JUHA KOIVISTO

Unruly Subjects

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
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Preface

This dissertation on some key concepts necessary to develop critical media studies grew out of my work on several collective projects. The most important of these were *Projekt Ideologie-Theorie* (PIT) on which I worked in West Berlin 1983-85 and the *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus*, the first volume of which came out in 1994 and on which the work after many more volumes will continue in years to come. Last but not least, many of the following texts presented here are results of collective writing and learning processes:

1. The Resurgence of the Critical Theories of Public Sphere. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 20(1996)2; 18-36. (together with Esa Väliverronen) (In German in *Das Argument* 201/1993, 717-732.)

2. Ideal I. In: Wolfgang Fritz Haug (Hrsg.): *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus. Band 6.1. Hegemonie bis Imperialismus.* Argument-Verlag; Berlin – Hamburg 2004, 592-99.

3. Der Umstrittene Ideologiebegriff. W.F. Haugs Theorie des Ideologischen im Vergleich. Afterword in: W.F. Haug: *Elemente einer Theorie des Ideologischen*. Argument-Sonderband AS 203. Argument-Verlag; Hamburg - Berlin 1993, 233-246. (together with Veikko Pietilä).

4. Ideological Powers and Resistance: The Contribution of W.F. Haug and Projekt Ideologie-Theorie. *Rethinking Marxism* 9 (1997)4, 40-59. (together with Veikko Pietilä)

5. Gebrauchswertversprechen. In: Wolfgang Fritz Haug (Hg.): *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus. Band 4*. Hamburg; Argument-Verlag 1999, 1289-1298.

6. The Heirs of Baron Münchausen in a Paradoxical Space. A shortened version of a text published previously in Finnish in Tarmo Malmberg and Lauri Mehtonen (eds.) Kanssakäymisiä. Juhlakirja Veikko Pietilälle. Tampere 1992, 73-112. (together with Risto Suikkanen) (now under review in *Historical Materialism*)

7. Hegemonialapparat. In: Wolfgang Fritz Haug (Hrsg.). *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus. Band 5.* Argument-Verlag; Berlin – Hamburg 2001, 1258-1270. (together with Stefan Bollinger)

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Tampere, February 14, 2005

Introduction and summary

Conformism, Reform and Historic Shift to Hegemonic Projects

I

“Obedience and Subjection” are according to David Hume “so familiar, that most men never make any enquiry about its origin or cause, more than about the principle of gravity, resistance, or the most universal laws of nature” (E 470). Hume’s statement seems to have lost none of its pertinence today. He wrote that “[n]othing appears more surprizing to those, who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few” (E, 32). In depicting the reasons behind this 'wonder' he brings in the dialectic between 'force' and 'opinion':

> "When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as *force* is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to most free and most popular. The soldan of Egypt or the emperor of Rome, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination: But he must, at least, have led his mamalukes or pretorian bands like men, by their opinion." (ibid., 32-33)

Thus, though all governments are more or less founded on 'opinion' in their use of 'force', especially the "stability of modern governments" (EHU, 10) depends on 'opinion'.

The following studies on some key concepts necessary to develop critical media studies deal with 'modern' forms of producing 'opinion' as well as 'obedience and subjection'. They study public sphere, discursive formations, ideological powers or hegemonic apparatuses, and commodity aesthetics as forms of societalization (*Vergesellschaftung*), i.e. as forms of practices producing social relations and active social agents (and their identifications and identities) as the two sides of the same coin (cf. Koivisto – Mehtonen 2001). Indeed, to put it briefly and somewhat facetiously, the subject is their power to produce subjects – perhaps even unruly ones. A good witticism would not need an explanation since it works on the basis of shared knowledge and linguistic codes. That may not be the case here, and an explanation of the pun is in order, especially since it perhaps at the same time serves as a timely anticipatory reaction to customary questions (usually the first ones) about the title of an academic dissertation.

To start with 'unruly', both compressing and adding some new information to that of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993) defines the word, in use already in late Middle English (dated 1350-1469), as "not easily controlled or disciplined; ungovernable; disorderly", "characterized by disorder or disquiet", "severe, incurable" in late 16th and early 17th century, and, now rarely, "stormy, tempestuous". As a noun, in use since the early 17th century, it means "an unruly person" and, as collective plural, "*the* class of unruly people".

The noun 'subject' seems to point in the opposite direction. 'Subject' derives from Latin *sub* (under) and *jacere* (throw, cast). As Raymond Williams (1988, 308) puts it, "the Latin root sense was evident in its earliest English meanings: (i) a person under the dominion of a lord or a sovereign; (ii) substance; (iii) matter worked upon." Of these three meanings the first and third are still clearly recognizable in the current use of the term. Concerning the first, the NSOED gives as an example a rather humorous quotation from Anthony Burgess: "I am a subject of the British Crown. You can't put me under arrest." The third is summarized in its current use by Williams as "an area or topic or theme which is studied, or written or spoken about, or modelled or painted; a subject being worked on" (ibid.).

According to the NSOED the adjective 'subject' has since Middle English meant "owing obedience to a sovereign, government, colonizing power, etc.; under the rule or domination of another country, group, etc., in subjection", and further "bound by a law or jurisdiction" or "under the control or influence of, subordinate to", also "vulnerable, exposed or susceptible to some (esp. harmful) occurrence or condition". In an obsolete use, dating from late Middle English to early 17th century,

it meant a direct opposite of unruly, namely "submissive, obedient". Yet, through a highly complicated process there has evolved a conception of a 'subject' as an active agent and a sovereign source of its own actions. This line of development has its roots in the above-mentioned second meaning of the noun 'subject' as a substance. A conception developing from the early 17th century and especially after Descartes proposed the thinking self as the first substantial area (i.e. the 'subject') of knowledge from the operations of which the independent existence of all other things (often with the exception of God) should be deduced. Intertwined with these developments is the evolving function of 'subject' in grammar from the 18th century, "typically denoting the actor in a predication" as the NSOED puts it.

The purpose of this small digression into etymology has been to explain the pun based on three different meanings of 'subject', utilized both above and in the title of this work. However, at the same time we have actually gained a preliminary mapping of some of the main dimensions of these enquiries. As Hume pointed out, obedience and subjection conveyed by opinions is indeed a tenacious subject in social theory, a subject that is rather hard to bury. One reason for this is the built-in topic of individuals as subjects, both as subordinated and as acting, perhaps even resisting and rebellious agents, able to radically expand their capacity for action.

Gramsci has pointed out that when it comes to worldview everybody is a "conformist" since we belong to some group that shares a common way of thinking and acting (Q 11, §12, 1376). Yet for Gramsci conformism does not necessarily mean kowtowing or passivity (see *Lettere* 2, 475-76). For him conformism, the word he likes to use to irritate the imbeciles, means simply social being: "Conformismo significa […] niente altro che 'socialità', mi piace impiegare la parola 'conformismo' appunto per urtare gli imbecilli." (Q 14, §61, 1720) For Gramsci "la socialità, il conformismo, è il risultato di una lotta culturale (e non solo culturale)" (Q 14, §61, 1720, cf. Barfuss 2002) and he writes that we experience an ongoing struggle between conformisms, i.e. a struggle over hegemony (Q 7, §12, 862). The crucial point is the social expansion and the type of conformism: is it critical and working towards coherence or passively received and disintegrated (Q 11, §12, 1376).

II

The problematics pointed out by Hume and Gramsci are not without history. It is also a history of the topics dealt in the texts collected in this study. An interesting figure in this respect is Thomas Hobbes, who, according to Habermas, projected a state that "auf die auctoritas des Fürsten allein gegründet, von den Überzeugungen und Gesinnungen der Untertanen unabhängig ist" (1962, 113). Yet, according to Hobbes "the actions of men proceed from opinions, and in the well-governing of opinions consisteth the well-governing of men's actions, in order to their peace and concord". Thus "it is annexed to the sovereignty to be judge of what opinions and doctrines are averse, and what conducing, to peace; and consequently, on what occasions, how far, and what men are to be trusted withal, in speaking to multitudes of people, and who shall examine the doctrines of all books before they be published". (*Leviathan*, II, xviii; cf. *De Cive* VI, 11) Indeed, for him the dangerous, widespread opinion of the distribution of power was behind the Civil War in England (*Leviathan*, II, xviii). He was thus strongly for "the rooting out from the consciences of men all those opinions which seem to justify, and give pretence of right to rebellious actions". However, according to Hobbes "opinions which are gotten by education, and in the length of time are made habitual, cannot be taken away by force, and upon sudden: they must therefore be taken away also, by time and education". (*The Elements of Law* 2.IX.8) Not least because of the social division of labour, linked to the necessities of subsistence, it is the universities that play the crucial role in this change – mediated by what in media research was later 'invented' as a 'two-step flow model' or in a more sophisticated vein as a 'multi-step flow model':

> "They whom necessity or covetousness keepeth attent on their trades and labour, and they, on the other side, whom superfluity or sloth carrieth after their sensual pleasures (which two sorts of men take up the greatest part of mankind), being diverted from the deep meditation which the learning of truth, not only in the matter of natural justice, but also of all other sciences requireth, receive the notions of their duty chiefly from the divines in the pulpit, and partly from such of their neighbours of familiar acquaintance as having the faculty of discoursing readily and plausibly seem wiser, and better learned in cases of law and conscience, than themselves. And divines, and such others as make show of learning, derive their knowledge from the universities and from the schools of law, or from the books which by men eminent in those schools and universities have been published." (*Leviathan* II, xxx)

Instead of the doctrine of Aristotle and others, "who have delivered nothing concerning morality and policy demonstratively; but being passionately addicted to popular government; have insinuated their opinion, by eloquent sophistry", universities should teach "the true doctrine concerning the

law of nature, and the properties of a body politic". (*The Elements of Law* 2.IX.8) After all, "the skill of making and maintaining commonwealths consisteth in certain rules, as doth arithmetic and geometry, not (as tennis-play) on practice only" stated Hobbes (*Leviathan* II, xx), an avid tennis-player himself still at the age of 75 according to Aubrey (*Brief Life*, 241). The universities should address "young men" whose "minds are yet as white paper"; They in turn would "afterward teach it to the people, both in books and otherwise" (*The Elements of Law* 2.IX.8). After all, also "common people's minds […] are like clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever by public authority shall be imprinted in them" (*Leviathan* II, xxx). In the last chapter of *Leviathan*, named *A Review and Conclusion*, he also writes with a bold theological allusion how "the Universities are the fountains of civil and moral doctrine, from whence the preachers and the gentry, drawing such water as they find, use to sprinkle the same (both from the pulpit and in their conversation) upon the people, there ought certainly to be great care taken to have it pure, both from the venom of heathen politicians and from the incantation of deceiving spirits". Indeed, another great ideological power is of course the Church and it ought to be ruled by "they who have the sovereign power"; "If that were not, but kings should command one thing upon pain and death, and priests another upon pain of damnation, it would be impossible that peace and religion should stand together." (*The Elements of Law*, 2.VII.10)

The ultimate reason for the importance of ideological powers and their regulation of opinions is that "the power of the mighty hath no foundation but in the opinion and belief of the people" (*Behemoth*, 16); "if men know not their duty, what is there that can force them to obey laws? An army, you will say. But what shall force the army?" (ibid., 59)

However, it has been claimed that Hobbes' approach creates a problem when it comes to the inner commitment of an individual to the state because his approach was thought to favour a kind of opportunism. Macaulay formulated the problem in the following way in his *History of England* (Part II, Chap. 2): "Thomas Hobbes had […] maintained the will of the prince as the standard of right and wrong and that every subject ought to be ready to profess Popery, Mahometanism, or Paganism at the royal command. Thousands who were incompetent to appreciate what was really valuable in his speculations, eagerly welcomed a theory which, while it exalted kingly office, relaxed the obligations of morality, and degraded morality into a mere affair of the state." Carl Schmitt (1938/1982, 85-86) works on the same point from a different perspective. Whereas Macaulay craves for the congruence of state and traditional moral values, i.e. the hegemony of state over those values and inner convictions, Schmitt wants to abolish the incongruence of individual

conviction, *fides*, and public *confessio*, thus rejecting any private or individual 'inner' realm not synchronized by the state. According to Schmitt, Hobbes' mistake was to create a space for such an inner realm that was to become the starting point for a series of dangerous interventions; "Schon wenige Jahre nach dem Erscheinen des 'Leviathan' fiel der Blick des ersten liberalen Juden [Spinoza –JK] auf die kaum sichtbare Bruchstelle. Er erkannte in ihr sofort die große Einbruchstelle des modernen Liberalismus" (Ibid., 86). Thus Schmitt in an anti-Semitic diatribe, articulating Liberalism, Humanism, and Enlightenment (and later of course, Bolshevism) as his enemies. His problem is that "angeblich freie Privatsphäre wurde dem Staat entzogen, und den 'freien', d.h. unkontrollierten und unsichtbaren Mächten der 'Gesellschaft' ausgeliefert" (ibid., 117), eroding the state as the truly potent sovereign power that operates in unanimity with its subjects and ruthlessly towards its enemies. From Schmitt's fascist perspective the task, connected to the strengthening of the SS state and the impending war, was to erode any potential site of inner resistance – in both senses of the word.

III

Locke, still in his twenties, stated in his 'Preface to the Reader' from his *First Tract on Government* (1661) that "the generality of men, conducted either by chance or advantage, take to themselves their opinions as they do their wives, which when they have once espoused they think themselves concerned to maintain, though for no other reason but because they are theirs". The outcome was a clash of opinions that was threatening the peace. This was deeply troubling for Locke, who wrote of himself that "I no sooner perceived myself in the world but I found myself in a storm, which hath lasted almost hitherto" (ibid.). Locke is of course referring here to the English Civil War, and – like Hobbes before him – he would always stress the crucial importance of peace and civic order. In the *Two Tracts on Government* (written 1660/61) he favoured for this end strong state authority in a Hobbesian mould and favoured "absolute and arbitrary power" (*First Tract*, 123). In *Essays on the Law of Nature* (written 1664) Locke wanted to give a natural law foundation for the view that the subjection to sovereign power should operate by inner consent: "we should not obey a king just out of fear, because, being more powerful, he can constrain (this would establish firmly the authority of tyrants, robbers, and pirates), but for conscience's sake, because the law of nature decrees that princes and law-maker, or a superior by whatever name you call him, should be obeyed." (ibid.,

189) However, like Hobbes again, he was convinced that tradition and customary arguments would not sustain the burden to be placed on them:

> "For since traditions vary so much world over and men's opinions are so obviously opposed to one another and mutually destructive, and that not only among different nations but in one and the same state – for each single opinion we learn from others becomes a tradition – and finally since everybody contends so fiercely for his own opinion and demands that he be believed, it would plainly be impossible – supposing tradition alone lays down the ground of our duty – to find out what that tradition is, or to pick out truth from among such a variety, because no ground can be assigned why one man of the older generation, rather than another maintaining quite the opposite, should be credited with the authority of tradition or be more worthy of the trust; except it be that reason discovers a difference in the things in themselves that are transmitted, and embraces one opinion while rejecting another, just because it detects more evidence recognizable by the light of nature for the one than another. Such a procedure, surely, is not the same as to believe in tradition, but is an attempt to form a considered opinion about things themselves; and this brings all the authority of tradition to naught." (*Essays on the Law of Nature*, 131)

Locke analysed the contested nature of 'tradition' and tried to offer the natural law approach as a solution that would provide the minimal but uncontested basis for peace and order. After this (if you allow, rather un-Gadamerian) demolition of the authority of tradition followed *An Essay Concerning Toleration* (1667). Induced by the growing division of the country caused by the forced imposition of official religious views, Locke concluded that the attempted remedy, supported earlier by himself, was turning out worse than the sickness it was meant to cure; forcible attempts at uniformity were counterproductive, leading to growing polarization, disintegration and revolt. In Locke's critical view, "all that speak against toleration seem to suppose that severity and force are the only arts of government" (*An Essay Concerning Toleration*, 209). Locke, advocating what we might call more hegemonic politics, stated that "force cannot master the opinions men have, nor plant new ones in their breasts" (ibid., 206).

In *Two Treatises of Government* Locke pursues further the diminishing of the relative weight of the coercive state; advocating the topics of *consent* and *trust* he criticises the view according to which "the people being ignorant, and always discontented, to lay the Foundation of Government in the unsteady opinion, and uncertain Humour of the People, is to expose it to certain ruine" (ibid., II, §223). On the contrary, Locke states that "introducing a Power which the people hath not authoriz'd, they actually *introduce a state of War*, which is that of Force without Authority" (ibid., II, §227). For a modern reader it should perhaps be added, that 'people' was conceived much more narrowly at that time compared to ours (see Hill 1988). Yet, there is an important shift away from a

state centred view of human *Vergesellschaftung* (where state is conceived in a narrow, not integral sense). According to Locke's general view, somehow reminiscent of later views of 'base' and 'superstructure', "where the Society is dissolved, the Government cannot remain; that being as impossible as for the Frame of an House to subsist when the Materials of it are scattered, and dissipated by a Whirl-wind, or jumbled into a confused heap by an Earthquake". (ibid., II, §211)

In *A Letter Concerning Toleration* – written in 1685 and published in 1689 – Locke continued to advocate toleration. He put forward an astoundingly acute argument concerning the social and political construction of identity and its relation to oppression and social rebellions:

> "Suppose this business of religion were let alone, and that there were some other distinction made between men and men, upon account of their different complexions, shapes, and features, so that those who have black hair (for example), or grey eyes, should not enjoy the same privileges as other citizens; that they should not be permitted either to buy or sell, or live by their callings; that parents should not have the government and education of their own children; that they should either be excluded from the benefit of laws, or meet with partial judges; can it be doubted but these persons, thus distinguished from others by the colour of their hair and eyes, and united together by one common persecution, would be as dangerous to the magistrate as any others that had associated themselves merely upon account of religion? Some enter into company for trade and profit: others, for want of business, have their clubs for claret. Neighbourhood joins some, and religion others. But there is only one thing which gathers people into seditious commotions, and that is oppression." (*A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 428-29)

However, the view presented above did not hinder him from recommending the non-toleration of Catholics and Atheists (ibid., 426). The former because they "are subjects of any prince but pope" (*An Essay Concerning Toleration*, 197) and the latter because "promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all." (*A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 426). Yet Locke stressed once again that "it is one thing to persuade, another to command" (ibid., 395) and that "it is only light and evidence that can work a change in men's opinions, and that light can in no manner proceed from corporeal sufferings, or any other outward penalties." (ibid., 395)

In Locke's *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, a project for reforming the opinion of the time, the view centred on narrowly understood state is further diluted. He distinguishes three different types of laws governing human actions: "1. The *Divine* Law. 2. The *Civil* Law. 3. The Law of *Opinion* or *Reputation*" (*An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, II, xxviii, §7). This third

law maintains that "the measure of what is every where called and esteemed *Vertue* and *Vice* is this approbation or dislike, praise and blame, which by a secret and tacit consent establishes it self in the several Societies, Tribes and Clubs of Men in the World" (ibid, §10). For Locke, "he who imagines Commendation and Disgrace, not to be strong Motives on Men, to accommodate themselves to the Opinions and Rule of those, with whom they converse, seems little skill'd in the Nature, or History of Mankind: the greatest part whereof he shall find to govern themselves chiefly, if not solely, by this Law of Fashion" (ibid., §12).

Thus men "do that, which keeps them in Reputation with their Company, little regard the Laws of God, or the Magistrate". Men reflect little on the penalties for breaching God's laws, count on a future reconciliation with Him, or develop schemes in order to evade punishment by the Magistrate,

> "But no Man escapes the Punishment of their Censure and Dislike, who offends against the Fashion and Opinion of the Company he keeps […] Nor is there one of ten thousand, who is stiff and insensible enough, to bear up under the constant Dislike, and Condemnation of his own Club. He must be of a strange, and unusual Constitution, who can content himself, to live in constant Disgrace and Disrepute with his particular Society. Solitude many Men have sought, and been reconciled to: But no Body, that has the least Thought, or Sense of a Man about him, can live in Society, under the constant Dislike, and ill opinion of his Familiars, and those he converses with. This is a Burthen too heavy for humane Sufferance: And he must be made of irreconcilable Contradictions, who can take Pleasure in Company, and yet be insensible of Contempt and Disgrace from his Companions." (ibid.)

For Locke human sociability, including human passions and interests, also extends to processes of knowledge. Accordingly, the most damaging pattern that "keeps in Ignorance, or Errour, more People than all the other together" is "*giving up our Assent to the common received Opinions*, either of our friends, or party; Neighbourhood, or Country." Thus "all Men are liable to Errour, and most Men are in many Points, by Passion or Interest, under Temptation to it." This extends also to the intellectuals in the worlds of learning and politics:

> "If we could but see the secret motives, that influenced the Men of Name and Learning in the World, and the Leaders of the Parties, we should not always find, that it was the embracing of Truth for its own sake, that made them espouse the Doctrines, they owned and maintained. This at least is certain, there is not an Opinion so absurd, which a Man may not receive upon this ground." (ibid., IV, xx, §17)

Yet, Locke points out that "there are not so many Men in Errours, and wrong Opinions, as is commonly supposed." His sarcastic argument is to sidestep the question of truth vs. error and to

look at the social conditions of knowledge formation. For Locke this social process of knowledge comprises a strong conformist dimension, which, if it goes unnoticed and unreflected by the persons themselves, can have grave effects:

> "Not that I think they embrace the Truth; but indeed, they have no Thought, no Opinion at all. For if any one should a little catechise the greatest part of the Partisans of most the Sects in the World, he would not find, concerning those Matters they are so zealous for, that they have any Opinions of their own: much less would he have Reason to think, that they took them upon the Examination of Arguments, and Appearance of Probability. They are resolved to stick to a Party, that Education or Interest has engaged them in; and there, like the common soldiers of an Army, shew their Courage and Warmth, as their leaders direct, without ever examining, or so much as knowing the Cause they contend for."

However we understand 'professor' in the following, Locke's view of conformist social formation of ideas may sometimes have a little pertinence even when it comes to the modern sense of the word:

> "'Tis enough for him to obey his Leaders, to have his Hand and his Tongue ready for the support of the common Cause, and thereby approve himself to those, who can give him Credit, Preferment, or Protection in that Society. Thus Men become Professors of, and Combatants for those Opinions, they were never convinced of" (ibid., §18).

IV

Locke's own pupil, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) whose powerful grandfather Locke had served as a doctor, secret agent and conceptive intellectual, develops further the idea of the fundamental role of consent in civil society, formed together with a "*publick"*, in creating a strong state and, as we learn, a strong nation. Shaftesbury wrote in his three-volume work *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinion, Times* (1711) that "A Multitude held together by Force, tho under one and the same Head, is not properly united: Nor does such a Body make *a People*. 'Tis the social Ligue, Confederacy, and mutual Consent, founded in some common Good or Interest, which joins the Members of a Community, and makes a People ONE. Absolute Power annuls *the Publick*: And where there is no *Publick*, or *Constitution*, there is in reality no *Mother*-COUNTRY, or NATION. "(III, 143).

For Shaftesbury a ‘multitude held together by force’ is a result of the dominant position of religion and priests in a society. In the long run this supremacy leads to religious strife and finally to wars of religion and authoritarian states. But before that for priests

> “’Tis a tempting circumstance: to have so easy a Mastery over the World; to subdue by Wit instead of force; to practice on the Passions, and triumph over the Judgement of Mankind; to influence private Familys, and publick Councils; conquer Conquerors; controul the Magistrate himself, and govern without the Envy which attends all other Government or Superiority. No wonder if such *a Profession* was apt to multiply: especially when we consider the easy Living and Security of the Professors”. (III, 44).

This favourable social position leads among the increasing group of priests to a growth of hierarchical structures and competition over the resources; thus “Provinces and Nations were divided by the most contrary Rites and Customs which cou’d be devis’d, in order to create the strongest aversion possible between Creatures of a like Species” (III, 60). Religious strife was fought on various levels; intellectual, organizational and military:

> “from the contentious learning and sophistry of the antient Schools (when true Science, Philosophy, and arts were already deep in their Decline) *religious Problems* of a like contentious Form sprang up; and certain *Doctrinal* TESTS were fram’d, by which *religious Partys* were ingag’d and lifted against one another, with more Animosity than in any other Cause or Quarrel had been ever known. Thus *religious Massacres* began, and they were carry’d on”. (III, 61)

Thus “here first began that Spirit of *Bigotry*” that was “less capable of Temper or Moderation than any Species, Form, or Mixture of Religion in the antient World “ (III, 80). Shaftesbury has a keen eye for ideological practices that kept up this “vulgar Species of Enthusiasm”. It was “mov’d chiefly by *Shew* and *Ceremony*, and wrought upon by Challices and Candles, Robes, and figur’d Dances” (III, 91).

Shaftesbury is sceptical about theories of natural law that see “Civil Government and Society appear a kind of Invention”; According to him there is a “*herding* Principle, and *associating* Inclination” that is “*natural* and strong in most Men”. Its starting point is “that Affection that is between the Sexes” and that extends “towards the consequent Offspring; and so again between the

Offspring themselves", thus "*a Clan* or *Tribe* is gradually formed; *a Publick* is recognized" (I, 110). For Shaftesbury this process entails the development of *common sense*, based both on pleasure and self-interest:

> "[B]esides the Pleasure found in social Entertainment, Language, and Discourse, there is so apparent a Necessity for continuing this good Correspondency and Union, that to have no *Sense* or Feeling of this kind, no Love of Country, Community, or any thing *in common*, wou'd be the same as to be insensible even of the plainest Means of *Self-Preservation*, and most necessary Condition of *Self-Enjoyment*." (I, 110-11)

For Shaftesbury, who was "politically close to many of the central figures in the Radical Enlightenment" (Jacob 1981, 144), it is "difficult to apprehend what Community subsisted among Courtiers; or what Publick between an absolute Prince and his Slave-Subjects. And for real *Society*, there cou'd be none between such as had no other Sense than that of *private Good*." (I, 105-6)

Shaftesbury, however, reflects how strong feelings of belonging to a community are attached even to very hierarchical and oppressive forms of political organization. For him there "is something still of a *publick Principle*, even where it is most perverted and depress'd. The worst of Magistracys, *the mere Despotick kind*, can shew sufficient Instances of Zeal and Affection towards it. Where no other Government is known, it seldom fails in having that Allegiance and Duty paid it, which is owing to a better Form." (I, 107) State, even a tyrannical one, seems in a way to play the role of a parent for its subjects: "If Men have *really* no publick Parent, no Magistrate in common to cherish and protect 'em, they still *imagine* they have such a one; and, like new-born Creatures who have never seen their Dam, will fansy one for themselves, and apply (as by Nature prompted) to some like Form, for Favour and protection." (I, 108)

Yet in troubled times to "bring the Sword, or Fasces, as a Cure, must make the Case more melancholy, and increase the very Cause of the Distemper" (I, 16). Instead the "Magistrate, if he be any Artist, shou'd have a gentler hand; and instead of Causticks, Incisions, and Amputations, should be using the softest Balms; and with a kind Sympathy entering into the Concern of the People, and taking, as it were, their Passion upon him, shou'd, when he has sooth'd and satisfy'd it, endeavour, by cheerful ways, to divert and heal it." (I, 17)

Since “the weakest Mortal finds within himself, that tho he may be *out-witted* and *deluded*, he can never be f*orc’d* in what relates to his *Opinion* or *Assent*” (III, 107) it is “by Freedom of Conversation […] illiberal kind of Wit will lose its Credit. For Wit is its own Remedy. Liberty and Commerce bring it to its true Standard.” (I, 63-64) Thus Gadamer’s socially exclusive claim in his *Wahrheit und Methode* that “Shaftesbury beschränkt wit und humour ausdrücklich auf den geselligen Umgang unter Freunden“ (1960/1972, 24) is simply false (like his reading of David Hume, see Koivisto 1993, 54-55). For Shaftesbury “All Politeness is owing to Liberty. We polish one another, and rub off our Corners and rough sides by a sort of *amicable Collision*. To restrain this, is inevitably to bring Rust upon Mens Understandings” (I, 64).

As an integral part of this hegemonic reform project with many dimensions (economy, politics, freedom of expression, manners and morality, knowledge …) Shaftesbury speaks for an increasingly self-directing subject that can use humour and irony in reflecting and organizing his or her own opinions in order to attain a certain coherence and capacity for action :

> “For let WILL be ever so free, *Humour* and *Fancy*, we see, govern it. And these, as free as we suppose ‘em, are often chang’d we know not how, without asking our consent, or giving us any account. If *Opinion* be that which governs, and makes the change; ‘tis itself liable to be govern’d, and vary’d in its turn. […] So that if there be no certain *Inspector* or *Auditor* establish’d within us, to take account of these Opinions and Fancys in due Form, […] we are as little likely to continue a Day in the same *Will*, as a Tree, during a Summer, in the same *Shape*, without Gardner’s assistance, and the vigorous application of the Shears and Pruning-knife.” (I, 185-86)

When it comes to this “inward OEconomy” (III, 201) the situation is that “Either I work upon my *Fancys*, or they on *Me*” (1, 323); “Every Man indeed who is not absolutely beside himself, must of necessity hold his Fancys under some kind of discipline and management.” (ibid.)

Shaftesbury argues that it is “just and reasonable” also to take distance from one’s own received opinions. When it comes to opinions one must “turn ‘em every way”: “For that which can be shewn only in *a certain* light, is questionable. Truth, ‘tis suppos’d, may bear *all* Lights: and *one* of those principal Lights or natural Mediums, by which Things are to be view’d, in order to throw Recognition, is *Ridicule* it-self.” (I, 61) Shaftesbury does not long for a ‘foundational’ theory of knowledge but thematizes instead social processes of knowledge producing self-reflecting subjects.

For him “the most ingenious way of becoming foolish, is by *a System*. And the surest Method to prevent good Sense, is to set up something in the room of it.” (I, 290)

Young Shaftesbury wrote to John Locke that “What I count True Learning, and all wee can profit by, is to know our selves”. (Letter to John Locke, September 29, 1694, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, Vol. 5, 150). Later in *Characteristicks*, too, he thinks that the task of philosophy is “*to know my-self*” (I, 298) and “To discover, how we may, to our best advantage, form within our-selves what in the polite World is call’d *a Relish*, or *Good* TASTE.” (III, 154) For Shaftesbury “’Tis We our-selves create and form our TASTE. […] But who dares search Opinion to the bottom, or call in question his *early* and *prepossessing* TASTE? Who is so just to himself, as to recal his FANCY from the power of *Fashion* and *Education*, to that of REASON?” (III, 186) Here “arises Work and Employment for us Within”, namely “To regulate FANCY, and rectify OPINION, on which all depends” (III, 198-99).

V

For Gramsci the analytic difference between ‘civil society’ and ‘political society’ can be understood as a difference between “autogoverno” and “governo dei funzionari”. The advance of the bourgeoisie to become a ruling class cannot be grasped solely as the setting free of the new ‘homo oeconomicus’ but as a “movimento per creare una nuova civiltà, un nuovo tipo di uomo e di cittadino”. In its most developed forms this has meant efforts to encircle the political society with “una complessa e bene articolata società civile, in cui il singolo individuo si governi de sé senza che perciò questo suo autogoverno entri in conflitto con la società politica, anzi diventandone la normale continuazione, il complemento organico.” For Gramsci the lesson both for the subaltern groups trying to overcome capitalist class societies as well as for the Soviet Union threatening to descend into Stalinism was to develop “nuove forme di vita statale, in cui l’iniziativa degli individui e dei gruppi sia ‘statale’ anche se non dovuta al ‘governo dei funzionari’ (far diventare ‘spontanea’ la vita statale).” (Q 8, §130, 1020-21)

The Texts

The first article *The Resurgence of the Critical Theories of Public Sphere* starts by pointing out that challenging the dominant discourses on *public* as well as *private* and *non-political* is a practical necessity of any radical political initiative. Here the legacy of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School has great relevance since in recent decades some of the most significant contributions from the heirs of this theoretical tradition have centred on the notion of public sphere. The article examines Jürgen Habermas' as well as Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's theories of public sphere and their subsequent new interventions on this topic.

The problem with Habermas' normative critique, based on ideals, is that the critique remains inside the normative categories without consistently posing the question of their social constitution and the limits of these ideals. The article points out three main problems in Habermas' analysis that are connected to his idealized concept of the public sphere. The first, discussing Habermas' different formulations at some length, concerns the question to what extent the idea of the public sphere represents reality. The second problem is that in practice Habermas conceives of public sphere in the singular and overlooks the contested nature of public discourses and their connection to upholding or dismantling social structures of domination. The third problem concerns the way the distinctions between *public* and *private* are socially and culturally constructed with a clear connection to class and gender; production as well as the reproduction of human life itself in families tend to be taken as private with highly problematic consequences for living labour and nature – and especially for women.

One of the merits of Negt and Kluge is to thematize the contested nature of public sphere, largely missing in Habermas. Yet they are criticized for their tendency to evoke an idea of an authentic human nature repressed by capitalism, the idea of an expressive totality inherent in their approach, and the class reductionism of their operative theory of ideology.

By introducing and developing the concept of public sphere, Habermas, like Negt and Kluge, has fruitfully continued the tradition of Critical Theory both in posing fundamental questions about democracy and societal organization (*Vergesellschaftung*) and in breaking down artificial disciplinary boundaries. Yet, the main problem in their analysis is the overrated theoretical status of the concept of the 'public sphere' itself. Habermas' normative critique produces a discrepancy

between his retouched ‘ideal’ and history. His normative perspective also ignores the role of public sphere as a forum for political and ideological struggles – a problem that also haunts his subsequent interventions on the topic. The bourgeois public sphere does not abolish the discursive power relations but reshapes them. As a conclusion, the concept of ‘public sphere’ seems to be more fruitful in analysing forms of societal organization when related to concepts like class relations, hegemony, hegemonic block, discourses and gender. As in the parallel case of ‘civil society’, grasping the dynamic reality requires us to move beyond abstract and normative conceptions of an idealized ‘public sphere’. It is important to see public sphere not only as a separate domain but also (like civil society) as an aspect of various social practices – ‘economy’ not excluded.

The second text continues and explicates the critique of ideals already present in the critique of Habermas in the first article. It turns out that the critique of ideals can be seen as an integral part of the critical study and theory of ideological forms and practices. The important topic of the antagonistic reclamation of ideals is discussed from this perspective. The critique of ideals presented in the article, however, is a solidary one; as Gramsci has pointed out in his *Prison Notebooks*, Marx, with his passionate sarcasm, “tries to give new form” to aspirations expressed in the form of ideals, “to regenerate these aspirations” but “not to destroy them” (Notebook 1, §29, vol. 1, 118). The article also includes an attempt to show in a short philologically grounded exercise why Nietzsche is both so important and problematic, a balance seldom drawn, for example, in the postmodern theory inspired by Nietzsche (see Rehman 2004).

The third text *Der Umstrittene Ideologiebegriff. W.F. Haugs Theorie des Ideologischen im Vergleich* is an attempt to present a critical overview of the theories of ideology and the contribution of W.F. Haug and the *Projekt Ideologie-Theorie* (PIT) led by him to this field. After brief sketches of the main positions in the theory of ideology the following dilemma is faced: On the one hand we have the approach which analyses ideology critically as a form of consciousness but which is unable to analyse societal practices and political discourses in a given conjuncture. On the other hand, we have the approach which draws our attention to these various societal practices and discourses but which blends the notion of ideology; A problem in Stuart Hall’s – as well as in Louis Althusser’s – view is that the concept of ideology has an “ambiguous and unspecified relation” (Hall 1977, 321) to that of ‘culture’. The same ambiguity also characterizes the relation between ‘ideology’ and ‘discourse’ (see Hall 1992, 292-93). This vagueness, however, is an inevitable result of the neutral conception of ideology, as well as for some writers a reason for its

abandonment for the more fashionable ‘discourse’. However, could it be possible to retain this focus on practices and discourses but also sharpen it by taking a more critical look at them?

The theoretical interventions by W.F. Haug and PIT into the theory of ideology represent an important attempt to solve this dilemma. To put it shortly, this approach can be characterized as a rethinking of the conception of contested practices and discourses inaugurated by Gramsci and Althusser, With the help of Engels’ (MEW 21, 302) concept of “ideological powers” (*ideologische Mächte*). Haug, as it were, reworks the neutral conception of ideology as contested practices or discourses by critically examining forms of societalization (*Vergesellschaftung*). His approach focuses on the critique of societal practices and discourses that reproduce social relations of domination by generating consent through ideal societalization ‘from above’. Yet, “at the core of concrete historical studies must be placed the dimensions of ‘hegemony’ or the formation of a ‘historical block’” (1987, 92).

In a way this position comes very close to those ideas developed by some current neutral conceptions of ideology that focus – like Hall – on contested practices and discourses. There is, however, one important difference: the current neutral conceptions of ideology do not pay specific attention to the forms of these contested practices. A critical point is the indispensability of conceiving that the development of ideological powers also entails the development of a specific discursive sphere of ‘celestial’ political, juridical, moral, religious etc. ideas and values. The point is that inside the ideological powers ideological struggles are fought in relation to these ‘celestial’ ideas and values (God/King/ Fatherland, ‘Law and Order’, National interest’ etc.) producing condensed and displaced struggles over social contradictions and relations.

In the fourth article on *Ideological powers and resistance* this problematique of ideological forms is discussed further with the help of some more concrete examples. The article was written for a mainly North American readership and introduces this theoretical approach through a critique of Richard Rorty’s ideas. The reason is the exemplary way he parades on the ideological field mapped out by Haug and PIT. Part of the irony, of course, is that Rorty is one of the foremost contemporary figures who declare the “uselessness” (Rorty 1989, 59) of the notion of ideology.

The major gain in focusing on ideological forms of societalization is a sharpening of the analytical focus: this rescuing of the ideological as a critical concept helps to differentiate the toils of the

ideological from the 'unconscious' effects of 'society', 'language' or 'culture' on individuals – as well as from the Althusserian psychoanalytically underpinned omnihistorical indifference.

Besides reopening the problematique of ideology on the terrain of contested social forms Haug has developed a useful conception of the *cultural* that separates it analytically from the *ideological*. He defines the cultural as forms of life "in which individuals, groups or classes practice that which appears to them worth living and in which they conceive of themselves as the meaning and purpose of their life activities" (1987, 65). An obvious gain of this working definition is that, unlike e.g. semiotic delineations of 'culture' as opposed to 'nature,' it does not exclude sensuality: for example, the food we enjoy is not just *meanings*. Though the cultural is analytically distinct from the ideological, this does not mean that it is opposed to it: cultural forms can be forms of tying oneself to subalternity. For some classes or groups they can also be the ways in which the ideological is experienced, which of course endows the latter with enormous strength. There is also a constant exchange of materials between the two, since "cultural flowers are continually picked up by the ideological powers" (ibid.). On the other hand, ideological phenomena can be 'profaned' and rearticulated culturally.

A third analytical dimension is *commodity aesthetics*. Its study has been pioneered by Haug in his *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics* (1971, Engl. ed. 1986) which studies the relations between capitalist commodity production, advertising and its imagery, and the shaping of human needs and sensuality. Thus 'ideological', 'cultural' and 'commodity aesthetics' are different forces that can be operative on the same material. That is why it is important to separate them analytically: "'Ideological', 'cultural' and 'commodity aesthetic' designate essential characteristics not of the material, but rather, of its organization which incorporates such material into an operative network." (Haug 1987, 65) This delineation of different analytical dimensions offers better conceptual tools for research than the somewhat intermingled conceptualisations of 'culture' and 'ideology' prevalent in the classic studies of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), not to mention the majority of current work in deradicalized and to a great extent academically co-opted Cultural Studies.

The fifth text is on the central concept of the critique of commodity aesthetics, the *use value promise*. It is a promise of a future satisfaction of a need, realizable after the purchase of a given commodity has taken place. Its aim is to generate an act of buying so that the seller can exchange his or her commodity for money. In developed capitalist economies based on the production of

commodities use value promises have become an integral part of daily life. The analysis of the use value promise and its dynamics opens up the possibility to study the working of the phenomenon known as ‘advertising’ as a part of a complex whole of social relations in a capitalist society. Besides, in pre- and emerging capitalist zones of the world commodity aesthetics serves as important incentive in spreading so-called globalization.

Considering the theoretical field the concept use value promise builds a bridge between Marx’ critique of political economy and later theoretical innovations in semiotics, Cultural Studies, and Crititical Psychology. It can also be stated that newspaper and television history cannot be written adequately without taking into account the enormous economic impact of commodity aesthetics linked inextricably to the spread and development of use value promises. Here the crucial point is achieved when industrial capitalists, in order to bypass the shopkeepers, begin to establish direct contact to consumers by trying to establish aesthetic use value monopolies (‘brands’). The simple reason behind this is that from their point of view it makes no sense to market some type of product in general (‘car’, ‘shampoo’ etc.) but rather their own identifiable product with an exclusive use value promise. The money allocated for this purpose provides the main sustenance for commercial media. Parallel to the development of these material interest runs the news media’s growing interest in ‘objectivity’ (devoid of coherence) and ‘impartiality’ as ideological values of compromise formation amidst conflicting interests.

The sixth text is on Michel Pêcheux’s contribution to the theory of discourse. The significance of this contribution is just starting to emerge for a wider audience of scholars as the erroneous attributions to Foucault among Anglo-American scholars are being revealed (see Sawyer 2002). Pêcheux tried to develop a non-subjectivist theory of the subject, inspired by his friend Louis Althusser. For Pêcheux individuals are ‘interpellated’ as speaking-subjects (as subjects of *their* discourse) by the discursive formations which represent ‘in language’ the ideological formations that correspond to them. Here a basic ideological effect is the self-evident character of meanings and the subject itself. In his theory of discourse Pêcheux tries to develop this idea of the ‘subject form’ (and specifically the ‘subject of discourse’) as a determinate effect of the process without a subject. Meanings have already been produced in different discourses in society: outside these discourses there is no ‘subject’ or ‘reason’ that would be the ‘origin’ of meaning. That is to say the aim is to think of subjects as ‘products’ of discourses, not as their ‘origin’ and to develop a “materialist theoretical approach to *the operation of representations and ‘thought’ in discursive processes*” (Pêcheux 1975, 112/84). What appears to the subjects as something self-evident is

produced in processes that are not ‘transparent’ to these subjects. A subject does not thus ‘experience’ his or her own subjection because it is realised “*in the form of autonomy*”. (ibid., 146-47/113-14) Pêcheux calls this the ‘Münchausen effect’, “in memory of the immortal baron who *lifted himself into the air by pulling on his own hair*“ (ibid. 142/108). Like Spinoza before him, Pêcheux criticises the ‘subjective illusion’ based on our ignorance of the forces affecting us.

One of Pêcheux’s aims was to study the historical conditions of ideological discourses. He identifies two different roads leading to capitalism; one based on a victorious struggle against absolutism and the other on a fusion with it. The different ‘American’ and ‘Prussian’ roads to capitalism have led to diverse politico-legal structures and forms of ideological subjection (‘democratic constitutional state’ + ‘developed civil society’ vs. ‘strong state’). The former variant rests more on ‘moral’ and ‘self-directed’ individuals emerging in various ideological apparatuses, whereas the latter is characterised by bureaucracy and governing by decree as well as an ideology supporting them. In the countries of the former variant the ideological reproduction/transformation of social relations consists not so much of defending and taking over fortresses as of a “paradox space”; here the political struggle expands to various practices so that ideological subjection does not evolve around clearly delineated fortresses (state, party).

The main problem in Althusser’s and Pêcheux’s theory of ideology remains (see PIT 1979, 127-29) that they do not pay adequate attention to what makes it possible “to rebel and to dare to think” (Pêcheux 1984a). Pêcheux has difficulties in considering the phenomenon we could call *interdiscursive capacity for action*. What probably underlies it is that the combination of Althusserian theory of ideology and psychoanalysis overlooks such a form of psychological theory focusing on the individual’s social capacity for action and the possibilities for its expansion. This kind of capacity cannot grow outside discourses but one could still ask how people in different discursive formations can develop their capacities to compare, contextualize, and criticise – and eventually resist – certain discourses.

The seventh and last article is a historical-critical study on the concept of *hegemonic apparatuses* and its relation to Althusser’s concept of *ideological state apparatuses* and the discussion it sparked, among them Nicos Poulantzas’ reactions. It was Gramsci who used the concepts *apparato egemonico* and *apparato di egemonia* to study those social fields where ‘leadership’ in a society is contested. Facing the worker’s movement’s defeat against fascism in Italy, initial Stalinization in the Soviet Union, and the reshaping of capitalism by an emerging Fordism, Gramsci’s aim was to

analyse those forms and dimensions of social domination or gaining of power that depend on consent and not on direct use of violence or the threat of it. As the article shows, certain linguistic features have rendered some difficulties for the reception of Gramsci's reflections in non-Latin languages: whereas Latin languages have tended to preserve the dimensions of 'production' and 'pomp' present in Latin *apparatus*, in translations into English or German Gramsci's *apparato* tends to *appear* in a much more mechanistic sense of a 'machine'. Thus the active and (e.g. sensually) fascinating dimensions included in Gramsci's concept may be lost.

The relevance of the dimensions analysed by Gramsci in his reflections on hegemony and hegemonic apparatuses was already pointed out by Marx and Engels in their *German Ideology* (1845/46): the articulation of society into a state form and its "illusorische Gemeinschaftlichkeit" (MEW 3, 33) means that "jede neue Klasse [...], die sich an die Stelle einer vor ihr herrschenden setzt, [...] genötigt [ist], schon um ihren Zweck durchzuführen, ihr Interesse als das gemeinschaftliche Interesse aller Mitglieder der Gesellschaft darzustellen, d.h. ideell ausgedrückt: ihren Gedanken die Form der Allgemeinheit zu geben, sie als die einzig vernünftigen, allgemein gültigen darzustellen." (ibid., 47)

Gramsci introduces and uses the concept of hegemonic apparatus for the analysis of some concrete historical cases in French and Italian history. One of the general lessons he draws is that nobody is unorganised if one understands organization and party in a broad sense and not formally: "In questa molteplicità di società particolari […] una o piú prevalgono relativamente o assolutamente, costituendo l'apparato egemonico di un gruppo sociale sul resto della popolazione (o società civile), base dello Stato inteso strettamente come apparato governativo-coercitivo." (Q 6, §136, 800)

In his third prison notebook we find plans for a study on "how the ideological structure of a ruling class is actually organized: that is, the material organization meant to preserve, defend, and develop the theoretical or ideological 'front'". He writes how "everything that directly or indirectly influences or could influence public opinion belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, even architecture, the layout of streets and their names. The position that the church has maintained in the modern world cannot be explained without knowledge of the incessant and patient efforts it makes to ensure the continuous development of its particular sector of this material structure of ideology." (Notebook 3, §51, vol. 2, 52-53) Yet the "most notable and dynamic part" is formed by "the press in general: publishing houses (which have an implicit and explicit

program and support a particular current); political newspapers; reviews of every kind – scientific, literary, philological, popular, etc.; various periodicals, including even parish bulletins."

Even in the present situation when, "at least in the West", the importance of newspapers has "declined, relatively speaking" and TV has become the main medium (Hobsbawm 2004) and, for example, in Gramsci's native Italy, coupled with commodity aesthetics, a focal point of Berlusconi's political project (see Ginsborg 2004, 32-52 and 103-116) this Gramscian approach to hegemonic struggles and apparatuses could prove very fruitful.

In one sense we have come back to where we started, however, with new useful insights for critical social theory: the projects for reforming society and creating new conformism through hegemonic politics – like Habermas' bourgeois public sphere – require in fact a complex structure of institutions, organizations and associations, i.e. hegemonic apparatuses that through their practices construct and circulate opinions creating a state in the Gramscian 'integral' sense. In this critical sense our whole journey has tried to examine and rescue conceptual tools for shaping the future.

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