dislocated, 'out-of-joint,' which is especially so in places of advanced marginality. There was also a need both in the ghetto school and on the side of the local NGO to foster a dialogue between the apparatuses:

[Géza, teacher]: The other thing is, that we should have some kind of relationship with the organizations involved in the child's education, that should be compulsory for them, because I'm sick of seeing that little Gizi [a student] coming in with such a belly, and only then I see, that she is pregnant.

[Bori]: Yes, that's right!

[Pál]: The guy is in jail anyway.

[Géza]: Is he in jail now?

[Pál]: Yeah, the girls reported him.

(…)

[Ágnes, social worker]: It would be good if there was a relationship with the school and someone could coordinate it.

[Alíz, social worker]: They might be more open with the new director.

During the working group meetings, the teachers had the chance to directly confront the symbolic structure of the dispositif and its dislocated, conflictual character. The discussions and conflicts throughout the seven meetings were structured around the predicament of the ghetto, the possible outcomes of an eviction and the limited potential of the school to help those children who will lose their homes.

[Olga, the director of the other school in the neighborhood, FIDESZ representative]: I have a belief, that it [the eviction] will be better for everyone. So far, for those who have moved out, it is already better. We should be crying that we had let the situation intact there for decades.

[Péter]: If they have to move to the countryside, then the story is over for them.

[Olga]: They may end up in the countryside, but they may end up in a good situation in the countryside. It may well be, that they end up, as you have said. That they will not be accepted, and parents will not get a job. This can also happen.

[Ágnes, social worker]: Ridiculous…

(…)

[Bori]: May I…? I know the kids from the ghetto, and as a teacher, knowing their predicament, I have to say that I am happy that the ghetto is going to be finally demolished. Because poverty is conserved here and centralized, these are the problems, and they are getting deeper and deeper, these families, and these kids cannot escape from it in any way. So, I think it's time to get rid of the ghetto… we cannot teach in the school precisely because of it.

[Pál]: Well, seriously? I do not know Bori… I see a very serious pedagogical responsibility here, so that I think it's a traumatic experience for the children, to demolish this whole place where they live… so for them it's a big drama and this, I think, should be taken into account pedagogically here…

[Bori]: Well, I do not know if it's a trauma. I do not know whether it's traumatic.

[Vera]: Juli [a student] said that she feels really bad, for example.

[Alíz, social worker]: Pisti said, that they ruined his life.

[Olga]: I refuse this.

(…)

[Magda]: Look, I care about the future of the kids. So, what is the opportunity of a family? They have no place to move to. They will start moving from place to place. This is a bad thing for a kid, and also only a few of them will stay at our school.

[LMP representative]: Well, so, caring for the kids would be the most important thing, but the trouble is that it is so diverse and it has to cover so many places…

[Feri]: So where would they go if they have to move out?

The teachers of the ghetto school started to take the environment of the school more and more seriously into account. They not only learned about the researcher's perspective of the neighborhood (the presentation of the sociologists about their research in the ghetto), but they also started to get a sense of the modalities of the dispositif of the ghetto and how the conflictual character of the hegemonic field is constituted between the apparatuses. The most talkative sign
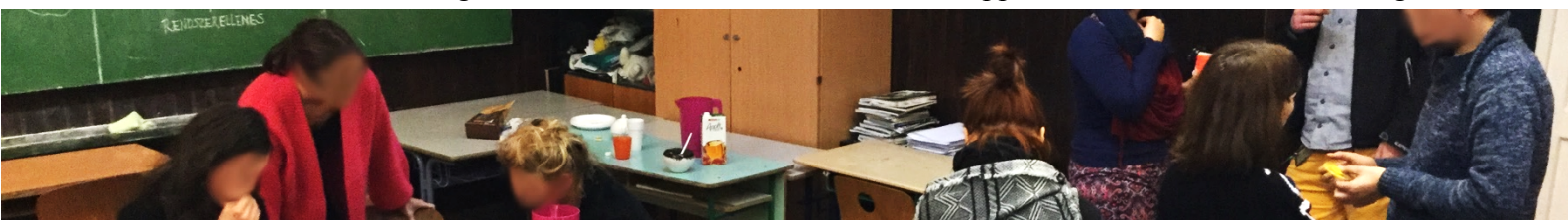
of it was the emerging commitment and engagement of the teachers who participated in the working group. Almost all of them started to build personal contacts with the local NGO, and they started to visit the ghetto by themselves. They even started to participate at the self-organizing forum of the residents in the ghetto, in the activities of the NGO, and some of them even joined a protest in front of the municipality. I argue that the dispositif is a fulcrum of transformative teacher learning *in potentia*, already in this sense. But, maybe even more importantly, through the working group meetings, *via* constituting a conflictual field within the school, the teachers had the possibility to confront the points of failure of the ghetto school, i.e., how it is inscribed into the dispositif as constitutive part of its gaze (the point of failure).

One of these points of failure of the school (which is again not the failure of the school in the first instance but a 'failure in advance' in its structural position) is what I called the accumulation of pedagogical instability, which not only exposes the teachers to the ideological mechanism of the temptation of meaning, but the parents as well. As Alacsony and Földesi (2016) argue in their research of the ghetto, the parents from the neighborhood are dedicated to this school, because they also attended it, but they regard it as a 'bad' or 'weak' school.

Paradoxically, however, this is also a reason for not taking their children to other schools, because the parents assume, their child wouldn't meet the expectations of a 'better' institution:

> [Klára, a parent]: I disagree with this school.
>
> [Péter]: Sorry, but with what?
>
> [Klára]: With the lack of learning. The learning of the children. This is not a good system.
>
> [Feri]: You haven't seen it, yet.
>
> [Klára]: I want to tell you, I've already told Pál, too. There is no system.
>
> [Péter]: There is a system…
>
> [Me]: Let Klára talk!
>
> [Klára]: Yes, let me tell you! Here the children do not learn anything. The kid comes to the school to learn. For example, my daughter is in the 6th class, and she doesn't know what the capital of Hungary is. I mean it's nonsense.
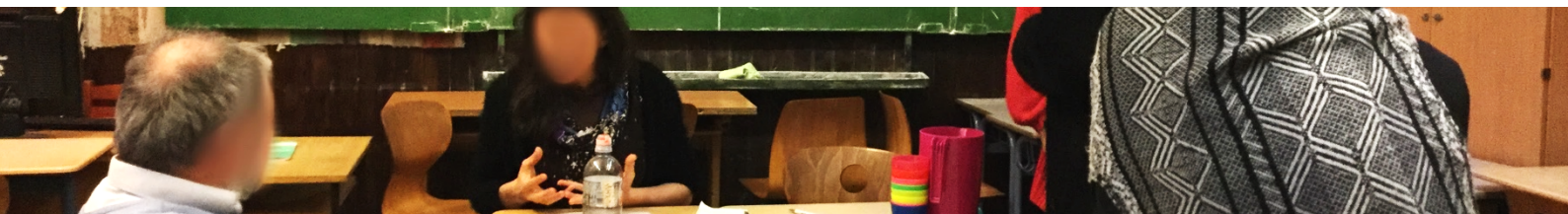>
> [Magda]: With which class were you satisfied?
>
> [Klára]: I tell you, the first class. There is a system.
>
> [Feri]: The countries are taught in fourth grade. Maybe there was a party at home the previous night, or a police control in the ghetto or something and they couldn't join the class.
>
> [Klára]: Come on, the responsibility is not on the side of the child!
>
> [Pál]: Of course not.

> [Péter]: This school was an asylum always. That is why we are trying to use such alternative methods…
>
> [Klára]: I also attended this school, but there was learning.

Then, another point of structural failure is that the accumulation of pedagogical instability ends up in strengthening the traditional frameworks of the institution and the development of disciplinary techniques, against which the teachers were very often alleged.

> [Alíz, social worker]: So, we see that the situation is tough, but the kid you kicked out is bumping around the ghetto the whole day. What can we do with this?
>
> [Péter]: The first and most important thing is not to get into this game, that it's our responsibility. It's the boy's responsibility to be dismissed. We told him everything. We told him why he was disciplined. I tried to help him, but we cannot save everyone. Please, let's not get into this game…
>
> [Alíz]: Good…
>
> [Péter]: … he acts like a poor little boy, kicked out of school, who has nowhere to go.
>
> [Alíz]: I did not mean that.
>
> [Péter]: I know you did not mean that.

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[Pál]: I'm sad because of this. He was one of my favorites. We tried to help him, and we just asked him not to ruin the relationship.

[Ágnes, social worker]: First of all, the question is what kind of responsibility do you expect from a child? So, you talk about this little boy, how much is he? nine or ten?, as if he would be an adult. As a volunteer, I also have the experience that when I visit the ghetto, children do not behave as I would expect. And when I go home, I think about it. How could you expect a child from such difficult circumstances to behave like yours or mine?

Confronting such a point of structural failure of the school can effectively show how the way one formulates a problem can be already a part of the problem itself: i.e., how the assumption, that the dismissal of a student can be a solution for a point of failure of the school, is already a part of this point of failure as such. Finally, there is a point of structural failure to which I referred as the 'last fortress'. The ghetto school is like a safety net, which catches the children of the poor dropped-out from the coordinates of the society, but at the same time this is often the most it can do. Moreover, usually there is no way further or deeper for these students, besides completely dropping out from the educational system.

[Géza]: By landing in this school, he reached the end. There is no way further.

[Péter]: But there is a point when you have to let it go.

[Vera]: I agree with the idea of Ágnes, and what Alíz said, that we often have such unrealistic expectations in the school. Here, this family was faced with the possibility to go to another institution 200 kilometers away, which possibility they refused quite understandably. But to say that they don't live up to their opportunities, is quite harsh, like when it's said that your destiny is in your hands.

[Péter]: These are very rough comparisons, let's not start to play this game.

[Vera]: But now I just say it, as an analogy.

[Rozi]: But I just want to confirm, that what Alíz said is true, that children are treated as adults, on the same level with parents.

[Pál]: The school maybe puts unrealistic expectations on the children. I do not think we have to understand that it is impossible to meet these expectations, but that it is unrealistic from the point of view, that there is an abyss between our demands and the child's situation. And sometimes, even if you really want to, it's insurmountable.

[Ágnes]: That's right.

[Péter]: Yes.

[Klára]: Think about what a conflict this is for the student. There is a norm here, but also at home.

In sum, I argue that hitting on the conflictual, hegemonic structure of the discursive field, getting a sense of how the dispositif of the ghetto is structured, and confronting the points of structural failures of the dispositif (and also the school as a part of it) was not only conducive to fostering the engagement of the teachers with the deadlocks, parallaxes, and impossibilities

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of the dispositif, but also made it possible to see the picture as a picture in Wittgensteinian, or 'to allow us not to get rid of meaning but to see it as what it is' in Žižekian, i.e., a site of struggle for the fixation of meaning and power, where the question is – as Humpty Dumpty said – 'which meaning is to be the master.' That is the field of the *political* for Laclau, and as I argued before, the *pedagogical* is irreducibly cut through by the political, even if it is disavowed. The leader of the Methodist Church, that was the owner of the ghetto school argued similarly.

> [Me]: In this book, edited for the 75th birthday of Miklós Bárdos, I read that 'to be a Christian is actually a political activity. Not on the side of a party, but on the side of the Eternal, for whose case, one must struggle in the eternal now, one must engage in political activity.' Do you think this is the school's job as well?
>
> [Methodist Pastor]: The question is always what we mean by the word 'political'. Because it can mean so many things. When it comes to politics, everyone starts to think about this and that party. It should be forgotten. Everyone engages in political activity.
>
> [Me]: Now, demolishing the ghetto is on the agenda of the local government. The situation of many families became quite risky. Obviously, a lot of people will end up on the streets. And this school is affected to a large extent. Do you think that the school has a task in this situation?
>
> [Methodist Pastor]: Obviously! A teacher is the teacher of the society as well. He teaches not only the children. 'I will educate all of my people!' Another question is whether there is any chance. I would definitely want to talk to the director of the school, to arrange meetings with parents, organizations, party representatives, and discuss what is going on.
>
> [Me]: We're already doing this.
>
> [Methodist Pastor]: Seriously? So, you have to get close to the case, however, it is not easy to get close to the ghetto nowadays. Neither entering it and nor getting out of there.

9.5 The Courage of Hopelessness

As the Methodist pastor pointed out, the question is *whether there is any chance* through the school's engagement with the political. Whether there is at least a minimum possibility for hope. But what I tried to illuminate by situating the school as part of the dispositif of advanced marginality is precisely that the chances of education, the transformative potential of education is extremely limited in places of urban poverty. A few months after finishing the research, the Gypsy settlement in Poland was demolished, evicting and displacing dozens of Gypsy families living in extreme poverty. The hybrid ghetto in Hungary is under the process of eviction which the local government plans to finish by the end of 2019, in order to demolish the buildings and 'revitalize' the area. This is the extent to which there is hope in any sense. As Zsuzsa Ferge, Hungarian sociologist, argued recently: '[w]hat we see, and a lot of research point it out, is that hope disappeared for the poorer strata of the societies. There is no hope that their children will

ever get out of this situation. The maximum they can hope for is auxiliary work, jobs in the black market, part-time labor, under completely precarious conditions' (2018, translation mine). Regarding the potentiality of education Ágnes Kende (2018) concludes with a similarly pessimistic tone:

> It is clear from the studies analyzing the school failures of Gypsy children that, without structural changes, it is impossible for institutions to operate differently, and within this institutional environment, teachers will not be able in themselves to compensate for the dysfunctions of the system (ibid., p. 158, translation mine).

Thus, I assume, that the 'real chances' of education is not a question, or not the right question anymore for a critical pedagogy. As Žižek argued in a lecture,

> the task of philosophy is not to provide answers, but to show how the way we perceive a problem can be itself part of a problem. Mystifying it instead of enabling us to solve it. There are not only wrong answers, there are also wrong questions. These wrong questions are what we call ideology (2011b).

In postmodern global capitalism, these wrong questions are tightly connected to hope, that is, however, disappearing both for the Real class and for education as well. In this sense, the hopes planted in transformative education turn out to be part of the problem it intends to 'transform'. Freirean critical pedagogy, for instance, is based on hope *per se*: 'The dehumanization resulting from an unjust order is not a cause for despair but for hope. (…) As long as I fight, I am moved by hope. (…) [D]ialogue cannot be carried on in a climate of hopelessness' (Freire, 1970/1993, pp. 91–92). However, from the ideologico-critical point of view, it seems like hope became the basic *form* of the opiatic illusions of global capitalism. While according to the myth, where only Hope was left within the jar from which Pandora released the evils of humanity, in postmodern global capitalism one could add that nowadays everyone owns this jar as a commodity, with only Hope left in it, with which we can sustain the unbearable reality. As the French anarchist group, the Invisible Committee put it,

> Hope, that very slight but constant impetus toward tomorrow that is communicated to us day by day, is the best agent of the maintenance of order. We're daily informed of problems we can do nothing about, but to which there will surely be solutions tomorrow. The whole oppressive feeling of powerlessness that this social organization cultivates in everyone is only an immense pedagogy of waiting. It's an avoidance of now. (…) The current disaster is like a monstrous accumulation of all the deferrals of the past, to which are added those of each day and each moment, in a continuous time slide (2017, pp. 10–11).

In his book *The Courage of Hopelessness* (2017d)*,* Žižek argues that all the great revolutions in the past were fueled not by hope in the first instance, but they had to go through a zero level of hopelessness, confronting an ultimate impossibility, a deadlock of the situation.

Only when a political future is held open it is possible to change the fundamental coordinates of the games of power and language.

> Giorgio Agamben said in an interview that 'thought is the courage of hopelessness.' (…) The true courage is not to imagine an alternative, but to accept the consequences of the fact that there is no clearly discernible alternative: the dream of an alternative is a sign of theoretical cowardice, functioning as a fetish that prevents us from thinking through to the end the deadlock of our predicament. In short, the true courage is to admit that the light at the end of the tunnel is probably the headlight of another train approaching us from the opposite direction (ibid., p. 9).

For pedagogy, and especially for critical pedagogy, such a theoretical ground is quite dangerous considering the incredible amount of hope that is constitutive of the pedagogical in general. But weren't the seeds of hopelessness already constitutive elements of the ghetto school in Hungary, at least for a few teachers? Aren't those melancholic subjectivities, characterized by the outrageously calm acceptance of the school's predicament, tickling the roots of hopelessness? With regards to Lars von Trier's respective movie, Žižek claims that it is an optimistic film. And, I argue cautiously, that tickling the roots of hopelessness is an optimistic practice. Melancholia is one of the 'gateway drugs' to transformative hopelessness.

> [I]f you really want to do something good for society, if you want to avoid all totalitarian threats and so on, (…) we should all go to this, let me call it – although I'm a total materialist – fundamentally spiritual experience of accepting (...) that at any point the end may be near. I think that, quite on the contrary of what may appear, this can be a deep experience which pushes you to strengthen ethical activity. The result of this experience is not, 'Oh, the end may be near, so let's kill, let's just enjoy,' and so on. No, it's the opposite (Žižek, 2012).

One of the teachers came up with an almost similar style of thinking during one of the working group meetings that we organized with a coach for institutions. She articulated her concerns with regards to the ghetto, and her relation toward its apparently helpless situation.

> [Ilona]: This is strong now, this feeling of hopelessness and insecurity. And we should accept that…Where am I in this whole picture? How am I hopeless? Have I had a similar experience so far? What is my role in the predicament of the [ghetto]? Can I save everyone? These are very important considerations.

These are indeed important considerations, and not completely unknown to pedagogy. Critical education scholar Wayne Ross, drawing also on Agamben's idea, translates 'the courage of hopelessness' to the field of education.

> It is crucial for educators to engage students in learning about our world in ways that are realistic, [which] should not take the form of the false hope that is embedded in the tired tropes of democracy and freedom that only exist in social studies textbooks and other propaganda outlets. (...) To teach now as we

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think we should teach in defiance of all that is bad in the society (and schools), is to be courageous in the face of hopelessness (Ross, 2016, pp. 79–80).

As I argued, the working group meetings were transformative *in potentia* with regards to revealing the structuration of the dispositif of the ghetto, its points of structural failures and fostering teachers' engagement with the social environment. But in a limited way, these meetings and the practices that emerged from them were also conducive to introducing cracks into the fantasy-scenarios characteristic to the Symbolic and Imaginary classes (to which teachers belong), which more and more take the illusory form of hope. The ideologico-critical process, which introduces cracks into illusory hopes hits on the ultimately dislocated character of the social and diverts the subject's attention from the temptation of meaning, the quest for answers, and shows 'how the way we perceive a problem can be itself part of a problem.' It brings the inconsistencies, antagonisms, and contradictions of the social into focus without the temptation of providing quick answers or an ultimate solution. The ideologico-critical act is registering these cracks and insisting on them by refusing the prefabricated fantasy-scenarios of capitalist realism for instance. One of the most liberating examples of this happened after I finished my research in the ghetto school. The local NGO organized a conference about the future of the ghetto and they invited the members of the working group – me as well. After the presentations of the sociologists, policy experts and social workers, we joined an open discussion with the teachers from the school. The discussion was dominated by legal and human rights discourses, and the policy experts tried to plant a zero level of hope in the audience. Even the most pessimistic comments ended with an uplifting or comforting summary, for which the social workers were especially grateful. Then I made a comment that escalated in a relatively dynamic debate, even the biggest Hungarian online portal published it in an article: *And what will happen after demolishing the most brutal ghetto of the city?* (Domschitz, 2018):

> [Me]: Hi, I'm Tamás Tóth, I conducted research in [the ghetto school]. There has been a lot of discussion so far quite rightly about the fact that the eviction of the ghetto involves an ad hoc task from us, social work must be done, legal assistance is important. But a little bit referring to the dimension of structural critique, there is a pretty serious politico-economic thread here. The problems of [the ghetto] are not only those concentrated issues that we experience directly every day, but also a series of social struggles is concentrated there, a systematic campaign against the Gypsies, ranging from class struggle to making the rural population starve, and so on. From this point of view, it seems to me that there is a political task, and my question is whether there is an organization or anybody who would deal with it or if we have to count on it, if there will be a political resistance. What are your predictions?
>
> [Sociologist 1]: Well, I think these people are in a very vulnerable situation. I'm not a really politically

motivated soul, but I do not think that in this [ghetto] you can fight class struggle and the struggle of the Roma, the poor and the disabled and any. At least I would not agree with that. These people need specific, targeted help here and, in addition, they do not have much chance of ending up in a much better position. Here, my aim would be not letting their situation get worse. (...) We have to provide realistic, down-to-Earth alternatives and true, honest alternatives. So, you can manage the situation. Sorry.

Then the director of the ghetto school, Péter raised his hand, and made a comment that I consider as one of the very few pedagogical successes of my research, that is the courage as present in the articulatory practice of the subject to confront the insurmountable deadlock and impossibility of a situation, the irreducible inconsistency of a social predicament:

[Péter]: I'm the director of the [ghetto school] and we work with Tamás. I would like to return to what he just said, it is a very important thing. And I'm not sure, you understand exactly what he means. I've been working with him for several months now, and he's doing a very serious helping activity in our institution. I'll try to say, what he said in other words. There is a huge dilemma here. There is no poverty today in Hungary, according to the central command of the regime. Actually, social workers are considered as injured people, who do not find their place in the world and therefore seek a poor person to fulfil themselves. This is the official discourse. What can we do as compared to this? We adapt to situations. So, we provide practical help in our institution, where many children from [the ghetto] are learning. These children get regular care, free meals, food can be taken home from the school. We also take their further education very seriously, we take them out to institutions, we introduce them to the directors, I just list it, I do not want to tell the whole story. But with this, and here comes our dilemma, that Tamás referred to, by doing this we also help in maintaining this whole system. Whatever we are talking about, by not letting the hands of these 40-50 children, we help this system. This is also a helping hand to those schools, that the local government favors. Which the local government likes and to which it refers as the 'honorary schools.' These are honorary schools, because their kids end up in our institution. If we won't have educational researchers, who would come to work without asking for money, and work with a whole class, we would be in complete lack of teaching force. Uncle Tamás manages a whole class alone sometimes, and it is a terribly hard work, but once again I say, underlining it, that we maintain the existence of this one-dimensional system. And I complain that while in the United States, in the center of capitalism, the young college students are all leftists, and they read volumes from Marx, early Marx... I do not want to say that we have to look for the future in Marxism, but it is a sign that we have no political philosophy, and we only do our practical work and actually contribute to something systemic. I know this is a well-intentioned contribution. We want to take care of the kids. But I'm saying that Tamás's idea must be addressed. Because, in Hungary, there may be a strong group who represents the poor, and maybe it is only me who doesn't see it. But maybe I see, since I'm a disillusioned man.

[Sociologist 2]: I'm very happy to have these two comments. If there is a specific situation, where people are very vulnerable or are in an existentially vulnerable position, then a political ideology cannot be the main consideration. And one cannot ignore that there is a big shift in their lives. But it cannot be limited

to solving the practical situation. That's why I'm glad that it came up because the two directions, in an ideal world, would work together and move together.

[Ágnes, leader of the local NGO]: I understand Péter and Tamás as well. We are part of a social action group that is now organized by [the school] and we are always happy to go there. On the one hand, because of such thoughts, and because we can agree. What I say is that the cooperation in these processes may lead us somewhere. I remember a quote from Bibó, but I cannot recall it. It is quite similar to our conversation… the social actors in the homeless care system were arguing with each other, whether the social workers shall maintain the current system. And obviously, Bibó said, that this system should not be helped and maintained; somehow it is necessary to move forward.

* * *

There are two basic assertions I want to emphasize with regards to the ghetto school. First, its structural location in the dispositif of the ghetto, as a 'last fortress,' in the margins of the institutional structure, and beyond the margins of the 'society' can be seriously considered as its positive condition. On the one hand it is the last protective environment for the children of the Real class – an island, where it is still possible to be a child. Even if sometimes I was extremely critical with the school, it is so important to acknowledge the potentiality of small, particular practices.

One of the teachers created a small resting corner for instance. She started from the assumption that the kids might not have a bed at home, and there they could lay down for an hour and sleep in peace. These are important things. One day the children made a cake for the birthday of one of their classmates. He never had such an experience. These are small things, but in the ghetto school these are miraculous events. For instance, to find a treatment for head-lice that has no smell, since children are often not treated due to the smell of the chemical. On the other hand, the separation and detachment of the ghetto school is also a condition of possibility of its transformative potentiality, to open up the world and expose the students to the risk of education.

As one of the teachers pointed to it beautifully:

[Rozi]: I think the basis of pedagogy is questioning. Not that you as a teacher tell that 'this is this' and 'that is that', but you ask and you might get a lot of things out of it you haven't thought of. (…) I don't want our children to get stuck in the consciousness that they are poor, I want them to open up, work, ask questions and stretch the system to its breaking point.

I assert, that this understanding of the transformative potentiality of education is also true in terms of teacher education. Confronting the deadlocks, impossibilities and inconsistencies of the symbolic field can unlock and liberate the world for the teachers as well. Not by overcoming the insurmountable gaps, or suturing the cracks in the meaningful field, but by encountering and 'standing by' its deadlocks and impossibilities. I want to argue in the following, concluding part, that confronting the 'Real as impossibility' – i.e., that there is no big Other – implies a transformative potentiality in teacher education (and in education in general), as it leaves a political future open.

TUCHÉ

THE REPRESSED OF PEDAGOGY

10 CONCLUDING REMARKS

'There is no big Other'

Pedagogy is dead, but it doesn't know it.

Looking merely at the promising titles of current articles and books in the field of education, one finds a recurring syntax: the pedagogy of (games, poverty, logic, silence), education for (justice, struggle, resistance). The problem with this logical structure, and what this syntax itself captures in advance, is that the style of thinking in the field of education is structured around what is (and what shall be) in parentheses, and not around education *per se*, and even less around the *educational* and the *pedagogical* in education. One of my favorite exercises is to reverse this syntax, and I assert that with this reversal we arrive at more profound and more interesting themes: e.g. the poverty of pedagogy, struggle for education. The question here is whether it is possible to talk about education educationally or pedagogically in the first instance (and not only politically, sociologically, economically). Because being superimposed by a central theme (that is something different than education), the pedagogical becomes repressed, unconscious, as if someone had turned Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/1993) upside down: *The Oppressed of Pedagogy*, or to make it sound more psychoanalytic *The Repressed of Pedagogy*. But what precisely is repressed?

I argued before that the *par excellence* pedagogical question regarding the *telos* of education has been disavowed in the midst of complex hegemonic struggles over the apparatus and discourse of education. But there is another side of this repression, which is perhaps even more deeply disavowed. As Michel Foucault (1983) has stated: 'People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does' (ibid., p. 187). Hence, I argue that the repressed, the unconscious of pedagogy is not only its *telos* (knowing why, for what sake we do what we do), but also knowing what *what we do does*. While the former is possible to know (I can be fully aware of pedagogical aims and goals), the latter is impossible due to the contingent, historical and ultimately dislocated character of the social and the subject as well. From the perspective of the political theory of hegemony, pedagogical intrusions into the social through subjectification are not predetermined and are not limited by any preceding necessity, and the pedagogical always thrives against a political future held open. This is what Biesta encapsulates with the title of his book *The Beautiful Risk of Education* (2013), where he argues against the contemporary strong expectations for a predictable and risk-free education, and promotes a weak conception of education that is unpredictable, uncertain, held open and hence risky: 'the weakness of

education should *not* be seen as a problem that needs to be overcome, but should rather be understood as the very "dimension" that makes educational processes and practices *educational*' (ibid., p. x). The educational unfolds within the ultimately dislocated character of the social as an intrusion into an unknown political future that is held open. However, the dominant conceptualizations of education are based on much stronger expectations. Gert Biesta and Carl Anders Säfström argue in their *A Manifesto for Education* (2011), that there is on the one hand a 'populist' attack against education, which depicts education as a one-dimensional, straightforward process, which only needs to be managed and ordered by teachers according to scientific knowledge about 'what works'. On the other hand, there is an 'idealist' attack on education, which imposes overwhelming expectations about what education should deliver:

> Here education is linked up with projects such as democracy, solidarity, inclusion, tolerance, social justice and peace, even in societies marked by deep social conflict or war. Education never seems to be able to live up to such expectations and is thus constantly being manoeuvred into a position of defence (Biesta & Säfström, 2011, p. 540)

I'm tempted to read this analysis of Biesta and Säfström from the perspective of the Lacanian orders of reality. Isn't their distinction between the populist and idealist approach to education analytically similar to what we could consider as the Imaginary and the Symbolic registers of education? The Imaginary register (the conservative-corporatist register, that is the place for fullness and totality constituted by fantasy-scenarios) can be characterized by a wide spectrum of educational fantasies: the medieval imaginaries of pre-given transcendental values that can only be accepted; the Herbartian phantasm of 'good' secular morality; some of the alternative threads of education (especially Steiner) emphasizing the inner fullness of the child; and also the contemporary neoconservative and neoliberal mantras combined with a scientific apparatus for defining 'what works'. The Symbolic register of education on the other hand (the antagonistic-revolutionary register, that is the place for difference and displacement) is analytically similar to what Biesta and Säfström referred as 'idealism,' and a variété of approaches to the conflictual field of the social belong here: democratic education, inclusion, multicultural education, social justice education, LGBTQIA+ education, citizenship education, global education, critical education, socialist education, and so on. In sum, while the Imaginary register of education focuses on 'what is' (of the society, of the child, etc.), the Symbolic register of education is concerned with 'what is not yet' (radical plural democracy, socialism, global social justice). In both cases,

education loses its interest in freedom, it loses its interest in an 'excess' that announces something new and unforeseen. (…) The solution for this, however, is not to put education under the aegis of the 'what is not'. If we go there, we tie up education with utopian dreams. To keep education away from pure utopia is not a question of pessimism but rather a matter of not saddling education with unattainable hopes that defer freedom rather than making it possible in the here and now (ibid., p. 541).

Thus, the result of the illusory hopes in education is 'an immense pedagogy of waiting' (cf. Comité Invisible, 2017), which not only loses the moment (now, now and now) from sight, but also forces education and the School into a position of defense as constantly failing to deliver both 'what is' and 'what is not yet'.[84] Hence, Biesta and Säfström argue that the theoretico-practical place proper to an *educational* conception 'in the tension between "what is" and "what is not" (…) rather than as an endless repetition of what already is or as a march towards a predetermined future that may never arrive' (ibid., p. 542). Placing the educational within this tension is to take the historical and contingent character of the social seriously, to keep the educational open to events, to risking the unknown-possible – in Lacanian, *to confront and come to terms with the Real*.

My central thrust throughout this research has been structured around how the transformative, ideologico-critical potential of confronting the traumatic Real can be meaningful for teachers, as opposed to Imaginary fantasy-scenarios and Symbolic hopes and utopian dreams regarding education. I started with the assumption that organizing household visits with the teachers in the Gypsy settlement would be conducive to confronting the Real. But, as I argued, the heterotopia of advanced marginality (the ghetto, the settlement, the Real as extimacy) is crisscrossed with ideological fantasies channeled through their respective dispositif to such a large extent, that it made both household visits and the intrusion into the Real impossible. Drawing on this experience and the empirical 'excesses' of the research I started to consider the dispositif of advanced marginality – i.e. the very hegemonic-discursive landscape through which ideological fantasies and hegemonic articulations are conducted – itself as educationally meaningful for teachers' transformative learning. I tried to foster teachers' engagement in mapping the discursive landscape of the dispositif that is radically cut through with its inconsistencies, absurdities, nonsenses, bizarre jokes, antagonisms, cracks and points of failures. This ideologico-critical thrust of confronting the teachers with the traumatic

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[84] Moreover, this failure functions as an invitation for other academic disciplines to solve the problem of the educational impotence. It is not surprising at all, that the theoretical field of education is dominated *not* by education, but by sociology, psychology, economics, etc.

Real contained a theoretico-practical commitment to public pedagogy with the assertion that the dispositif of advanced marginality is pedagogically meaningful for teacher education. But in what sense is it a commitment to 'public pedagogy'? On the one hand, in the sense of how Giroux understands public pedagogy, namely as a critico-pedagogical engagement with the immediate social environment of the school, which environment in itself resounds global mechanisms of structural oppression that has to be contested and in the contestation of which critical pedagogues have a significant role. This is one account of public pedagogy that Biesta (2012a) calls 'a pedagogy *of the public*', a critical praxis similar to Freire's concept of *conscientização*, distinguished from what Biesta proposes, that is an account of public pedagogy, which

> appears as an enactment of a concern for 'publicness' or 'publicity', that is a concern for the public quality of human togetherness and thus for the possibility of actors and events to *become public*. (…) In this interpretation the educational agent – the public pedagogue – is neither an instructor nor a facilitator but rather someone who *interrupts*. (…) The aim of such interruptions is not to teach actors what they should be, nor to demand a particular kind of learning, but to keep open the opportunities for becoming public (…), to keep open the possibility of a space where freedom can appear (Biesta, 2012a, p. 693)

Public pedagogy understood as a pedagogy of the public is concerned with the ideologico-critical potential of education for demystifying relations of domination, it is, however, (at least as it is understood by Freire, Giroux, McLaren, etc.) based on traditional accounts of ideology criticism (i.e., the accounts related to false consciousness). But as I tried to argue, interpretive demystification is constrained in postmodern global capitalism to a large extent by ideological fantasies, and ideological mystification can be effective regardless of what the subject 'knows'. The working group meetings that I organized in Hungary were based on this acknowledgement, and the form of these meetings were analytically closer to the account of public pedagogy that Biesta advocates, namely an enactment of publicness that I tried to realize through fostering a dialogical confrontation between teachers and other agents of the dispositif of the ghetto within the public space of the School. But how is such an account of public pedagogy educationally meaningful for teachers? While Biesta argues for an enactment of the publicness of human togetherness, I understand this account of public pedagogy in a different way, which can be characterized *via* two interconnected dimensions, both of which stand for an understanding of the educational as ideology criticism.

The first dimension is connected to the discursive account of the critique of ideology. I argued that teachers' confrontation with the dispositif can potentially illuminate how the wider hegemonic discursive landscape of the School is constituted as a heterogeneous collage of

floating/empty signifiers where the sedimentation of meaning, the totalization of certain nodal points, and other forms for mastering dislocation can result in cementing and fixing states of domination. This style of thinking is based on a discursive account of the Marxian 'demystification of domination', which I proposed in order to introduce an ethical matrix (the ethics of the Real) into Laclau's theory of hegemony, not merely for the sake of contributing to post-Marxist theory and releasing the normative deficit in the theory of hegemony, but also because an educational account of Laclau's theory needs an ethical 'directionality'. As Tomasz Szkudlarek argues, there is a need in Laclau's theory for a 'pedagogical fine-tuning' (cf. Szkudlarek, 2016b, 2016a): an educational account has to say something not only about the construction of meaning, but also about the particular meanings as such:

> The content also matters. It is not indifferent if empty signifiers used in the process evoke, through possible metonymic contiguities, fascist, liberal or socialist connotations. Laclau is very clear that the ontological by itself 'is not enough' to explain the process. (…) Whatever we decide in the domain of the political is not ontologically determined; we have to take responsibility for such decisions. Exactly the same pertains to education. If we are politically and pedagogically *responsible* for our investments, we should make them consciously. How do we distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' empty signifiers? Can we judge or evaluate them? (Szkudlarek, 2011, p. 124)

This is precisely the question I intended to deal with by elaborating a discursive account of domination and by connecting it to the critique of ideology within Laclau's theory, in order to 'contaminate' it with an ethical directionality. Such a 'contamination' can be useful for different accounts of the educational, which draw on the theory of hegemony as well (Snir, 2017; Wright, 2013). These accounts of the educational understand the educational in Laclau's theory as the articulatory practice of 'floating' or 'emptying' signifiers, with an emphasis on the contingent, historical and conflictual character of the social. In such conceptualizations, the educational can be understood as a journey across the discursive hegemonic landscape, a 'travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction', where approaching the same landmarks again and again from different directions allows for 'new sketches to be made' (Wittgenstein, 1986, p. V). I assume that the working group meetings in Hungary can also be understood as traveling through the discursive landscape which allowed for lighting-up different aspects of the picture, but also allowed for educating, restructuring the discursive landscape itself. The basic pedagogical relation in the educational confrontation with the discursive landscape is *questioning*. As Laclau puts it in a 1999 interview:

> I think questions do not operate as purely neutral, leaving the field of the answer entirely open; rather, questions operate in the sense of narrowing the field of the answer. So questioning is already the first step

in the organization of a discursive field. (…) [T]o create a culture of questions is absolutely important and is perhaps what distinguishes a dogmatic education or a dogmatic approach to any kind of social practice from a position which is not dogmatic, which is open. (…) This is important for democratic theory because questions can close a certain field, but they can also constitute a community which poses itself a set of problems while at the same time maintaining relatively open the fields of the answers (1999, p. 10).

But, again, I argue that there must be some minimum ethical criteria against which one can measure the construction of meaning. I argued, that there is an ideologico-critical moment when traveling through the discursive landscape *in potentia*, i.e., the demystification of domination, that is a confrontation with how a particular arrangement, totalization and detotalization, sedimentation and reactivation in the meaningful field can function effectively for fixing, cementing perpetually asymmetrical relations of power. *This ideologico-critical moment is the first step to constructing antagonism (struggle) through subversive meaning, that should be a central thrust for a critical pedagogy based on the theory of hegemony.* As Laclau argues in the same interview from 1999:

> In a situation in which emancipatory struggles start, there is always a whole transformation at the discursive level: you know how to handle a set of situations to which you didn't have access before. So discourses against oppression (…) are absolutely essential for any struggle against oppression. (…) In general, situations of oppression (…) are situations in which in some sense the (…) tools of liberation struggle – discourses - are not present. At the moment in which they start being present, we are in a situation in which oppression begins to be radically a question and in which different outcomes are possible (ibid., p. 8)

In sum, the first dimension of how I understand public pedagogy is based on a confrontation with the hegemonic discursive landscape with a focus on demystifying dominations by introducing an ideologico-critical moment to the discursive level, which is the domain of critical pedagogy, whose main interest within the theory of hegemony is structured around subversive signifiers.

The second dimension that characterizes my understanding of the educational character of public pedagogy is connected to a more primordial level of ideology criticism. While the previous dimension is based on the confrontation with the Symbolic and Imaginary orders, this second dimension draws attention to the educational potential of confronting the traumatic Real. On the one hand, it is the pedagogical dimension of coming to terms with the ultimately dislocated character of the social, and on the other hand it is the (also pedagogical) dimension – so important for teacher education – of confronting the *repressed of pedagogy* itself, to what Biesta referred as the irreducible tension between 'what is' and 'what is not', i.e. that education

is not predetermined and not limited by any preceding necessity, and the pedagogical always thrives against a political future held open. This double-edged weapon, which is both a confrontation with the Real, the open wound of the social (the lack around which the Symbolic is structured) and a confrontation with the repressed of pedagogy (its Real, that it is always structured around risking the impossible, i.e., an untouchable, unsignifiable, irreducible, unforeseen and unknown possibility) is what I tried to capture with the two faces of the gaze of the dispositif. On the one hand, the working group meetings in Hungary were pointing towards the illusion that the discursive landscape only appears as a solid meaningful totality and that there is always a blurred stain on its geometrical organ (as in Holbein's painting), a point of failure which radically cuts through it. On the other hand, even more importantly, these meetings also pointed to the dislocated character of education itself, not only of how the school is 'secretly' embedded in its respective dispositif as a point of failure, but also how *education is itself (and* par excellence*) out of joint*.

I argue that the zero-level ideologico-critical moment of transformative teacher education is the liberating experience of confronting the points of failure of education in fulfilling the spectacular desires that 'populist' and 'idealist' attacks depict on it (economic prosperity, upward mobility, quality and equity, the fullness of the society), of giving up false, fetishistic hopes that should not be constitutive elements of the educational, and finally, to come to terms with what is the traumatic Real of both the political and the pedagogical, namely, that *there is no big Other*. To put it simply, the big Other doesn't exist, it merely insists as an inconsistent, barred, purely virtual order, which guarantees the meaning, the consistency of the subject's practice. Beyond the symbolic canvas of fantasies and language, there is only a constitutive lack, an ontological void, which is so to say, 'positively charged'. In other words, the Lacanian formula, that 'there is no big Other' means, that

> there is no a priori formal structural schema exempt from historical contingencies – there are only contingent, fragile, inconsistent configurations. (…) For this reason, far from being opposed to historicity, the Real is its very 'ahistorical' ground, the a priori of historicity *itself*. (…) [T]he Real is neither pre-social nor a social effect – the point is, rather, that the Social itself is *constituted* by the exclusion of some traumatic Real. What is 'outside the Social' is not some positive a priori symbolic form/norm, merely its negative founding gesture itself (Žižek, 2000c, pp. 310–311).

The same holds for the pedagogical as well, that it circulates in the limbo between 'what is' and 'what is not' – its constitutive void is its interruption into an unknown, unforeseen political future that is held open. Confronting the Real of the pedagogical is not only a radical refusal of the populist temptation, of utopian idealism and of the belief that there is someone or

something in charge, but it is also a liberating experience, which, I propose, is the zero-level ideologico-critical moment in teacher education:

> far from signaling any kind of closure which constrains the scope of the subject's intervention in advance, the bar of the Real is Lacan's way of asserting the terrifying abyss of the subject's ultimate and radical *freedom*, the freedom whose space is sustained by the Other's inconsistency and lack (Žižek, 2000b, p. 258).

This traumatic abyss is also a sign for the radical freedom of the pedagogical, which can be confronted and to which confrontation Lacan referred as a *tuché – 'the encounter with the real'* (1998a, p. 53), *which in education means coming to terms with the point of indetermination of the pedagogical.* This in itself anticipates a shift in the role of the teacher, who, by becoming 'ill' with the Real, and facing the repressed register of pedagogy, can enact what might be Real (impossible, provoking, shocking, untouchable, unforeseen) to the students. If I may risk an analogy between teaching praxis and the praxis of the Lacanian analyst, then the teacher's role, being 'ill' with the Real, is to enact what Lacanians call a 'therapeutic traumatization' (cf. Cauwe, Vanheule, & Desmet, 2017) of the student, that is a practice inherent to, but also beyond and behind the process of signification and meaning making in education. In this sense, the teachers' role as compared to the analyst's would be to 'help to discover the non-sense and contingence at the heart of meaning and to find a way of dealing with this non-sense (…) [the teacher is] one incarnation of this Real presence: an odd and provoking figure' (ibid., pp. 24-26). The 'Lacanian teacher' is hence someone who dares to be an 'adult' and accepts the difficult yet liberating challenge of the abyss that opens between 'what is' and 'what is not' in order to stand for the students beyond signification as a disturbing, floating question mark or a subversive element. I assert, that this is the domain proper for education understood as subjectification (cf. Biesta, 2015), that is not only putting the young into the world (socialization), but also '*displacing* the young from their milieux (to *educe* means *to draw out*) and prepare them not only for the worlds that are, but for those that ought to be as well' (Szkudlarek, 2013a, p. 67).

This is a very similar conception as compared to Biesta's weak conception of the teacher, which he characterized with the formula of 'being taught by' as opposed to 'learning from'. In it, the teacher is not a resource for learning, but the enactment of an uncertain, contingent subjectivity that allows for embracing the unforeseen yet possible:

> [T]o learn from someone is a radically different experience from the experience of being taught by someone. When we think, just at the level of 'everyday phenomenology,' of experiences where we were taught something (…) we more often than not refer to experiences where someone showed us something

or made us realize something *that really entered our being from the outside.* Such teachings often provide insights about ourselves and our ways of doing and being – insights that we were not aware of or rather did not want to be aware of. They are inconvenient truths… (Biesta, 2013, p. 53).

This is very similar to the Lacanian approach to being confronted with a radical 'outside' *through* 'a model of subjectivity that enables traumatic knowledge to be registered' (D. Cho, 2007, p. 704). Hence, the pedagogical can be understood as a form of subjectification which is both therapeutic and traumatic, *wherein the subject is thrown in at the deep end of its own constitutive lack.* Against the classic accounts of critical pedagogy (see for example Freire, 1970/1993; Hill, 2012; Mclaren, 2000; Mclaren & Kincheloe, 1998) which advocate action and reflection through which students can reorganize and reinterpret knowledge in order to acquire a critical consciousness of the prevailing structures, Chris McMillan argues that a Lacanian-Žižekian account of pedagogy offers 'more disruptive' trajectories, since – as I also argued before – critical interpretation of knowledge is not a guarantee for a change in practice (ideological mystification can be effective regardless of what the subject 'knows'):

> [N]ew knowledge may be able to be integrated into the self without the radical transformation of the learner: it is only engagement with the void of subjectivity, or that which is impossible within a discursive position, that produces the possibility of such a radical pedagogical act. (…) [A] Žižekian mode of pedagogy rejects the suturing role of discursive 'answers' through an insistence upon the disruptive element of that which becomes impossible within a learner's conception of the Other: a pedagogy of the impossible (McMillan, 2015, pp. 546–548).

With regards to the student, a 'pedagogy of the impossible' is based on subjectification *qua* confrontation not only with the inconsistent, barred big Other (barred A̶), but also with the subject's own inconsistency (barred $): namely that any attempt – symbolic or imaginary – for constituting the Self, the illusory wholeness of a narrative 'I' is structured around an irreducible lack, that *is* the subject. For Lacan, the subject is divided not between different identifications (between something and something), rather it emerges as a failure of identification (it is ultimately divided between *something* and *nothing*). In sum, the Lacanian decentered subject doesn't mean a fragmented multiplicity of 'Selves', but that these identifications are 'like the layers of an onion: there is nothing in the middle, and the subject is this "nothing" itself' (Žižek, 1997b, p. 181). The subject has only symbolic (language) or imaginary (fantasy) means to transcend this gap, which ultimately fails.

I assert that there is a profoundly liberating pedagogical moment in such a traumatic encounter with our *irreducible incompleteness* (barred subject) and with that *we are completely alone* (barred Other – i.e., there is no big Other). I also argue, that this Lacanian pedagogical

moment is almost completely aligned with the central argument of Masschelein and Simons regarding the School:

> School starts from the assumption there is no destination, no natural relation to future or that it is not given by 'nature' what we will become. The consequence is that school can question all social privileges or any so-called natural order or hierarchy, and therefore the attempts of the elites to neutralize school, similar to neutralizing democracy. (…) [T]here is really nowhere written where we have to end up. Human beings have to find their own ways (Masschelein and Simons in Bernardo & Karwoski, 2017).

Still, however, a conceptualization of the 'pedagogy of the impossible' or what I'm tempted to call the '*pedagogy of the Real*' cannot simply get away with merely insisting on the constitutive lack of the subject and of the Symbolic order, and on the tension between 'what is' and 'what is not' against which the pedagogical thrives. A 'pedagogy of the Real' cannot get away without a minimum anchoring in the *political* – without acknowledging that even if the big Other doesn't exist it still *insists* (even if there is nowhere written where we have to end up, we still tend to end up here and there) and even if the subject is a failure of identification still there are temporary and contingent attempts for constructing a 'center' in order 'to arrest the flow of differences' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 112). There are attempts to dominate the discursive landscape, to install nodal points, to hegemonize meaning, to mystify domination through the totalization or detotalization of meaning – that are the basic considerations of the political theory of hegemony as combined with the discursive account of ideology. Without acknowledging the conflictual field of the social, the 'pedagogy of the Real' can hardly account for becoming a 'critical' account of pedagogy outside the Lacanian universe. In itself it is also unable to allow for a way out from the pedagogical deadlocks, that I tried to identify as the '*neverland syndrome*,' that is the parallax between the glorification and infantilization, appreciation and degradation of the teachers work; '*the atrophy of the pedagogical*,' as the learnification and instrumentalization of education at the expense of the primordial pedagogical question of the telos in education; '*cynical pedagogy*,' as the pedagogical practice structured against and despite what the subject knows; and '*the courage of hopelessness*', that is standing still against the false, fetishistic hopes that are so characteristic to the pedagogical. Thus, a Lacanian-inspired account of the pedagogical has to account for the ideologico-hegemonic structure of the discursive landscape into which it intrudes.

In the research, I considered the places of urban poverty and the dispositifs of advanced marginality as privileged, educationally meaningful places not only because the murmur of the Real, the murmur of the inconsistencies and fissures in their discursive landscapes is louder and more visible than anywhere else, but also because these sites are oversaturated with ideologico-

hegemonic ruptures which are chanting the predominant forms of mastering dislocation in the hegemonic structures of postmodern global capitalism. The discursive constellation of these sites relentlessly mystifies how the logic of Capital and other exclusionary logics are channeled through the dispositifs of the polypore Centaur states, and conducted by a multiplicity of interconnected institutional practices which culminate into such parallaxes like 'inclusion through exclusion,' 'patronization through punishment,' 'exclusion with love,' 'helping by refusal,' 'revitalization through eviction,' and so on. These *ideological parallaxes*, which function as discursive mystifications of domination, contain a certain point of impossibility, a limit that is irresolvable within their discursive constellation. As McMillan argues, the pedagogy of the impossible 'seeks to confront those impossible positions' (2015, p. 558) that cannot be simply resolved within the field of discursivity. Freire, in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/1993), also structures the emancipatory thrust of critical pedagogy around such impossibilities, to which he refers as 'limit-situations' and which he understands as ideological and ontological boundaries that have to be overcome by the transformation of reality through 'limit-acts' in order 'to discover that beyond these situations – and in contradiction to them – lies an *untested feasibility*' (ibid., p. 102). In order to foster such 'limit-acts', Freire advocates the thematic investigation of limit-situations that are contextual, historical and contingent. I argue that a critical pedagogy that draws on Lacan and Žižek also finds an emancipatory, pedagogical thrust in the confrontation with the impossible positions, to which I referred as ideological parallax. I assert that the parallax is pedagogical *per se*, thus the pedagogical practice should be oriented to keep such ruptures open in order to confront students with the inconvenience that no reassurance can be found for them – neither in fantasy scenarios, nor in the big Other. Jones Irwin, in his attempt to conceptualize a Lacanian pedagogy, also arrives at the conclusion that the ideologico-critical and pedagogical moment is 'where a certain "deadlock" must be borne, both at the level of subject and at the societal level' (2016, p. 69). The parallax is pedagogical insofar as it stands for the impossible, irresolvable, where 'lives hang in the balance'. Similarly to the Wittgensteinian 'aspect change', but with a slight shift in the modality, the pedagogical moment of the parallax shift (as discussed in Part I) is not only to see the picture as a picture, but to see the ultimate deadlock of a situation that is captivated within the picture between the aspects, 'which are mutually untranslatable (…) [and] there is no rapport between the two levels, no shared space' (Žižek, 2006c, p. 4). There is no higher perspective at the level of such incompatible perspectives than the logic of struggle, which means that the irreducible gap of the parallax cannot be simply overcome: '[a]ll we can do is to formulate the antagonism. To understand a certain society is to understand its antagonism, its

contradiction, its deadlock' (Žižek, 2017c). I find, hence, the concept of parallax that is resolvable in a meaningful way only by formulating it as an antagonism, of utmost importance for a 'pedagogy of the Real'. I have understood the pedagogical moment so far as confronting the Real, and I argue that antagonism is also a name for the Lacanian Real, on which both Laclau and Žižek agreed at the time of publishing *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990). It is quite amazing how close Freire's understanding of a limit-situation is to the concept of social antagonism. Whereas Laclau and Mouffe argue that the limit of the social is antagonism, where the presence of the antagonistic Other 'prevents me from being totally myself' (1985, p. 125), Freire understands limit-situation 'as the frontier between being and being more human' (1970/1993, p. 102). At the moment, when the 'oppressed' come to perceive these boundaries as such, 'rather than the frontier between being and nothingness, they begin to direct their increasingly critical actions towards achieving the *untested feasibility* implicit in that perception' (ibidem., italics added). And here is the last component with which I wanted to supplement a conception of the pedagogy of the Real, that is the radical openness and freedom of the pedagogical moment with which Freire characterized the 'limit-act': that there is an 'untested feasibility,' an unknown-yet-possible political future held open.

This is of utmost importance, since if a Lacanian-inspired pedagogy understood as 'confronting the Real' or the 'pedagogy of the impossible' is intended to be a *critical* pedagogy, then it must hold on a certain ethical criterion *without* the closure of the subject and the political future. A critical pedagogy of the impossible has to embrace also the very impossibility of critical education itself, which is, as Biesta argues 'not what is *not* possible but what cannot be foreseen and calculated as a possibility but literally takes us by surprise' (Biesta, 1998, p. 500):

> [A] critical pedagogy that wants to be pedagogically and politically consistent will have to reckon with (…) impossibilities: 'impossibility' does not denote what is *not* possible, but that which does not appear to be possible. Impossibility is therefore not the *opposite* of the possible: impossibility *releases* the possible. The recognition of the impossibility of education releases the possibility of disclosure (ibid., p. 510).

Embracing this impossibility is also a way of confronting the Real of pedagogy itself, that it is structured around a constitutive indetermination. But, again, if a Lacanian-inspired pedagogy is intended to be a *critical* pedagogy, then it somehow has to have a minimum of political anchoring while keeping the political future open. There is only one reason for the necessity of anchoring in a political stance: insofar as struggle/antagonism (that is embedded in the concept of parallax) is part of the 'therapeutic traumatization' with the Real, there is an inevitable ethical challenge for the teachers of taking a position. As I argued in Part I, the ethics of the Real presupposes a standpoint which is against all kinds of domination, against all kinds

of attempts for perpetually fixing meaning and asymmetrical power-relations. For such a political anchoring that is aligned with the ethics of the Real and is intended to keep a political future open, I can hardly see any other theoretico-political stance possible than Alain Badiou's '*communist hypothesis*' (2008b, 2008a, 2010). Badiou understands 'communism' as an affirmative hypothesis, devoid of method, content and utopian romanticism – it is merely a philosophical defense of an unknown-yet-possible future which can unfold through experimentation. Hence, it is only an affirmation, that the logic of Capital, class domination, and any other forms of domination and exclusionary logics are not inevitable, rather historical and contingent; that a different collective organization is possible; overcoming private property over the means of production is practicable; putting an end to the prevailing relations of production is achievable; and getting rid of the coercive state, its punitive and penal dispositifs and the obsession with national identities is not limited by any underlying logic of necessity:

> 'Communism' as such denotes only this very general set of intellectual representations. It is what Kant called an Idea, with a regulatory function, rather than a programme. It is foolish to call such communist principles utopian; (…) they are intellectual patterns, always actualized in a different fashion (Badiou, 2008a, p. 35).

The communist hypothesis stands against the horizon of the ideological parallaxes of postmodern capitalism (of which a few I attempted to illuminate) merely as an affirmation that the very coordinate-system against which these deadlocks thrive can be changed. In this sense, *the communist hypothesis is nothing more but nothing less, than the affirmation of the very prerequisite* (conditio sine qua non) *of the pedagogy of the Real – it stands precisely for the affirmation that there is a political future held open:*

> [W]e know (…) that *communism is the right hypothesis*. Indeed, there is no other, or at least I am not aware of one. All those who abandon this hypothesis immediately resign themselves to the market economy, to parliamentary democracy – the form of state suited to capitalism – and to the inevitable and 'natural' character of the most monstrous inequalities. (…) Without the perspective of communism, without this Idea, nothing in the historical and political future is of such a kind as to interest the philosopher. Each individual can pursue their private business, and we won't mention it again (Badiou, 2008b, pp. 97–115)

That is to say, all other forms of political anchoring of the pedagogical forecloses education into the pseudo-comfortable and risk-free, yet harmful and disastrous present. Yet, anchoring education in the communist hypothesis shouldn't be read as a populist or a utopian attack on education against which Biesta warns us. If the communist hypothesis is a utopia, then it is somehow negative, or as McMillan calls it the 'utopia of the impossible (…) [that] emerges at the very limits of our imagination' (2012, p. 249). Thus, the 'utopia' of the

communist hypothesis stands merely for an absence, a limit, an impossibility that is for instance at the heart of the ideological parallaxes. These deadlocks stand precisely for and embody such a 'negative' concept of utopia. As Frederick Jameson put it, a utopia is

> most authentic when we cannot imagine it. Its function lies not in helping us to imagine a better future but, rather, in demonstrating our utter incapacity to imagine such a future – our imprisonment in a non-utopian present without historicity of futurity – so as to reveal the ideological closure of the system in which we are somehow trapped and confined (2004, p. 46)

In this sense, a utopia is merely a confrontation with the ultimate deadlock of our predicament, beyond which a political future is yet to be imagined. With regards to this 'negative' sense of utopia, Freire's 'limit-act' thrives rather against 'hope and confidence (…) which leads men to attempt to overcome the limit-situations' (1970/1993, p. 99). As opposed to this, a pedagogy of the Real anchored in the communist hypothesis is driven by a sense of hopelessness, of accepting and embracing the impossibility of a deadlock. That is what I referred to in the previous part as the courage of hopelessness 'which manifests itself through endurance in the impossible. This is not simply a matter of a momentary encounter with the impossible. (…) The virtue of courage constructs itself through endurance within the impossible…' (Badiou, 2008a, p. 41). That means: *the pedagogical play, investigation, experimentation with parallaxes and deadlocks*, which are perpetually fixed yet heterogeneous and infinitely variable objects (since overdetermined with empty/floating signifiers), which always signal a state of domination and a possible formulation of an antagonism, through which one can sense a political future held open. Deadlocks and parallaxes are sublime pedagogical objects in this sense – they stand for the possibility of endurance within the impossible. The presentation of a parallax as a pedagogical 'subject matter' reminds me to how Foucault reflected on his educational praxis:

> When I lecture (…) I design an object, I try to make it as well as possible. I make a lot of trouble for myself (not always, perhaps, but often), I bring this object to the desk, I show it and then I leave it up to the audience to do with it what they want. I consider myself more like an artisan doing a certain piece of work and offering it for consumption than a master making his slaves work (Foucault, 1971, p. 200).

The pedagogical object of a deadlock or parallax is precisely an object, that someone puts on the desk and leaves it there for investigation as it itself stands for a political future held open. The very character of a deadlock or a parallax, that it stands 'without orientation or destination, turns [it] into school matter' (Masschelein, 2011, p. 532). And the Lacanian ethics of teaching stands not merely for 'remain[ing] open or present to such a possibility' (Taubman, 2010, p.

211), but also for 'making seem possible precisely that which, from within the situation, is declared to be impossible' (Badiou, 2001, p. 121). The pedagogically meaningful character of the communist hypothesis further unfolds if we read Badiou's experiment for finding a viable principle or axiom for the communist hypothesis from an educational perspective. Against the primordial rupture of global capitalism, that is between the Inside and the Outside of the social, between the Included and the Excluded, Badiou suggests the declaration that 'there is only one world' not as an objective statement, but something that we decide. The recognition that follows this axiom is 'that all belong to the same world as myself' (Badiou, 2008a, p. 39). This experimental axiom read from a pedagogical perspective is in itself liberating as it introduces to the pedagogy of the Real what Biesta and Säfström call the 'aesthetics of freedom,' that is 'assuming equality in a situation of inequality' (2011, p. 542). *There is no better common ground than this for* 'corrupting the young' *and letting them be thrown into the* 'Real as impossible', *where a political future is held open to their boundless imagination*. Badiou's assertion of one common world, where we all belong aligns quite well with the argument of Masschelein, that the *scholè* stands precisely for assuming this common world and the equality in it, both in the sense that we all belong to it, and that we are all capable. The *scholè* is the way

> to communize and disclose world, and place students time and again in a position to begin (*with* the words, things): [it offers] the experience of being able, of potentiality in front of a thing in common. The words to 'communize' and 'communization' exist in English, but are seldomly used. They have their origin in communist theory where they refer to the process of abolishing ownership of the means of production and therefore resonate to the de-appropriation which we want to emphasize here, however in a somewhat different way. Communization is first of all – and perhaps only – an educational term, not a political one. As education presents the world once more, unfinished, it turns the world into a common thing, and puts students as equals in the position to begin. This is, if one would like, the political dimension of scholè. (…) Scholè is the time of *being exposed together* (Masschelein, 2011, pp. 532–533).

If there is a common task of teachers, then it is not only teaching, but becoming educators, which means orienting one's practice toward the communization of the world, the equality of students, and keeping a political future open. I argued before, that I consider the pedagogical 'aspect change' from the role of the teacher to that of the educator as transformative teacher learning *par excellence*. I understand this aspect change precisely in this sense, i.e., becoming an educator 'who leads to the school/scholè (…) and/or contributes to its happening: the architect of scholè, i.e. the one who un-finishes, who undoes…' (ibid., p. 530), and who throws the student in at the deep end of the 'Real as impossible.' But in order to preserve the idea of a common world and equality, I don't think that teachers can retreat to the relatively detached,

separated and suspended world of the School. Of course, I agree that the transformative potentiality of the School is its separation which can unlock the world, undo and un-finish meaning, structure, time, etc. in order to expose the young to the risk (the impossibility) of education. But I assume, that the teachers' engagement with the social and the political is inevitable not only for the sake of '[l]ove (…) for the material the teacher is engaging' (Masschelein & Simons, 2013, p. 68), which sublime pedagogical 'subject matters' (deadlock, parallaxes, impossibilities) hang in the balance 'out there'; their engagement is also necessary to become 'ill' with the Real, and discover the potentiality to enact what might be Real (impossible, provoking, shocking, untouchable, unforeseen) to the students.

> [A teacher] is not an agent of discipline and prohibition, his message is not 'You cannot!', nor 'You have to…!', but a releasing 'You can!' – what? Do the impossible, i.e. what appears impossible within the coordinates of the existing constellation – and today, this means something very precise: you can think beyond capitalism and liberal democracy as the ultimate framework of our lives. [A teacher] is a vanishing mediator who gives you back to yourself, who delivers you to the abyss of your freedom. (…) The underlying paradox here is that the more we live as 'free individuals with no Master,' the more we are effectively non-free, caught within the existing frame of possibilities. We have to be pushed or disturbed into freedom… (Žižek, 2017b, p. 211)

<div align="center">* * *</div>

I began this dissertation with Shel Silverstein's book *The Missing Piece* (1976). The book was followed by a second part five years later, *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O* (1981). Here, the Lacanian barred subject takes the position of the missing piece who tries to find reassurance in lacking objects, whose desire it could fulfil, who would provide an anchor for it, who would have an eye on it. It fits some of these lacking objects, but then they cannot move, some couldn't hold it, 'Some had too many pieces missing,' and 'Some had too many pieces, period.' One day, the Big O comes along, a full circle, without an inherent lack. The missing piece confronts the Big O (the big Other) in a twisted way: as we know, the big Other is inherently constituted around a lack, cut through by the Real, but the Silverstein's Big O comes along in its fullness, as a Whole. This is, paradoxically, how the missing piece, the lacking subject confronts the fact that *there is no big Other*. Presenting the inexistence of the big Other as a totality is Silverstein's way to confront the subject that there is none, since if it would exist (as the Big O does), it would still bring no reassurance for the barred subject. Moreover, it would want nothing from it. The discussion between the missing piece and the Big O is exemplary for illuminating what is pedagogical in teaching as confronting the Real. One could even read this dialogue from the point of view of the teacher, *who pushes and disturbs the subject into its ultimate freedom to do the impossible:*

<div align="center">387</div>

'What do you want of me?' asked the missing piece.

'Nothing.'

'What do you need from me?'

'Nothing.'

'Who are you?' asked the missing piece.

'I am the Big O,' said the Big O.

'I think you are the one I have been waiting for,' said the missing piece. 'Maybe I am your missing piece.'

'But I am not missing a piece,' said the Big O. 'There is no place you would fit.'

'That is too bad,' said the missing piece. 'I was hoping that perhaps I could roll with you…'

'You cannot roll with me,' said the Big O, 'but perhaps you can roll by yourself.'

'By myself? A missing piece cannot roll by itself.'

'Have you ever tried?' asked the Big O.

'But I have sharp corners,' said the missing piece. 'I am not shaped for rolling.'

'Corners wear off,' said the Big O, 'and shapes change. Anyhow, I must say good-bye… Perhaps we will meet again…'

And away it rolled. The missing piece was alone again. For a long time, it just sat there. Then… slowly… it lifted itself up on one end… and flopped over. Then lift… pull… flop… it began to move forward… And soon its edges began to wear off… liftpullflopliftpullflop… and its shape began to change… and then it was bumping instead of flopping… and then it was bouncing instead of bumping… and then it was rolling instead of bouncing… And it didn't know where and it didn't care. It was rolling!

SYNOPSIS OF THE DISSERTATION

SYNOPSIS OF THE DISSERTATION IN POLISH
Streszczenie Rozprawy Doktorskiej

Główną pobudką moich badań jest chęć głębszego zrozumienia możliwości edukacji transformatywnej i transformatywnego uczenia się nauczycieli w uwarunkowaniach skrajnego miejskiego ubóstwa. Skupiam się na dwóch „osiedlach wydalenia" (*neighborhoods of relegation*) w dwóch półperyferyjnych krajach – na Węgrzech i w Polsce (z pobieżnym omówieniem Rumunii) – charakteryzujących się postsocjalistyczną katastrofą globalnego kapitalizmu oraz znaczącym wzrostem skrajnie prawicowych systemów wyobrażeniowych, które uznaję za dopełniające się wymiary wyłaniającej się konfiguracji europejskiej. W przeciwieństwie do dominujących tendencji w naukach pedagogicznych, w których za analityczny kontekst aparatu edukacyjnego i praktyki pedagogicznej nauczycieli uznaje się albo narodowe systemy szkolnictwa albo międzynarodowe ramowe regulacje polityki oświatowej, w moich badaniach umiejscawiam „szkoły w gettach" w transnarodowej dynamice cechującej geopolityczną pozycję półperyferii oraz w szerokich, instytucjonalnych mikro-środowiskach miejskiego ubóstwa (policja, Kościół, ośrodek pomocy społecznej, organizacja pozarządowa, itp.), których znaczącą częścią składową jest szkoła. Aby naświetlić złożone modalności takich glokalnych środowisk oświatowych, nieustannie rozwijam i wykorzystuję narzędzia analityczne związane z krytyką ideologii, które zakotwiczone są w badaniach etnograficznych i w ramach tych badań stosowane. Z jednej strony krytyka ideologii jako narzędzie analityczne pozwala sięgnąć głęboko pod powierzchnię i odsłonić edukacyjne i instytucjonalne praktyki sprzyjające maskowaniu dominacji, oraz ujawnić na przeszkodzie praktykom pedagogicznym stają ideologiczne iluzje. Z drugiej strony, w moim zrozumieniu edukacja transformatywna oznacza organizację działań pedagogicznych oraz prowadzenie krytyki ideologii, której krzewienie niesie znaczny potencjał w kontekście ubóstwa miejskiego. A zatem, oprócz prób wychwycenia ideologicznych fantazji i mistyfikacji charakteryzujących pedagogiczną praktykę nauczycieli w półperyferyjnych kontekstach ubóstwa miejskiego, podejmuję również próbę określenia emancypacyjnych możliwości transfromatywnego uczenia się nauczycieli dzięki promowaniu ich zaangażowania w społeczne i mikro-instytucjonalne środowisko szkoły.

Część pierwsza pt. „Dyskretna szkodliwość ideologii" (*The discreet harm of ideology*) opisuje, jak koncepcja ideologii kształtowała się w filozofii marksistowskiej, post-marksistowskiej i postmodernistycznej. Za teoretyczny punkt wyjścia moich badań obrałem post-marksistowską teorię hegemonii w ujęciu Ernesto Laclaua i Chantal Mouffe (1985). Postuluję powrót do marksistowskiego rozumienia ideologii w ramach post-marksistowskiej

teorii hegemonii. Odrzucając wzajemną wymienność koncepcji „ideologii" i „dyskursu" wraz z postmodernistycznymi narracjami o „śmierci ideologii", opracowuję i przedstawiam *dyskursywne ujęcie ideologii*, którą rozumiem jako maskowanie dominacji na drodze hegemonicznych praktyk artykulacyjnych, w których hegemoniczna walka o znaczenie utrwala i cementuje niezmiennie asymetryczne relacje władzy. Rozwijając dyskursywne ujęcie ideologii wpisuję koncepcję dominacji Foucaulta (1997) w teorię hegemonii. Ostatecznie zaś postuluję uzupełnienie interpretacyjnego dyskursywnego ujęcia ideologii o lacanowsko-marksistowski model ideologii zaproponowany przez Žižka (1989), co umożliwia powrót do głównej koncepcji ideologii przedstawionej przez Marksa (opium, fetysz, widoczna rzeczywistość) w ramach nurtu post-marksistowskiego.

W części drugiej zatytułowanej „Widmo ubóstwa" (*The Spectre of Poverty*) zajmuję się przykładami współczesnej krytyki ekonomii politycznej oraz Lacanowską ontologią w celu dalszego sproblematyzowania teorii politycznej Laclaua oraz postulowania teoretycznego i strategicznego powrotu do polityki klasowej i analizy stosunków klasowych w globalnym kapitalizmie. Mam przy tym na celu naświetlenie epistemologicznych i ontologicznych powodów wyboru obszarów miejskiego ubóstwa jako „uprzywilejowanego" miejsca badań. Twierdzę, że takie miejsca są nie tylko niezwykle ważne dla krytyki ideologii, ale także edukacyjnie istotne. Posługując się koncepcją „zaawansowanej marginalności" (*advanced marginality*) Loïca Wacquanta (2008) oraz koncepcją „urządzenia" (*dispositif*) Foucaulta (1980b), proponuję analityczny i metodologiczny model badania dyskursywnej totalności krajobrazów ubóstwa miejskiego, które są naddeterminowane przez ideologiczno-hegemoniczne artykulacje wyłaniające się z określonych układów mikro-instytucjonalnych. Następnie zaś, kreśląc *via media* między Althusserowską (1971) a Foucauldiańską krytyką szkoły (Deacon, 2004), odrzucam założenie Wacquanta, że w urządzeniach zaawansowanej marginalności czołowym aparatem jest „policja" i dowodzę, że to Szkoła (czyli zinstytucjonalizowana edukacja) zajmuje uprzywilejowaną pozycję między innymi aparatami. Na końcu zaś zarysowuję etnograficzną metodologię badań służącą ideologiczno-krytycznym analizom urządzeń zaawansowanych marginalności, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Szkoły, w celu zbadania istotności obszarów miejskiego ubóstwa dla kształcenia nauczycieli. Moje etnograficzne podejście jest przy tym tak pedagogiczne (Mészáros, 2017), jak i terapeutyczne (Fink, 2007).

W części trzeciej zatytułowanej „Wyłaniający się kompleks europejski" (*The emerging European complex*) kreślę geopolityczny aspekt mojego obszaru badawczego w oparciu o teorię systemów-światów (1974), oraz umiejscawiam Węgry i Polskę w postsocjalistycznych,

półperyferyjnych wzorcach produkcji kapitalistycznej. Aby wzbogacić analizę systemów-światów o element ideologiczno-krytyczny rozwijam koncepcje „kompleksu europejskiego", która jest analitycznym ujęciem klasy posługującym się Lacanowską ontologią, a którą rozumiem jako ideologiczny portret komedii dell'arte europejskiej konfliktów będącej źródłem politycznych współrzędnych (ramy i ról) półperyferyjnego teatru. Twierdzę, że podstawowymi modalnościami kompleksu europejskiego obserwowanymi w półperyferyjnych krajach postsocjalistycznych są wyrzeczenie się polityki klasowej oraz zaniedbanie krytyki ekonomii politycznej, ideologiczno-dyskursywne ustanawianie hegemonicznych granic na ulicach (raczej niż w regulacjach prawnych) i kontekstach mikro-instytucjonalnych, oraz wyłonienie się „zaawansowanej marginalności" (tj. poszerzenie i przemieszczenie ultraprawicowych systemów wyobrażeniowych). Następnie przedstawiam badania etnograficzne, które prowadziłem w Polsce, i omawiam urządzenie koczowiska cygańskiego. Dowodzę, że pierwotną specyficzną modalnością hybrydycznego getta półperyferyjnego jest jego wszechogarniająca i wszechmocna międzyinstytucjonalność (od wszechobecnego aparatu polityczno-karnego począwszy na wyraźnej obecności instytucji i organizacji publicznych skończywszy), w której ustanawiana jest ideologiczna konstelacja dyskursywnych krajobrazów ubóstwa. Następnie odnajduję dominujące ideologiczne punkty węzłowe pola dyskursywnego i urządzenia koczowiska (żebractwo, zanieczyszczenie powietrza), na które nakładają się dyskursy prawa i praw człowieka zapośredniczane przez karanie ubogich (Wacquant, 2009b), „NGOizację' (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013) oraz „ucyrkowienie". W kolejnym kroku sytuuję dwie szkoły – w których organizowałem spotkania grup roboczych nauczycieli cygańskich dzieci z koczowiska – w dyskursywnym krajobrazie urządzenia. Omawiam powody porażki prób zorganizowania wizyt domowych nauczycieli w koczowisku. Twierdzę, że możliwości transformatywnego uczenia się nauczycieli dzięki aktywnemu i refleksyjnemu zaangażowaniu w środowisko społeczne zostały ograniczone zarówno przez to, jak aparat edukacyjny spozycjonowany jest w swym urządzeniu, jak i przez postsocjalistyczne, półperyferyjne walki o modalności działania aparatu edukacyjnego, które opisuję przy użyciu ideologiczno-krytycznych koncepcji „syndromu nibylandii", paralaksy między gloryfikacją a infantylizacją, docenianiem a umniejszaniem pracy nauczycieli (np. Labaree, 1992); „atrofii pedagogiki", „lernifikacji" (*learnification*) i instrumentalizacji edukacji kosztem pierwotnego pedagogicznego pytania o telos w edukacji (np. Biesta, 2015); oraz „pedagogiki cynicznej", tj. dystansowania się struktur społecznych od edukacji. Przedstawiając moje doświadczenia badawcze z Polski i Rumunii, staram się pokazać, jak przekształciłem moje metody badawcze na Węgrzech. Mianowicie, podczas gdy w Polsce skupiałem się na obozowisku jako na miejscu

edukacyjnie istotnym dla kształcenia nauczycieli, podchodząc do jego urządzenia jedynie jako do okoliczności czy też modalności dostarczającej informacje, na Węgrzech zacząłem rozważać urządzenie zaawansowanej marginalności samo w sobie jako edukacyjnie istotne dla transformatywnego uczenia się nauczycieli. Następnie określam dominujące ideologiczne punkty węzłowe urządzenia (rynek narkotykowy, degradacja środowiska i etnicyzacja ubóstwa), cechującego się „rozpadem i detotalizacją znaczenia" w systemach wyobrażeniowych klasy średniej i wyższej, psychopatologizacją problemów społecznych, oraz instytucjonalną fuzją aparatów i miejscowej władzy politycznej. Następnie omawiam spotkania grup roboczych z udziałem nauczycieli w szkole w getcie, które były całkowicie otwarte dla aktorów instytucjonalnych, w celu skonfrontowania szkoły z jej urządzeniem. Twierdzę, że konfrontacja ta odniosła dwa pozytywne, potencjalnie wywrotowe skutki; były nimi „spojrzenie urządzenia", czyli uświadomienie sobie przez nauczycieli, że szkoła jest „potajemnie" zakotwiczona w szerszym mikro-instytucjonalnym kontekście, który w znacznej mierze kształtuje codzienność ich pedagogicznych działań; oraz „pedagogika beznadziejności", czyli pogodzenie się z tym, że edukacja niezdolna jest zaspokoić wygórowanych pragnień formułowanych we współczesnej ewangelii edukacyjnej (dobrobyt gospodarczy, awans społeczny, jakość i sprawiedliwość, pełny rozkwit społeczeństwa), a wraz z tym wyzbycie się fałszywych, fetyszystycznych nadziei, które są tak typowe dla pedagogicznych filozofii, szczególnie zaś dla edukacji krytycznej (np. Freire, 1994).

W końcowej części zatytułowanej „Wyparcie pedagogiki" (*The Repressed of Pedagogy*) krótko opisuję podstawy krytycznej krytyki pedagogiki krytycznej Freirego (i pedagogiki nadziei). W oparciu o empiryczne doświadczenia płynące z moich badań postuluję konceptualizację modelu pedagogiki podbudowanego filozoficznymi propozycjami przedstawionymi niedawno przez Badiou (2010) i Žižka (2017d), uznając, że model ten stanowi już wyłaniające się pole badawcze, które McMillan (2015), odnosząc się do pedagogicznej wartości brakującego podmiotu, nazwał „pedagogiką niemożliwego" (*pedagogy of the impossible*), a które ja nazywam „pedagogiką Realnego" (*pedagogy of the Real*).

SYNOPSIS OF THE DISSERTATION IN ENGLISH

Synopsis of the Dissertation

The central motivation of this research is to contribute to the understanding of the possibilities of transformative education and of transformative teacher learning in the context of extreme urban poverty. I focus on two neighborhoods of relegation in two semiperipheral countries – Hungary and Poland (briefly covering Romania as well) – both characterized by the post-socialist catastrophe of global capitalism and the significant emergence of far-right imaginaries, which I understand as complementary dimensions of an emerging European context. Contrary to the dominant research trend in education, which situates the analytical context of the educational apparatus and of teachers' pedagogical praxis either within national education systems or within international policy frameworks, I contextualize the 'schools of the ghetto' by focusing on the transnational dynamics characteristic to the geopolitical position of the semiperiphery and on the broad institutional micro-environments of urban poverty (the police, the Church, the welfare center, the NGO, etc.) of which the school is a significant constituent. In order to illuminate the complex modalities of such glocal milieus of education, I continuously develop and use the analytical tool of ideology criticism embedded in and channeled through ethnographic research. On the one hand, the critique of ideology as an analytical tool allows for digging deep and unmasking educational and interinstitutional practices conducive to the mystification of domination and unveiling how pedagogical practices are constrained by ideological illusions. On the other hand, I understand transformative education as the pedagogical organization and conduct of ideology criticism, the fostering of which has a significant potential in the context of urban poverty. Thus, besides trying to grasp the ideological fantasies and mystifications characteristic to teachers' pedagogical praxis in the semiperipheral contexts of urban poverty, I also attempt to locate emancipatory possibilities for teachers' transformative learning by facilitating their engagement with the social and micro-institutional environment of the school.

In *Part I: The Discreet Harm of Ideology,* I describe the theoretical development of the concept of ideology in Marxist, post-Marxist and postmodern political philosophies. I ground the theoretical framework of my research in the post-Marxist theory of hegemony as elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) and I argue for a return to Marx's understanding of ideology within the post-Marxist theory of hegemony. By rejecting both the interchangeability between the concepts of 'discourse' and 'ideology' and the postmodern narratives of 'the death of ideology' I elaborate and propose *a discursive account of ideology,*

which I understand as the mystification of domination through hegemonic articulatory practices, where the hegemonic struggle over meaning fixates and cements perpetually asymmetrical relations of power. To elaborate the discursive account of ideology, I inscribe Foucault's (1997) account of domination in the theory of hegemony. Finally, I argue for supplementing the interpretive, discursive account of ideology with Žižek's Lacanian-Marxist account of ideology (1989), which promises a return to Marx's central concepts of ideology (opium, fetish, manifest reality) *within* the post-Marxist framework.

In *Part II: The Spectre of Poverty,* I engage with contemporary critiques of the political economy and with Lacanian ontology in order to further challenge Laclau's political theory and to advocate a theoretical and strategical return to class politics and to the analysis of class relations in global capitalism. I do so to illuminate the epistemological and ontological reasons for choosing places of urban poverty as the 'privileged' sites of research. I argue that such sites are not only of utmost relevance for ideology criticism, but they are also educationally meaningful. Drawing on Loïc Wacquant's concept of 'advanced marginality' (2008) and Foucault's concept of the 'dispositif' (1980b), I propose an analytical and methodological framework for studying the discursive totality of the landscapes of urban poverty, that are overdetermined by the ideologico-hegemonic articulations that emerge from the particular arrangement of the micro-institutional context. Then, by charting a *via media* between the Althusserian (1971) and the Foucauldian critique of the school (Deacon, 2004), I reject Wacquant's assumption that in the dispositifs of advanced marginality the frontline apparatus is the 'police', and I argue that it is the School (i.e. institutionalized education) which holds the privileged position among the other apparatuses. Finally, I outline the ethnographic methodology of the research for the ideologico-critical analyses of the dispositifs of advanced marginality with particular focus on the School, in order to investigate how places of urban poverty are educationally meaningful for teacher education. I frame my ethnographic stance as pedagogical (Mészáros, 2017) and therapeutic (Fink, 2007).

In *Part III: The Emerging European Complex,* I outline the geopolitical aspect of the research field, drawing on Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory (1974), and situate Hungary and Poland within the post-socialist semiperipheral patterns of capitalist production. In order to contribute to the world-systems analysis with an ideologico-critical register, I elaborate the concept of the 'European complex', which is a class-analytical account drawing on the registers of Lacanian ontology and which I understand as the ideological portrayal of the European commedia dell'arte of conflicts, that provides the political coordinates (the frameworks and roles) for a semiperipheral theater. I argue that the basic modalities of the

European complex with regards to post-socialist semiperipheral countries are (1) the disavowal of class politics and the negligence of the critique of political economy, (2) the ideologico-discursive constitution of the hegemonic frontiers on the streets (rather than in legal frameworks) and within micro-institutional contexts, and (3) the emergence of 'advanced imaginality' (i.e. the extension and displacement of the far-right imaginaries). Then, I introduce the ethnographic research that I conducted in Poland, and I discuss the dispositif of a Gypsy settlement. I argue that the primordial distinctive modality of the semiperipheral hybrid ghetto is its strong omnipresent and omnipotent interinstitutional character (from the omnipresent police-and-penal apparatus to the strong presence of public institutions), where the ideological constellation of the discursive landscapes of poverty is constituted. Then, I locate the dominant ideological nodal points in the discursive field and dispositif of the settlement (begging, air pollution), which are superimposed by legal and human rights discourses, mediated through the punishment of the poor (Wacquant, 2009b), 'NGOization' (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013), and 'circusification'. I then situate the two schools – where I organized working group meetings with the teachers of Gypsy children from the settlement – within the discursive landscape of the dispositif. I discuss the reasons for failing to organize household visits with the teachers in the settlement. I argue that the possibility for enhancing transformative teacher learning via teachers' active and reflective engagement with the social environment was constrained both by how the educational apparatus is positioned in its respective dispositif and by the post-socialist struggles over the modalities of operation of the educational apparatus, which I characterize by introducing the ideologico-critical concepts of 'neverland syndrome,' the parallax between the glorification and infantilization, appreciation and degradation of the teachers work (e.g. Labaree, 1992); 'the atrophy of the pedagogical,' the learnification and instrumentalization of education at the expense of the primordial pedagogical question of the telos in education (e.g. Biesta, 2015); and 'cynical pedagogy,' the distancing of the social structures from the pedagogical. By illuminating my research experiences in Poland and Romania, I try to show how I reshaped the method of my research in Hungary. I argue that, while in Poland, I was focusing on the settlement as an educationally meaningful place for teacher education, approaching its respective dispositif as merely an informative modality. In Hungary, I started to consider the dispositif of advanced marginality itself as educationally meaningful for teachers' transformative learning. Then, I locate the dominant ideological nodal points of the dispositif (drug market, environmental degradation and the ethnitization of poverty), characterized by the 'dissolution and detotalization of meaning', channeled through middle class imaginaries, psychopatologization of social problems, and the institutional merger

between the apparatuses and the local political regime. Then I discuss the working group meetings in the ghetto school, which were completely open for the institutional actors, in order to confront the teachers with the school's respective dispositif. I argue that there were at least two promising aspects of this confrontation that are subversive *in potentia*: 'the gaze of the dispositif,' i.e., teachers realizing how the school is 'secretly' embedded in a broader micro-institutional context that shapes the daily aspect of their pedagogical practices; and 'the pedagogy of hopelessness', that is coming to terms with the impotence of education in fulfilling the spectacular desires that the contemporary education gospel depicts on it (upward mobility, quality and equity, the fullness of the society) and giving up false, fetishistic hopes that are so characteristic to pedagogical philosophies, especially in critical pedagogy (e.g. Freire, 1994).

In the concluding part, *The Repressed of Pedagogy,* I briefly outline the foundations of a critical critique of Freirean critical pedagogy (and the pedagogy of hope). Based on the empirical experience of the research, I argue for conceptualizing a pedagogical account based on the recent philosophical directions of Badiou (2010) and Žižek (2017d), considering it as an already emerging field of research, which is called 'the pedagogy of the impossible' by McMillan (2015) referring to the pedagogical value of the lacking subject, and to which I refer as '*the pedagogy of the Real*'.

SYNOPSIS OF THE DISSERTATION IN HUNGARIAN
A Disszertáció Összefoglalója

Kutatásom központi törekvése az, hogy hozzájáruljon a transzformatív oktatás és a tanárok transzformatív tanulási lehetőségeinek megértéséhez a szélsőséges városi szegénység kontextusában. A kutatás két kirekesztett városi szegregátumra összpontosít, két félperifériás országban – Magyarországon és Lengyelországban (ill. röviden Romániát is érintve) – amelyekre kölcsönösen a globális kapitalizmus posztszocialista katasztrófája és a szélsőjobboldali fantáziák erőteljes előtörése jellemző, melyeket mindazonáltal egymást kiegészítő dimenziókként értelmezek – egy formálódó európai kontextus részeként. Ellentétben az oktatás kurrens kutatási trendjeivel, amelyek az oktatási apparátus és a pedagógusok pedagógiai praxisának analitikai kontextusát az állami oktatási rendszerek vagy a nemzetközi 'politika-csinálás' (policy) keretein belül helyezi el, ez a kutatás a 'gettóiskolákat' a félperiféria geopolitikai pozíciójára jellemző transznacionális dinamikákra összpontosítva, és a városi szegénység kiterjedt intézményi mikrokörnyezetére (rendőrség, egyház, jóléti központ, NGO-k, stb.) fókuszálva helyezi el. A kutatás jelentős szerepet tulajdonít az iskolának e makro- és mikrokörnyezetben. Az oktatás glokális miliőjeire jellemző összetett körülmények feltárásához folyamatosan újraértelmezem és használom az 'idológiakritikát' mint analitikai eszközt egy etnográfiai kutatás részeként. Egyfelől az ideológiakritika mint analitikai eszköz lehetővé teszi azon oktatási és intézményközi gyakorlatokat leleplezését és feltárását, amelyek hozzájárulnak az elnyomás misztifikációjához, így bemutatva, hogy a pedagógiai gyakorlatokat hogyan határozzák meg az ideológiai illúziók. Másfelől a transzformatív oktatást úgy értelmezem, mint az ideológiakritikai mozzanat pedagógiai megszervezését, amely elősegítésének jelentős potenciált tulajdonítok a városi szegénység összefüggésében és azon túl is. Így a városi szegénység félperifériás kontextusában a pedagógus pedagógiai praxisára jellemző ideológiai fantáziák és misztifikációk megértése mellett megpróbálom azonosítani a tanárok transzformatív tanulásának emancipatórikus feltételeit és lehetőségeit, a tanárok az iskola társadalmi és mikro-intézményi környezetében való aktív és reflektív részvételén keresztül.

Az I. részben (Az Ideológia Diszkrét Ártalma) az ideológia és az ideológiakritika koncepciójának elméleti átalakulását tárgyalom a marxista, posztmarxista és posztmodern politikai filozófiák tükrében. Kutatásom elméleti kereteit az Ernesto Laclau és Chantal Mouffe (1985) által kidolgozott posztmarxista hegemónia-elméletével jelölöm ki, és Marx ideológiakritikájához való visszatérés mellett érvelek a hegemónia posztmarxista elméletén belül maradva. Elutasítva a 'diskurzus' és az 'ideológia' fogalmának összemosását, és az

'ideológia halálát' feltételező posztmodern narratívákat, felvázolom az ideológia diszkurzív koncepciójának a lehetőségét, amelyet az elnyomás hegemonikus artikulációkon keresztüli misztifikációjaként értelmezek, ahol a hegemonikus küzdelem a jelentések lehorgonyzásáért rögzítik és megszilárdítják az aszimmetrikus hatalmi viszonyokat. Az ideológia diszkurzív koncepciójának kidolgozásához Foucault (1997) elnyomás-koncepcióját vezetem be a hegemónia-elméletbe. Végül az ideológia értelmező, diszkurzív koncepciójának kiszélesítése mellett érvelek, Žižek lacaniánus-marxista ideológiakritikájára hivatkozva (1989), amely a marxi ideológiakritikai koncepciók (ópium, fétis, látszatvalóság) központi elképzeléseinek visszatérését jelentik a posztmarxista elméleti kereten belül.

A II. részben (A Szegénység Kísértete) a politikai gazdaság kurrens kritikáival és a lacaniánus ontológiával foglalkozom Laclau politikai elméletének további szétfeszítése érdekében, valamint az osztálypolitikához és a globális kapitalizmus osztályviszonyainak elemzéséhez való elméleti és stratégiai visszatérés jegyében. Teszem mindezt azért, hogy megvilágítsam azon episztemológiai és ontológiai okokat, amelyek miatt a városi szegénységet helyezem a kutatás fókuszába, egyfajta 'kiváltságos' terepeként. Véleményem szerint ezek az terepek nemcsak az ideológiakritika szempontjából, hanem oktatási szempontból is rendkívül fontosak. Loïc Wacquant 'fejlett marginalitás' (2008) és Foucault 'dispositif' (diszpozitívum, gép[szerk]ezet) (1980) fogalmaira alapozva egy sajátos analitikus és módszertani keretet javaslok a városi szegénység diszkurzív tájainak tanulmányozására, melyek az intézményi mikro-kontextus konkrét elrendezéséből származó ideológiai artikulációk dominálnak. Ezután figyelembe véve az iskola apparátusának mind az Althusser-i (1971) mind a Foucault-i kritikáját (Deacon, 2004) amellett érvelek (ellentétben a Wacquant-tal, aki a fejlett marginalitás gép[szerk]ezeteiben a rendőrség apparátusát helyezi előtérbe), hogy az iskola (vagyis az intézményesített oktatás) a többi apparátushoz képest kiváltságos helyzettel rendelkezik. Végül felvázolom a kutatás etnográfiai módszertanát a fejlett marginalitás gép[szerk]ezeteinek ideológiakritikai elemzéséhez, különös tekintettel az iskolára, annak feltérképezése érdekében, hogy a városi szegénység helyszínei oktatási szempontból miért sokatmondóak a tanárképzés számára. Az etnográfiai álláspontomat pedagógiainak (Mészáros, 2017) és terapeutikusnak tekintem (Fink, 2007).

A III. részben (A Formálódó Európai Komplexus) felvázolom a kutatás geopolitikai aspektusait. Immanuel Wallerstein világrendszer elmélete alapján (1974) Magyarországot és Lengyelországot a kapitalista termelés posztszocialista félperifériás mintázataiban helyezem el. Annak érdekében, hogy a világrendszerek elemzéséhez egy ideológiakritikai regisztert csatoljak, kidolgozom az 'európai komplexus' fogalmát, amely a lacaniánus ontológia

dimenzióira épülő osztályelemzési keret, és amelyet a konfliktusok európai 'commedia dell'arte'-jának ideológiai ábrázolásaként értelmezek, amely a félperifériás színjáték politikai koordinátáit (kereteit és szerepköreit) biztosítja. Azt állítom, hogy az európai komplexus alapvető módozatai a posztszocialista félperifériás országok tekintetében: az osztálypolitika és a politikai gazdaság kritikájának elfojtása és elutasítása; az eltolódás a hegemónia frontvonalainak terepei között az 'utcafront' és a mikro-intézményi kontextus irányába (a jogi keretek felől); valamint a 'fejlett képzelőerő' kialakulása és térnyerése (azaz a szélsőjobboldali fantáziák kiterjesztése és elmozdulása). Ezután bemutatom a lengyelországi etnográfiai kutatást, amiben egy cigánytelep diszpozitívumának (gép[szerk]ezetének) feltérképezésére tettem kísérletet. Azt állítom, hogy a félperifériás 'hibrid gettó' elsődleges megkülönböztető jegye az erős, mindenütt jelenlévő és mindenható intézményközi karakter (a mindenütt jelen lévő rendőrségi és büntető apparátusoktól a közintézmények erős jelenlétéig), ahol a szegénység és a nyomor diszkurzív tájainak ideológiai konstellációja formálódik. Arra teszek kísérletet, hogy e diszkurzív mezőben és a telep diszpozitívumában (gép[szerk]ezetében) meghatározzam az ideológiai 'csomópontokat' (pl. koldulás, légszennyezés), amelyet jogi és emberi jogi diskurzusok dominálnak (Wacquant, 2009) a nyomor büntetésén, 'NGOizáción' (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013) és 'cirkuszifikáción' keresztül. Ezután megpróbálom a két iskolát – ahol munkacsoport megbeszéléseket szerveztem a telepi cigánygyerekek tanáraival – a diszpozitívum diszkurzív tájain belül elhelyezni. Tárgyalom továbbá a telepi családok meglátogatására tett kísérleteink sikertelenségének a lehetséges okait. Úgy vélem, hogy a tanárok transzformatív tanulásának támogatását a társadalmi környezettel való aktív és reflektív kapcsolaton keresztül mind az oktatási apparátus 'gép[szerk]ezeten' belüli pozíciója, mind az oktatás működési módjairól folytatott poszt-szocialista, félperifériás küzdelem sajátosságai korlátozták. Ezeket a következő ideológiakritikai koncepciókkal írom körül: a 'Sohaország-szindróma', amely a tanárok munkájának dicsőítése és infantilizációja, felértékelődése és lenézése közötti parallaxisra utal (pl. Labaree, 1992); a 'pedagógiai atrófia', amely az oktatás 'learnifikációjára' (tanulásizálás, tanulás-fétis) és instrumentalizálására utal az oktatási télosz pedagógiai kérdésének rovására (pl. Biesta, 2015); és a 'cinikus pedagógia', amely a társadalmi struktúrák és pedagógiai viszonyának eltávolodására utal. A lengyelországi és romániai kutatási tapasztalataim bemutatásával megpróbálom felvázolni, hogyan alakítottam át a kutatásom módszereit a magyarországi vizsgálat során. Úgy vélem, hogy míg Lengyelországban a cigánytelepre, mint a tanárképzés számára oktatási szempontból kiemelt helyre tekintettem, míg a telep diszpozitívumát csak informatív körülményként vagy modalitásként közelítettem meg, addig Magyarországon már a fejlett marginalitás diszpozitívumát tekintettem a tanárok

transzformatív tanulása szempontjából kiemelt fontosságú tényezőnek. A magyarországi kutatás tárgyalása során bemutatom a diszpozitívum domináns ideológiai csomópontjait (drogpiac, környezetiszennyezés, és a szegénység etnizálása), melyeket a jelentés felbomlása és detotalizációja, a középosztályos és a felső középosztálybeli fantáziák, a társadalmi problémák pszichopatologizálása, valamint az apparátusok és a helyi politikai rezsim közötti intézményi összefonódások jellemeznek. Ezután bemutatom és elemzem a gettóiskolában a tanárokkal szervezett munkacsoport találkozókat, melyek teljesen nyitottak voltak más intézményi szereplők számára annak érdekében, hogy az iskola saját diszpozitívumával konfrontálódhasson. Véleményem szerint ennek a konfrontációnak legalább két ígéretes aspektusa volt, amelyek potenciálisan felforgatóak: a 'diszpozíció tekintete' amely a tanárok konfrontálódására utal azzal kapcsolatban, ahogy az iskola 'titkosan' be van ágyazva egy szélesebb intézményi mikro-kontextusba, amely pedig a napi pedagógiai gyakorlatok nagy részére kihatással van; és 'a reménytelenség pedagógiája', amely az oktatás impotenciájával való konfrontációra utal, hogy ti. az iskola képtelen azon spektakuláris vágyak teljesítésére, amelyeket a kortárs oktatási evangélium ábrázol (gazdasági jólét, felfelé irányuló mobilitás, minőség és méltányosság, a társadalom teljessége), így ez a szembenézés lehetővé teszi a azon hamis, fétisisztikus reményekkel való leszámolást, amelyek a pedagógiai filozófiákra oly jellemzőek, különös tekintettel a kritikai pedagógiára (pl. Freire, 1994).

A záró részben (A Pedagógia Elnyomottja) röviden felvázolom a freire-i kritikai pedagógia (a remény pedagógiájának) lehetséges kritikai kritikáját. A kutatás empirikus tapasztalatai alapján a pedagógiai egy olyan konceptualizálására vállalkozom, amely Badiou (2010) és Žižek (2017) kurrens filozófiai útkeresésére alapul, figyelembe véve azt is, hogy ez egy formálódó kutatási terület, amire McMillan 'a lehetetlen pedagógiájaként' hivatkozik (McMillan, 2015) utalva a 'hiányos szubjektum' pedagógiai értékére, és amelyet én később a Valós pedagógiájaként' összegzek.

Endnotes

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[i] I used the metaphor of Einstein's account of 'gravity' for illuminating the structuring function of the discursive account of domination as such. In the case of 'Capital *qua* domination' I am tempted to draw on the astrophysical concepts of 'dark matter' and 'dark energy'. According to the recent scientific state of quantum physics and the general theory of relativity, astrophysicists argue that almost 80% of the universe is composed of dark matter and dark energy. However, it ca not be directly observed. Dark matter for instance can be observed through gravitational lensing, because it bends light around galaxies. Dark matter is 'clustered in lumps, and those lumps become the homes to galaxies. (…) For our own Milky Way, that means that the dark matter density is the highest towards the very center of the galaxy' (Scudder, 2017). Dark energy, on the other hand, is an unknown form of energy that is hypothetically responsible for the *accelerating expansion of the universe* – contrary to all expectation in the past, that since matter is predominant in the universe, its expansion has to slow down due to the gravitational force. Dark energy thus has an antigravitational effect (it exerts negative pressure). The map below is created with the help of Hubble Space Telescope, and it shows the uneven distribution of dark matter and dark energy in three clusters of galaxies (A. Cho, 2017):
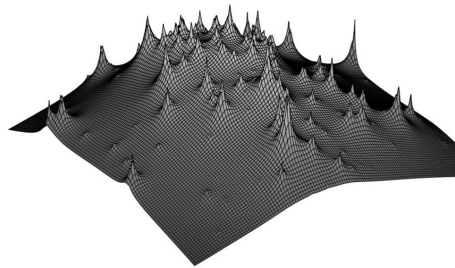
Within this metaphorical universe, one can identify on this map (1) the dense centers of dark matter (just as 'Capital *qua* domination' has uneven densities and dispersed centers of power throughout the Globe), and (2) the matrix-like veil of dark energy that smoothly covers the landscape, while expanding and accelerating the coordinates of space-time (just as the logic of Capital detotalizes, deterritorializes and decodes flows, signification, and so on). Žižek also addresses the phenomenon that centers of dark matter and energy induce the presence of density. In *How to Read Lacan* (2006a), he argues that, while in Einstein's special theory of relativity the curvation and distortion of space-time is considered as an effect of the presence of matter (as I elaborated it in the previous chapter regarding domination), in the general theory of relativity this correspondance between matter and space-time is reversed: 'far from *causing* the curvature of space, matter is its *effect* and the presence of matter signals that space is curved. What can all this have to do with psychoanalysis? Much more than it may appear: in a way that echoes Einstein, for Lacan the Real – the Thing – is not so much the inert presence that curves symbolic space (introducing gaps and inconsistencies in it), but, rather, an effect of these gaps and inconsistencies' (Žižek, 2006a, pp. 72–73).

[ii] One of the most talkative ways to illustrate how the Real class functions as a spectre (as a constitutive outside of the social field of representation) is by looking at the class-composition of new social movements and new antagonisms. Already since the protests of 1968, research suggests that the construction of antagonisms is to a large extent determined by social class, socioeconomic status, level of education, etc. (cf. Bourdieu, 1984). New social movements are in this sense socially exclusive, characterized by three tendencies: the overrepresentation of the upper classes and the new middle class; the flattening of the participation and representation of the working class; and the continuous under- and non-representation of the outcasts of society (Barker, Nilsen, Krinsky, & Gunvald, 2013; Chaudhuri, 2013; Eggert & Giugni, 2015; Hylmö & Wennerhag, 2012). This dilemma of representation is at the core of contemporary social movements, which while rhetorically represent the many, practically consist of the few – and eventually the class-composition of these movements result in the narrowing of goals and demands. The result is 'class-blindness' (Gagyi, 2011), characteristic to new antagonisms, from the 'Millennium strikes' to the European Social Forum (ESF), from the Spanish 'Indignados' movement to Occupy

Wall Street (Fernández, 2014; Zolcsák, 2013). The invisibility of the Real class makes at least visible that 'capitalism has an incredible ability to *assimilate critique*' (Chaudhuri, 2013, p. 180), because the construction and the constellation of the demands are overdetermined by the class-composition of representation. Thus, it universalizes to a certain degree the participant's relationship to the political: 'the person, who possesses the means to the production of political opinions and is not in need of delegating the production of opinion to others' (Gagyi, 2011, p. 112). Éber (2018a) refers to this tendency (which is to a large extent characteristic to semiperipheral countries, where the middle class is very thin) as the *trap of an optical illusion*, wherein the upper classes not only don't see that they are only at the 'tip of an iceberg', but they *don't see that they don't see it*. Hence, '[t]he problems of the wider, lower classes immerse into the sea: their protests are not expressed, they have no representation, the themes of the protests are not their demands. In the meantime, above the level of the sea, the smaller, upper part confuses its own problems *with the problems of the whole society* and misrecognizes itself *as the society per se*' (ibid., p. 220).

[iii] Baudrillard's example of the map is based on Jorge Luis Borges' novel, *On Exactitude in Science,* where cartographers make a detailed real-sized map of the Empire that covers the entire territory of the Empire. With the collapse of the Empire, the map also disintegrates, meaning that the map is destroyed as was the copy of it. For Baudrillard, Borges' logic is *passé*: '[I]t is the map that precedes the territory – *precession of simulacra* – it is (…) the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges subsist here and there, in the deserts which are no longer those of the Empire, but our own. *The desert of the real itself*' (1981/2001, p. 166). There is a direct reference to the last sentence of this quote in the Wachowskis' movie, *The Matrix* (1999), where Morpheus introduces Neo to reality through a computer simulation with the words: 'Welcome to the desert of the real.' If there ever was a movie besides *The Truman Show* which captured the concept of Debord's *spectacle* and Baudrillard's *hyperreality*, then it was *The Matrix*, where the hyperreal (the Matrix) becomes more tempting than reality (Zion) itself. As Kiss (2016) argues, Zion stands for Debord's radical politics, while the hyperreal of the Matrix is that of Baudrillard's hyperreality, where radical politics is encapsulated within the choice between the blue and the red pills. While Debord posits a reality of struggles and resistance, Baudrillard takes on a more pessimistic standpoint with 'the desert of the real.'

[iv] One of the best examples of the early germs of this 'positive' development is the works of Johann Friedrich Herbart. In the reprinted version of his *Outlines of Educational Doctrine* (1835/1913), he presented the practical considerations of the introductory pedagogical phase of his theory, called the 'government of children.' He based his concept on the pedagogical power of discipline, but obviously by introducing a 'fairer' and more 'positive' and 'humane' mode of discipline. 'It would be in vain to attempt to banish entirely the corporal punishments usually administered after fruitless reprimands; but use should be made of them so sparingly that they be feared rather than actually inflicted' (ibid., p. 51). Herbart introduced a few of the most successful techniques to guarantee constant obedience through the pedagogical practice of raising fear using mental and physical superiority. He urges teachers not to punish for too long and to look after the child (punishment should 'be feared rather than actually inflicted') and to use an 'adequate mode of disciplinary procedure' because inadequate punishment may produce backfire ('brutish insensibility is the consequence') and pupils would not 'conform to the system of order that obtains in the school' (ibid., p. 33).

[v] Although the intellectual hinterland of neoliberalism[*s*] is rooted in post-enlightenment 'classical' liberalism (which framed its political program around the freedom of individuals, the freedom of the market, the constitutionally limited government, the laissez-faire, the anti-mercantilist and anti-protectionist political economy and challenged the institution of inherited privileges and the dominance of the state), the post-Fordist neoliberal interventions of the 1970s have led ultimately to the limitation of the rights and freedom of the individual, to eroding social security, and to the protectionist merger of the state and the market in Western countries. The pioneering theorists of neoliberalism were Friedrich August von Hayek and Milton Friedman. Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* (1944), and Friedman's intellectual outburst *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), promoted the regulation and restriction of state interventions, and the broadening of market freedom (cf. D. S. Jones, 2012). However, to

have their prophecies fall on fertile ground (and to culminate in two Nobel Prizes), there had to occur a significant economic recession that had been fueled by two oil crises in 1973 and 1979. The crisis was largely conducive to the elimination of the Keynesian economic program and escalated into the onset of the transatlantic h[a]unting of the neoliberal spectre – that is designated in the literature also as *neoliberalization* (cf. Canaan, 2013). Neoliberalism soon infiltrated the political agendas of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which started to promote the extreme deregulation of the market and radical cuts to social expenditures from the 1980s, and it has infiltrated the Maastricht Treaty and then the European Constitution as well. By the beginning of the new millennium, the practices of the governing bodies of the European Union and the political projects of the OECD, WTO, IMF, World Bank, etc. had been hegemonized by neoliberalism (Lóránt, 2005). Thus, neoliberalism has become a global hegemonic formation on the basis of which modern globalization is evaluated and developed on the international scale. In the political rhetoric of neoliberalism[*s*], the market appears as a self-regulating social system with the proviso that the more freedom it enjoys, the better it functions. Hence, the arguments for cutting back restrictions on the market and restricting the state instead, since an extensively regulated market – as the argument goes – escalates into inequality, poverty, unemployment, etc. The assumption is that the free market is a condition for handling socio-economic problems, because the global free market can effectively meet the needs of society: it fosters economic growth, utilizes economic resources optimally and is conducive to full employment (Harvey, 1996, 2007; Shaikh, 2005; Somogyi, 1998; Stiglitz, 2002). Such political rhetoric, however, simply ignores the innermost contradictions of the global market economy, despite the fact that after several decades of neoliberal interventions, the social inequalities are still growing and poverty is deepening and widening around the globe. These issues are instead interpreted either as a symptom of the imperfect functioning of the market economy or as necessary side-effects of the economic processes toward perfection. The basic premise of the political economy of neoliberalism is that 'unemployment is either natural or voluntary', that it is a consequence of people's unwillingness to work in accordance to certain wages (Lóránt, 2005, p. 66). Thus, in neoliberal discourse, the cause of social inequalities and poverty is either transferred to the dimension of individual responsibility or is interpreted as a natural ingredient of the nature of economic development. But besides this account of negligence, the neoliberal state also uses direct and brutal techniques of punishment, control and discipline against marginalized groups.

[vi] The necessity of a positive shift in the degrees and modes of disciplinary techniques provided great opportunities realize education as a science through the diversity of possible fields of power/knowledge relations it could occupy and rationalize: teaching methods, time management, organizing spaces, directing sexuality, molding bodies, toilet training, prescribing rituals, examining and observing knowledge transaction (Kirk, 2001). The differentiation of spaces into classrooms, separating pupils spatially according to their diverse characteristics, and replacing the monitorial system and one-on-one teaching by putting the teacher in the centre of the classroom are the few early densities of the contingent constellation of education science (Landahl, 2013). Measurement, and the promises of quantification and statistics, also played a crucial role in the story of education's emergence as science. From the 18th century, institutionalizing the discourse of education had to realize that 'power always stands in need of numbers' (Arendt, 2002, p. 28), thus the School opened several 'classrooms' for the new power/knowledge relations of examination, observation, measurement, quantification and monitoring. This new scientific grid imposed upon the School greatly contributed to its increasing importance, intensified the interlinks between supervisors, observers, officers, monitoring groups, teachers, parents and pupils, and became responsible for the (still) multiplying number of bureaucrats in education. As a consequence of the new religion of measurement, calculation and examination, the School started controlling its own processes. Examinations, observations and School visits – which have their resemblances in pre-modern forms of disciplinary traditions, defined by Foucault (1972) as religious confession and medical examination – provided the appropriate scientific forms for extracting knowledge from students, teachers, headmasters and parents. This established those microphysics of power processes, in which people controlled and mastered one another and themselves in a self-disciplinary, intersubjectively subjected manner (Deacon & Parker, 1995). The appearance of examination 'in the form of tests, interviews, interrogations and consultations is apparently in order to rectify the mechanisms of discipline: educational psychology is supposed to correct the rigours of the School, just as the medical or psychiatric interview

is supposed to rectify the effects of the discipline of work' (Foucault, 1975, p. 226) Testing, the flagship of contemporary policy-making in education, started to become popular in education in the mid-19th century as a 'tool of government,' and after the post-Sputnik era it became the core arithmetic of normalizing judgment and jurisdiction not only for pupils, but for teachers, too (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). In the United States, written examination was introduced to educational practice around 1845, and the success-failure dichotomy was replaced with results given in percentages (McArthur, 1983). Around the same time, Francis Galton established the first mental testing centre in the world, and Europe was suddenly in the 'transitional phase' of giving birth to IQ testing. One of its most successful precursors was the Binet-Simon test, designed to identify mental retardation, to diagnose 'sickness' and redistribute children among the variety of normalizing institutions, from schools to asylums (Gregory, 2003; Huddleston & Boyer, 1996). Although contemporary testing culture avoids labels such as sickness, since it is based on hierarchical surveillance and normalizing judgment, it still 'assures the great disciplinary functions of distribution and classification' (Foucault, 1975, p. 192). Thus, the arithmetic of controlling the School with evaluations and training put not only the pupils under critical gaze. *Teachers, supervisors and school administrators were also under surveillance.* And this surveillance technology pointed to one of the most characteristic historical diversifications of education: *teaching as a science* was starting to appear at the developmental stage of a larva. '[J]ust as the procedure of the hospital examination made possible the epistemological "thaw" of medicine, the age of the "examining" School marked the beginnings of a pedagogy that functions as a science' (Foucault, 1975, p. 187). Teaching as a science and teacher professionalization emerged in the mid-19th century. The shift from practical knowledge to a mastery of knowledge and control over practice redefined the role of the teacher as a professional, which presupposed scientific knowledge and certification. While Comenius talked about *the art of teaching* in his Didactica Magna in 1632, a few centuries later the industrializing Western world required the implementation of a new strategy in institutionalized education: the evaluation of teaching profession, scientific standards for proper and objective knowledge in classroom instruction and, most important, qualified teacher educators.

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Ethical Considerations

The proposed research project is conceptualised as a comparative school ethnography based on first-hand qualitative research in schools. The qualitative data consists of interviews, workshops and field observations. The collected data will be only used in this project and participants will be acknowledged of the ways the data is going to be used and anonymized later. Anonymization will be implemented as a procedure for ensuring that data is kept securely and that publication does not lead to a breach of agreed confidentiality. The ethical considerations of the research methods follow strictly the Horizon2020 Program Guidance and ensures: 'respect for people and for human dignity and fair distribution of the benefits and burden of research, and that you must protect the values, rights and interests of the research participants,' page 9.

My primary research focus is how the school is embedded in its social and institutional environment in places of advanced marginality. In conversation with teachers and workers of other social institutions, information on children might be revealed that can be called sensitive data. These informations, however, will be strictly encoded and anonymized. The children themselves will not be interviewed. Information that could identify them will be strictly avoided in the publication of my research. At the heart of my interest is the teacher. Should he or she reveal personal sensitive data, this will also be encoded and his persona anonymized.

Procedure of consent

Participants will be given an informed consent form that is written in a language they can fully understand; outlines the purposes, methods of data collection, the nature of the participation. Additionally, the form explicitly states that participation is voluntary and that they have the right to refuse participation as well as the right to withdrawing their participation, samples or data at any time during the process — without any consequences. The form also states how data will be collected, protected during the project and either destroyed or reused subsequently. It also states what procedures will be implemented in the event of unexpected or incidental findings. The form informs also that data will be used for publication and that all personal information will be highly anonymized.

Permission for research in public schools has to be granted by school administration who determines which district-level of governance shall give the permission. In the cases of Hungary and Poland it is the director of the school, who gives the permission. In my case the first contact has been established with a Non-Governmental Organization in Poland, which joined the project signing Agreement 6 (Commitment of Partner Organizations). The two directors of the

schools that corresponded to my research were contacted and informed in Poland with the help of the Non-Governmental Organizations who already had informal contact with them. Only one of the schools agreed to sign Agreement 6. In Hungary the first contact has been established with a Non-Governmental Organization, which joined the project signing Agreement 6 (Commitment of Partner Organizations). The school in Budapest, that corresponded to my research were contacted and informed, and the school agreed to sign Agreement 6.

Before I entered into research activities with either the school or the NGO, or other institutions, the document "Declaration of Consent," provided in Polish and English, was signed by research participants. I am committed to ensure that all collected research data is treated confidentially. The document 'Declaration of Consent' comprised of:

- Information on the project and the research: name, aim, methods, risks and goals of the research.
- Declaration and consent of a person/parent/legal representative: personal data, contact data.

Research was carried out with tertiary institutions in my case, in Poland and in Hungary. Both NGOs are concerned with the popularization and protection of human rights. They work especially with marginalized groups that have been excluded from society such as immigrants, foreigners, and ethnic and religious minorities. Through number of actions, projects and cooperation with outside groups, these NGOs create relationships based on mutual understanding and good communication. The NGOs signed Agreement 6 and the employees, who participated actively in the research project signed the Declaration of Consent.

The above-mentioned form, the declaration of consent, which is signed by the research participants remains in copy with the participants. This way they are aware of their rights and the grounds on which research takes place at all times. Thus, they can reassure themselves at any point in the process of the option to withdraw from participation including also their given information up to this point. However, researchers will also continuously ensure themselves that participants are acting under consent. Researchers will ask participants before meeting and ensure all parties are participating voluntarily.

Vulnerable Individuals

Vulnerable Groups are categories of people who are not legally able to provide informed consent due to age or incompetence. Children, students, people who have a language difficulty, persons who have an intellectual or mental impairment, certain groups of elderly people, persons who are incarcerated, and people in dependent or unequal relationships

(teacher/lecturer-student, therapist-client, employees as participants) are also viewed as vulnerable groups. Other groups might also be included in this category depending on the nature and context of the research. My project involves vulnerable individuals, mostly children/students in marginalized communities, but only indirectly, since the focus of my research and data collection is on the side of the institution. However, even if I'm not going to make interviews with the children/students, all information I will receive on them or from them is considered here extremely sensitive. The measures that I take to prevent the risk of enhancing the vulnerability/ stigmatization include

- Anonymization of name and place and all other attributes if not relevant (age, gender, race, etc.)

- Involving participants only with their knowledge and consent

- Being transparent on the information about the true nature of the research

Children and students are always assured that their grades, social relations, etc. will not be affected by the research.

Technical Considerations

The researcher expects predominantly electronic data; thus, the procedures will comply with the relevant legislation (in particular EU Directive 2002/58/EC and 2006/24/EC). The collected data will be stored temporarily on a secured, encrypted computer HDD, and then will be moved and archived by uploading them to iCloud storage. Since data transfers will take place within the EU/EEA, the procedure will comply with the general requirements of Directive 95/46/EC. Offline data will be stored at the University of Lower Silesia. Computer hard drives are going to be encrypted and archiving data will comply with EU and national law (in particular, EU Directive 95/46/EC), since iCloud itself comply with the EU's Data Protection Directive relating also to cross-border transfers of personal data (following in particular the Model Clauses - standard contractual clauses approved by the European Commission). The data will be kept in an iCloud personal account and an encrypted copy of that will be written to DVD at the end of the research and will be kept at the University of Lower Silesia. The permanent and irreversible destruction of data is a cornerstone of protecting the privacy and security of collected data. For the irreversible destruction of data programmatic, software-based techniques will be implemented for sanitization, combined with the standard Read and Write commands to the storage, adapted from NIST Draft Special Publication 800-88 Rev 1. As above mentioned, the procedures take EU's Data Protection Directive into consideration and follows through with them along with EU Directive 2002/58/EC, Directive 2006/24/EC, the general

requirements of Directive 95/46/EC and the Model Clauses. These procedures are also in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act dated 29.08.1997 (uniform text: Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland 2002 No 101, item 926 with further amendments).

The EDiTE-EJD project has appointed an independent external Ethics Adviser (Priv.-Doz. Mag. Dr. phil. Robert Rebitsch) for monitoring and reporting the ethics issues to the REA and who will be able to advise on the consent/assent procedures that should be applied. Rebitsch is a member of the Ethical Board of the University of Innsbruck and is managing the office of the board since 2010. Further, the institutional ethics board of the Partner Universities are a first contact point for researchers to request advise on ethical issues.

DEKLARACJA ZGODY NA UDZIAŁ W BADANIACH

Prosimy o zapoznanie się z poniższymi informacjami, a następnie wypełnienie danych i podpis w deklaracji zgody.

INFORMACJE O BADANIACH

- Nazwa badań:

TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHER LEARNING FOR BETTER STUDENT LEARNING WITHIN AN EMERGING EUROPEAN CONTEXT.

- Cel badań: zrozumienie, w jaki sposób nauczyciele uczą się o uczeniu się innych osób. Uwaga w badaniach będzie skupiona na: 1) naturze profesjonalnej wiedzy nauczycieli, 2) kolektywnej lub społecznej naturze uczenia się nauczycieli, 3) roli prowadzenia własnych badań przez nauczycieli. Szkoła stanowi naturalny kontekst, w którym zachodzą procesy uczenia się nauczycieli (tzw. transformatywne uczenie się), dlatego jest miejscem prowadzenia badań.

- Metodologia badań: badania jakościowe - badania etnograficzne, badania w działaniu, wywiady indywidualne, wywiady fokusowe, badania dokumentacji

- Kierownik badań: dr hab. (Prof. DSW) Hana Cervinkova

- Czas trwania badań: czerwiec 2016 – grudzień 2018

- Możliwe ryzyka: uczestnikami badań mogą być również osoby niepełnoletnie. Badania zostaną przeprowadzone w zgodzie z ustawą o ochronie danych osobowych (ustawa z dnia 29.08.1997 r. o Ochronie Danych Osobowych; tekst jednolity: Dz.U. z 2014 r., poz.1182 ze zm.). Dane zebrane w badaniach poddane zostaną anonimizacji (prawdziwe imiona i nazwiska zostaną zastąpione pseudonimami lub kodami), zebrany materiał będzie archiwizowany w sposób uniemożliwiający dostęp osób trzecich.

- Źródła finansowania badań: program Horyzont 2020.

- Dane kontaktowe instytucji prowadzącej badania:

dr hab. (Prof. DSW) Hana Cervinkova

Kierownik Projektu EDiTE, Prodziekan ds. Międzynarodowej Edukacji i Badań
Wydział Nauk Pedagogicznych
Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa
ul. Strzegomska 55
53-611 Wrocław

- spełnianie wymogów etycznych niniejszych badań gwarantuje:

Uczelniana Komisja ds. etyki badań naukowych

Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej
ul. Wagonowa 9
53-609 Wrocław

- Uczestnikom przysługuje prawo wglądu do swoich danych, ich korekty oraz prawo do odwołania zgody na udział w badaniach.

Badania stanowią część projektu "European Doctorate in Teacher Education" (EDITE) finansowanego ze środków Komisji Europejskiej w ramach programu Horyzont 2020 (działania Maria Skłodowska-Curie – numer umowy 676452).

………………..   ………………………………………

miejsce i data   *podpis kierownika projektu*

DEKLARACJA ZGODY dla osoby pełnoletniej

Ja ……………………………………………….……….(*imię i nazwisko*) niżej podpisany/podpisana zostałem/zostałam poinformowany/a o nazwie i celu badań i wyrażam zgodę na udział w badaniach...
……………………………………………………………….(*tytuł badań*).

…………………..   ……………………………………………
miejsce i data   *czytelny podpis*
                    uczestnika/uczestniczki badań

DECLARATION OF CONSENT for an adult person

I …………………………………………….………(*name and surname*)   have been
informed on the title and aim of the research and I declare participation in the research
……………...
.... (*title of the research*).

…………………………..   ……….…………………………………………
        place and date   *signature of the research participant*

SZERZŐDÉSI NYILATKOZAT felnőtt személy számára

Alulírott …………………………………………………….(*vezetéknév és keresztnév*) elismerem, hogy tájékoztattak a kutatás címéről és céljáról, és kijelentem, hogy részt veszek a kutatásban... .... (*a kutatás címe*).

……………………………..   …………………………………………………………

Datum és hely   *A kutatás résztvevőjének aláírása*

University of Lower Silesia

Wrocław, …………………………..

……………………………………………….
Surname and name

……………………………………………….
Address

DECLARATION

Aware of legal liability, I declare that the submitted doctoral dissertation entitled:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………

has been written by me independently.

At the same time I declare that the dissertation does not violate copyrights as defined by the Copyrights and the Related Rights Act of 4 February 1994 (Journal of Laws of 1994, no. 24, item 83), or personal rights protected by civil law.

Moreover, the dissertation does not contain information and data obtained illegally, and had not previously been the subject of other official procedures connected with obtaining diplomas or professional titles at universities.

……………………………………………….
Signature of the doctoral student