

Ideology and History Intertwined – a Marxist Study of *The Clerkenwell Tales* and *Hawksmoor* by Peter Ackroyd

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Postmoderni historiallinen fiktio ei ainoastaan kuvaa historiallisia aikakausia, vaan se etsii uusia tapoja ymmärtää historian käsitettä. Peter Ackroydin postmodernissa historiallisessa fiktiossa korostetaan ajan kerroksellisuutta ja kehämäisyyttä. Postmodernismin hengessä Ackroyd kyseenalaistaa ja horjuttaa muun muassa ajan, historian ja yksilöllisen subjektin käsitteitä.

Marxilaisuudessa historia nähdään loputtomana kehänä, jossa yhteiskunta uusintaa itseään. Tutkielmani tarkoituksena on löytää viitteitä marxilaisesta ajattelusta Peter Ackroydin teoksista *The Clerkenwell Tales* (2003) ja *Hawksmoor* (1985). Tavoitteena on tutkia marxilaisesta näkökulmasta Ackroydin kuvausta yksilön identiteetin rakentumisesta ideologian prosesseissa sekä liittää teoksissa kuvattu ideologian valta yksilöön nähden historialliseen perspektiiviin koko ihmiskuntaa koskettavaksi ongelmaksi.

Tutkielmani teoreettinen kehys nojaa Louis Althusserin teoriaan ideologiasta yksilön identiteetin rakentajana. Althusserin ideologia-käsite on yläkäsite ideologioille, joita eri intressiryhmät käyttävät keskinäisessä valtataistelussaan. Althusserin mukaan ideologia tuottaa aina ihmisen identiteetin samanlaisessa prosessissa, jota hän kutsuu *interpellaatioksi*. Vaikka ideologioiden aatteelliset sisällöt vaihtelevat, interpellaatio-prosessi pysyy samanlaisena. Althusserin ajattelu nivoutuu poststrukturalistiseen käsitykseen, jonka mukaan yksilöllinen subjekti on myytti. Sivuan tutkielmassani poststrukturalismin ja postmodernismin käsitteitä. Käytän käsitteitä selittämään Ackroydin historiakuvausta hänen oman aikakautensa näkökulmasta.

Tutkielmani analyysi-osiossa tutkin ideologian ja yksilön välistä suhdetta teoksissa. Ideologiaa ilmentävien instituutioiden sekä ideologisten traditioiden, arvojen ja uskomusten kuvataan olevan yksilön yläpuolella eri historiallisilla aikakausilla. Tutkin minkälaisen metaforien avulla Ackroyd kuvaa ideologian valtaa yksilöön nähden sekä sitä, kuinka kyseisiä metaforia käytetään teoksissa kuvaamaan ihmisen toimijuuden ja autonomian hautautumista ideologioiden alle läpi historian. Etsin yhtymäkohtia hänen historiakuvauksestaan ja marxilaisesta historiäkäsityksestä. Totean idean yksilön identiteetistä kahlittuna tietyn yhteiskunnan ideologiaan yhdistyvän teoksissa marxilaiseen ajatukseen ihmiskunnasta kahlittuna uusintamaan yhteiskuntaa loputtomasti.

Avainsanat: postmoderni historiallinen fiktio, ideologia, marxismi, Peter Ackroyd

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## 1. Introduction

Peter Ackroyd (1949- ) is a London-born writer of both fiction and non-fiction. The height of his career was in the 1980s when the most critically acclaimed of Ackroyd's novels, *Hawksmoor* (1985) and *Chatterton* (1987) were published. *Hawksmoor* won the Guardian and the Whitbread fiction awards, and received rather extensive critical attention.

Ackroyd has written biographies of T.S. Eliot, Charles Dickens, Thomas More and the city of London, to name a few. His enquiry into the past, particularly into the history of London is extensive. Lewis sums up the central themes of Ackroyd's fiction and non-fiction: "Ackroyd's works explore the continuity of the English tradition and its love of variety and spectacle; the centrality of London and its imperatives of place; and the spiral nature of time" (2007, 4).

Even though Ackroyd's writing has inspired a number of critics, he does not have a firm place within the English literary tradition. The themes that are dealt with in his fiction are rather peculiar. Ackroyd's fiction is a strange mixture of mysticism and paradox, where past and present as well as reality and fiction are entangled. Lewis notes that Ackroyd has been grouped with "those British writers who seek to understand history from new perspectives", such as John Fowles (2007, 151).

Herman argues that Ackroyd's genre is the postmodernist historical novel (1990, 108). According to Bertens, postmodernist fiction "destabilizes preconceived notions with regard to language, representation, the subject, history, morality..." (2008, 112). For Hutcheon, historical fiction is the clearest artistic expression of postmodernism (De Groot 2010, 119). In its "rethinking and reworking the forms and contents of the past", historical fiction is "paradigmatic" for the functioning of postmodernism (Hutcheon 1988, 5). "From its beginnings as a form the historical novel has queried, interrogated and complicated fixed ideas of selfhood, historical progression, and objectivity" De Groot states (2010, 139).

Ackroyd looks for new ways of understanding history and its representation as well as the role of the human subject in it. In this thesis, I will examine Ackroyd's destabilization of the standard notion of history and the traditional humanist view of the free individual subject.

The aim of the thesis is to examine how the individual subject is replaced with the ideological subject and the ways in which the representation of the subject caught in the repetitive patterns of ideology interconnects with the representation of the repetitive patterns of history in *The Clerkenwell Tales* (2003) (hereafter referred to as *TCT*) and *Hawksmoor* (1985).

Ackroyd's themes of trans-historicism and critique of ideology combine in *TCT*, in which he mixes history, reality and fiction. Ackroyd sets the fictitious events and characters of the novel in the accurate historical context of Henry Bolingbroke's usurpation of the crown of King Richard II, ending with the coronation of Bolingbroke in 1399.

At the heart of the plot of *TCT*, there is a secret group of powerful and wealthy men called Dominus, whose members are conspiring to overthrow Richard. As Richard's new policies and arbitrary, tyrannical government begin to threaten their assets, the group decides to finance Bolingbroke's invasion and to stage an upheaval in London, which would speed Richard's fall. The upheaval is organized by a member of Dominus, William Exmewe, who uses another secret society, the Predestined men, to execute his plan of five acts of terror around London. A nun called Clarice, who at the very end is revealed to be the leader of Dominus, plays an important role in creating false beliefs among the citizens of London that Richard's dethroning and the acts of terror are the will of God – predestined and foretold.

Lewis states that “[t]he spiral nature of time” is prevalent throughout Ackroyd's fiction (2007, 4). The theme is highly central in *Hawksmoor*, in which the chapters shift between the seventeenth century and the twentieth. The protagonist of *Hawksmoor* is Nicholas Dyer. After the Great Fire in 1666, Dyer designs six London churches that one can still see in London

today, as well as a seventh church, Little St. Hugh's, which is entirely fictitious (Link 2004, 517). Dyer, a member of a secret Satanist sect, works into the design, construction, and location of his churches a hidden code of his sect and buries a human sacrifice in the foundations of each church. The chapters describing Dyer's deeds alternate with chapters that take place in twentieth-century London, where corpses start to appear on the grounds of Dyer's churches (Link 2004, 517). A detective called Hawksmoor tries to solve the mystery, but his investigations leave him with a lot of questions and few answers, and in the end he loses himself in the search of truths that cannot be found.

I have chosen the two novels out of Ackroyd's production as the primary material of the study for several reasons. Firstly they complement each other regarding the central topics of the study. Ideology dominating the lives of people is the central theme in *TCT*, whereas the cyclical notion of time is the dominant theme in *Hawksmoor*. Nevertheless, both novels deal with both themes and as the novels are looked at next to one another, it can be shown that the themes are interconnected.

Secondly the two novels present three different historical settings, which offers perspective to Ackroyd's concept of history as a self-repeating cycle. *TCT* will provide a detailed picture of one historical era and *Hawksmoor* will provide insight into how history echoes through another historical era into our postmodern time. Mortimer's thought is apt here: "W.H. Auden once suggested that to understand your own country you need to have lived in at least two others. One can say something similar for periods of time: to understand your own century you need to have come to terms with at least two others" (2009, 5). There is an echo between the two novels and all three time frames through interconnecting themes and metaphors.

Thirdly having one novel from Ackroyd's earlier production and another from his more recent production creates something of a continuum in his fiction, and so it is possible to locate the themes that have remained central throughout his production.

This thesis is related to the field of Marxist studies. The most important theory for the study is Louis Althusser's (1918-90) theory on ideology (1971). His notion of ideology is the broadest of the uses of the term and "it is close to the broader meaning of the term 'culture'", Eagleton argues (1991, 28). Althusser focuses on exposing the structures of ideology, which construct and enclose the human subject. Althusser's theory on ideology addresses the same issue that *TCT* and *Hawksmoor* deal with: the subject cannot transcend their cultural and historical setting – the subject is always a cultural, or ideological, construction.

There is a multitude of mysterious elements in the two texts, which constantly break the flow of the texts and leave the reader puzzled. I will apply Marxist theory in explaining and interpreting the mysterious moments in the novels. The analysis will aim at showing that locating the presence of ideology within the texts is one way of understanding Ackroyd's intricate fiction and his representation of history.

The previous criticism that there is on Ackroyd has mainly been focused on the postmodern features and the concept of time in his fiction. *Hawksmoor* has inspired numerous articles and "appears frequently in studies of postmodern historiographic metafiction and of the gothic", Link notes (2004, 517). I will not focus on the postmodern aspects of the two novels, however the study will be to some extent connected to the previous scholarship on Ackroyd's postmodern historiography, as the Marxist aspect of his representation of history will be connected to it. There is not a single critical study on *TCT* according to the *MLA*, nor is there any criticism from a Marxist angle on Ackroyd's novels.

In the first part of the analysis, Ackroyd's representation of human beings as "ideological animals" (Althusser 1971, 163) will be studied. I will look at the depiction of

how the characters in the two novels have their existence inside ideology and its practices, which ultimately enclose the subject without leaving space for individuality. In the second part of the analysis, I will study the ways in which the destabilization of the individual subject and historical progression are interconnected in the novels. Before starting the analysis, I will look at previous views on Ackroyd's historiography more closely and outline the theoretical framework of the study.



## 2. Previous views on Ackroyd's historiography

Hutcheon (2002) argues that postmodernist fictions deal with the paradox of representing the past. They recognize that while past reality is not altogether inaccessible, it can only be retrieved through its residues in the present. Hutcheon points out that the past can only be reconstructed through previous representations:

We only have access to the past today through its traces – its documents, the testimony of witnesses, and other archival materials. In other words, we only have representations of the past from which to construct our narratives and explanations. In a very real sense, postmodernism reveals a desire to understand present culture as the product of previous representations. The representation of history becomes the history of representation. What this means is that postmodern art acknowledges and accepts the challenge of tradition: the history of representation cannot be escaped but it can be both exploited and commented on critically through irony and parody. (Hutcheon 2002, 89)

Lewis points out that Hutcheon's definition fits Ackroyd's writing perfectly, since "his narratives operate upon the textual remnants of history, the surviving public records or private diaries and manuscripts" (2007, 170). "Hutcheon cites *Hawksmoor* as a paradigm of what she calls 'historiographic metafiction' – fiction that is self-conscious about its historical reconstructions", Lewis notes (2007, 170).

Numerous commentators support Hutcheon's view of Ackroyd as a postmodernist, including Susana Onega and Alison Lee, who "bunches *Hawksmoor* together with *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984) by Julian Barnes; *Waterland* (1983), by Graham Swift; and *Midnight's Children* (1981), by Salman Rushdie" (Lewis 2007, 170). Steven Connor disagrees and argues that Ackroyd's circular view of time is very different from the discontinuities in the texts by Barnes, Swift and Rushdie (Lewis 2007, 170). According to Connor, *Hawksmoor* does not highlight the conflict between the past and present, instead, it upholds "the coherence of history as a closed and echoing plenitude" (quoted in Lewis 2007, 170). Lewis concludes that "in this respect, therefore, it is more of a modernist work than a postmodernist one" (2007, 170).

Even though the focus of the study will not be on whether Ackroyd's novels and their representation of the past are predominantly postmodernist or modernist, I will relate the findings of the study to the previous discussion on Ackroyd's historiography at the end of the thesis.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

In this chapter, I will map out the theoretical framework of the thesis. The most relevant theory for the study is Louis Althusser's theory on ideology. Before outlining Althusser's concept of ideology, the origin of Marxist views on culture will be introduced briefly. Then, I will discuss how Marxism relativizes historical progression. The Marxist view will be compared to Ackroyd's representation of historical progression in the analysis. Postmodern theory will also be touched upon, as it cannot be avoided when studying the twentieth-century time frame in *Hawksmoor* and Ackroyd's representation of history that echoes to modern time.

#### **3.1 The basis of Marxist thought, Althusser's concept of ideology and the Marxist notion of history**

Raymond Williams (1977, 75) argues that "Any modern approach to a Marxist theory of culture must begin by considering the proposition of a determining base and a determined superstructure". In *The German Ideology* [1846] (1970), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels introduced a theory of the structure of society, which divides society into a base and a superstructure. "The simplest Marxist model of society sees it as constituted by a base (the material means of production, distribution, and exchange) and a superstructure, which is the 'cultural' world of ideas, art, religion, law, and so on", Barry sums up (2002, 158).

According to Marx and Engels (1970), mankind has always been tied to the economic base because of the necessity to produce the material needs that are required for maintaining their existence. Marx and Engels see the superstructure fundamentally as an illusion, a mere reflection of the economic base, which serves the purpose of securing the reproduction of the conditions of production. "To find 'primary causes' in 'ideas' was seen as the basic error", Williams points out (1977, 58). Marx and Engels (1970) argue that ideas can never transcend their connection to the material base. "Traditional Marxism, then, asserts that thought is

subservient to, and follows, the material conditions under which it develops”, Bertens notes (2008, 64).

Marx and Engels’ notion that all ideas are tied to the material base of society is rather straightforward to understand, but the model has been criticized for being crude. Marx and Engels did not discuss in detail what takes place at the level of the superstructure. Louis Althusser, a French Marxist theoretician, developed a theory according to which it is ideology that ensures the coherence of the superstructure. “[T]he attraction of Althusser to recent Marxist critics is that he offers ways of by-passing the crude base/superstructure model without giving up the Marxist perspective altogether”, Barry states (2002, 165).

A French philosopher Destutt de Tracy coined the term *ideology* in the late eighteenth century with the intention of creating a philosophical term for the ‘science of ideas’ (Williams 1977, 56). I am referring to Althusser’s concept of ideology whenever I use the term in my thesis. Althusser’s use of the term is broader than “a more political or sociological sense of ideology as the medium in which men and women fight out their social and political battles at the level of signs, meanings and representations” (Eagleton 1991, 11). Eagleton points out that Althusser’s notion of ideology, which is the widest of the term’s uses, refers to

the general material process of production of ideas, beliefs and values in social life. Such a definition ... is close to the broader meaning of the term ‘culture’. Ideology, or culture, would here denote the whole complex of signifying practices and symbolic processes in a particular society (1991, 28).

Althusser’s notion of ideology contains, in addition to the broad meaning of culture, the idea of the unrecognized relations between people and the institutions that surround them, a relationship which he calls *interpellation*. The term *interpellation* is central in Althusser’s theory. The term sounds rather cumbersome, but it denotes a fairly straightforward process: “Interpellation is the process by which any individual is constituted within society as a subject” (Wolfreys 2004, 114). “Interpellation produces us as subjects and subject to, or

subjected by, laws, beliefs, and other systems and structures of values”, Wolfreys states (2004, 115).

In essence, Althusser’s concept of ideology covers all the ideas, beliefs and values within a given culture that construct the subject as well as that which makes one’s position within the structures of ideology feel natural. *Subject* is another key term for Althusser. There is no need to explain the philosophical origins of the term here. He uses it to denote an individual subjected to something or by someone. Althusser points out that “there is no ideology except for concrete subjects” (1971, 160). He argues that the very core of ideology is the functioning of “the category of the subject”, which is “the constitutive category of all ideology” (Althusser 1971, 160). “The category of the subject” simply signifies the processes through which ideology “‘recruits’... or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects by the very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing...” (Althusser 1971, 173-4).

Larrain notes that Althusser’s conception of ideology is “structuralist” (1979, 154). Althusser’s adds a structural, concrete aspect to Marx: the meanings and values that structure social reality are realized in concrete, material practices. Althusser argues that “an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material” (1971, 156).

Ideology creates subjects and maintains its power using what Althusser calls Ideological state apparatuses, ISAs, by which he refers to “such groupings as political parties, schools, the media, churches, the family and art...” that make “each of us feel that we are freely choosing what is in fact being imposed upon us”, Barry notes (2002, 164). Althusser mentions some of the practices that are a part of “the material existence of an ideological apparatus...: a small mass in a small church, a funeral, a minor match at a sports’ club, a school day, a political party meeting” (1971, 158). The list could be almost indefinitely expanded, Bertens points out

and concludes: “What is clear is that ideology is waiting for us wherever we go and that everything we do and everything we engage in is pervaded by ideology” (2008, 67).

Even though there is a concrete side to Althusser’s notion of ideology, he does not completely abandon Marx and Engels’s idea that the superstructure is an illusion. “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence”, he argues (Althusser 1971, 153). “In ideology men represent their real conditions of existence to themselves in an imaginary form” (Althusser 1971, 153). The imaginary representation is necessary because of “the material alienation which reigns in the conditions of existence of men themselves” (Althusser 1971, 154). Zizek points out that for Althusser, “... ideology is not simply a ‘false consciousness’, an illusory representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as ‘ideological’” (1989, 21). For Althusser, life within ideology contains an illusion, which is not to say that ideological reality is not tangible.

Ultimately, Althusser keeps returning to Marx. Everything that takes place at the level of the superstructure serves to secure the reproduction of society: “All ideological State apparatuses, whatever they are, contribute to the same result: the reproduction of the relations of production, i.e. of capitalist relations of exploitation” (Althusser 1971, 146).

Marx and Engels’s concept of history follows their base and superstructure model. They argue that mankind has been tied to the necessity to produce the material needs for their existence, the material base, from the beginning of time (Marx and Engels 1970). Since the superstructure is nothing more than an illusion that stems from the material base, there is no historical progress besides material progress (Marx and Engels 1970).

The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. (Marx and Engels 1970, 47)

What Marx and Engels are arguing is that the progress of ideas has never been independent from material progress. “Ideology has no history, which emphatically does not mean that there is no history in it (on the contrary, for it is merely the pale, empty and inverted reflection of real history) but that it has no history *of its own*”, Althusser clarifies (1971, 151).

Marx and Engels (1970) argue that generations have followed each other only to see the reproduction of the modes of material production. “History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations...” (Marx and Engels 1970, 57). They point out that history is a story of political and religious struggles, which are secondary to real life:

In the whole conception of history up to the present this real basis of history has either been totally neglected or else considered as a minor matter quite irrelevant to the course of history. History must, therefore, always be written according to an extraneous standard; the real production of life seems to be primeval history, while the truly historical appears to be separated from ordinary life, something extra-superterrestrial. ... The exponents of this conception of history have consequently only been able to see in history the political actions of princes and States, religious and all sorts of theoretical struggles, and in particular in each historical epoch have had to *share the illusion of that epoch*. (Marx and Engels 1970, 59-60)

Marx and Engels’s view is that independent human history has not started. Material production (and the relations of exploitation derived from it) has dictated human life since pre-history. Eagleton states that Marxism aims at getting true history started:

Marxism is not a theory of the future, but a theory and practice of how to make a future possible. As a doctrine, it belongs entirely to what Marx calls ‘pre-history’; its role is simply to resolve those contradictions which currently prevent us from moving beyond that epoch to history proper. About that history proper, Marxism has little to say, and Marx himself generally maintained a symptomatic silence on this score. The only truly historic event would be to get history started, by clearing away the obstacles in its path. So far, nothing particularly special has occurred: history to date has simply been the same old story, a set of variations on persisting structures of oppression and exploitation. (Eagleton 1990, 215)

Althusser’s view of historical development at the level of the superstructure is again somewhat ampler and perhaps more lenient than that of Marx and Engels’s. Nevertheless, he

does not abandon Marx here either. Althusser (1971) introduces a paradoxical dichotomy regarding the concept of ideology. He separates the underlying layer of ideology that essentially stays the same through time, ideology in general, from ideologies that express class positions and are used in fighting for power.

I think it is possible to hold that ideologies *have a history of their own* (although it is determined in the last instance by the class struggle); and on the other, I think it is possible to hold that ideology *in general has no history*, not in a negative sense (its history is external to it), but in an absolutely positive sense. This sense is a positive one if it is true that the peculiarity of ideology is that it is endowed with a structure and a functioning such as to make it a non-historical reality, i.e. an *omni-historical* reality, in the sense in which that structure and functioning are immutable, present in the same form throughout what we can call history... (Althusser 1971, 151-2).

While ideology in general is “non-historical” and unchangeable in time, ideologies do change and do have a material history – although, not an independent one.

Marxism attempts to reveal a meta-narrative within history:

Marxism is a meta-language or meta-narrative, it is not because it lays claim to some absolute truth ... it is rather on account of its insistence that, for any human narrative whatsoever to get under way, certain other histories must already be in place. Of these histories, Marxism attends to the one which concerns ... social reproduction. (Eagleton 1990, 228)

In the analysis, I will try to show that a Marxist meta-narrative can be seen in the representation of history in *TCT* and *Hawksmoor*.



### 3.2 A few notes on postmodernism

The destabilization of the subject and history, which are the main areas of study of this thesis, are practices that have originated with the arrival of postmodernism. Even though my aim is not to map out postmodern features in Ackroyd's writing, the concept of postmodernism cannot be avoided when studying the representation of time in the novels.

Fredric Jameson's essentially Marxist stance affirms that postmodernist culture is an expression of late or multinational capitalism where the populace is distanced from the system of production it services and two of its most prominent properties are the effacement of history and its replacement by pastiche (Lewis 2007). For Jameson, there are "as many different forms of postmodernism as there were high modernisms in place, since the former are at least initially specific and local reactions against those models", which is why it is a difficult concept to describe (1991b, 2). He points out that

it is not just another word for the description of a particular style. It is also, at least in my use, a periodizing concept whose function is to correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of a new type of social life and economic order ...called post-industrial or consumer society, the society of the media or the spectacle, or multinational capitalism. (Jameson 1991b, 2)

Jameson argues that pastiche and schizophrenia, two significant features of postmodernism, illustrate "the ways in which the new postmodernism expresses ... that newly emergent social order of late capitalism" and "give us a chance to sense the specificity of the postmodern experience of space and time respectively" (1991b, 2-3). Pastiche is one of the tools with which postmodern fiction explores the instability of the subject, language, representation, history and morality. After all the certainties of modernism have been blown up, all that is left is pastiche, which is parody "without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared with which what is being imitated is rather comic", Jameson notes (1991b, 3). "Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humour" (Jameson 1991b, 3).

“Postmodernism is notoriously difficult to define. In general it might be characterized as a set of ideas and practices that reject hierarchy, stability and categorization...”, De Groot notes (2010, 110). Hutcheon defines it as “a mood arising out of a sense of the collapse of all those foundations of modern thought which seemed to guarantee a reasonably stable sense of Truth, Knowledge, Self and Value” (1988, 345). According to De Groot, “postmodern theories, particularly following the ideas of Jacques Derrida, challenge our sense of centeredness and order, suggesting instead that the world is innately unknowable and unstable” (2010, 110).

Bertens points out that “since for the poststructuralists all structures are inherently unstable, mere temporary arrangements within chains of signification that are literally infinite, the subject, too, is only a temporary arrangement” (2008, 106-7). He notes that the view is not uncontested, but concludes that “it is fair to say that the liberal humanist subject, with its self-determination, moral autonomy, coherence, and an essential, trans-historical core, has since the 1970s been a major target for poststructuralist critique” (Bertens 2008, 107).

Jameson argues that the poststructuralist position proclaims that “not only is the bourgeois individual subject a thing of the past, it is also a myth; it never really existed in the first place; there have never been autonomous subjects of that type” (1991b, 4). According to him, the death of the subject has led to an aesthetic dilemma: “because if the experience and the ideology of the unique self ... is over and done with, then it is no longer clear what the artists and writers of the present period are supposed to be doing” (Jameson 1991b, 3). Jameson concludes that modernist models do not work anymore since “nobody has that kind of unique private world and style to express any longer” (1991b, 3). New styles cannot be invented as the unique ones have been thought of already – all that is left is pastiche: “to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum” (Jameson 1991b, 3).

De Groot (2010, 114) states that Jameson's account of schizophrenia is derived from the work of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.

For Lacan we *understand* due to time. Through language we 'have what seems to us a concrete or lived experience of time' whereas the schizophrenic 'is condemned to live a perpetual present' without personal identity 'since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the "I" and "me" over time'. (Jameson, quoted in De Groot 2010, 114)

Due to the breakdown in signification and representation demonstrated by Derrida, and through the development of a late type of capitalism, contemporary society finds itself in the position of the schizophrenic, unable to appreciate the passing of time because of the corruption of language (De Groot 2010, 114). According to Jameson

our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates the traditions of the kind which all earlier social information have had, in one way or another, to preserve. (1991b, 10)

Jameson's "perpetual present" will be related to the representation of time in the novels towards the end of the analysis.

#### **4. The ideological subject replaces the individual in the novels**

In this chapter, I will argue that Marxism and especially Althusser's concept of ideology have a strong presence in Ackroyd's representation of the lives of the citizens of London in different layers of history. The characters, placed in different historical settings, cannot transcend the confinement of their ideological surroundings. The aim of the chapter is to look at how Ackroyd disposes of the free individual subject and replaces it with the ideological subject.

##### **4.1 The structures of ideology surround people**

In this subchapter, I will argue that ideology has a dominating presence in the society of medieval London that is presented in *TCT*. Material realizations of ideological apparatuses – ideological symbols, ceremonies and rituals – are a major part of how the characters live their lives and construct their reality. Occasionally, I will look at Ian Mortimer's historical account of medieval English society alongside Ackroyd's fictional one in order to show that historical fact is definitely there alongside historical fiction in the novel.

*Hawksmoor* operates “[t]hrough the lens of the postmodern” (Link 2004, 516). A postmodern text ultimately undermines and questions the essence of all structures of knowledge and final meanings are hard to find (Bertens 2008). *Hawksmoor* is more about dissolving structures than building them. The everyday functioning of the seventeenth-century and twentieth-century societies is not described in detail. Nevertheless, the novel does deal with ideology and its practices. *Hawksmoor* questions the structures of standard knowledge through inversion; it is all about inverting the familiar, “[the] layering of the quotidian with the uncanny” (Link 2004, 520), arguably to reveal its ideological nature. The story is narrated from the perspective of eccentric central characters that have an outsider's viewpoint. The protagonist, Dyer, implies that the real nature of the world can be exposed from looking at it

from the other side: “It is only the Darknesse that can give trew Forme to our work and trew perspective to our Fabrick, for there is no Light without Darknesse and no substance without Shaddowe...” (*Hawksmoor*, 5).

In *TCT*, the religious ISA dominates the lives of the characters. It provides the people of medieval Clerkenwell with social coherence, a medium through which people construct their social reality. In a meeting of Dominus, the secret group of powerful people that advocates Henry to the throne to further their interests, it is agreed that “Matters of religion were to be used to quell the people and to promote good order” (*TCT*, 75). God is inserted everywhere in everyday beliefs and linguistic conventions: “The name of God was all around them – ‘God save you’, ‘God’s speed’, ‘God give you grace’ – muttered casually and under the breath, or cried aloud in greeting, like some susurrus of benevolence from the divine world” (18).

The people of Clerkenwell rely on God to run their lives in the direction that they wish it to go. In *The Merchant’s tale*, the merchant says: “I have prayed faithfully ... so the Lord send me good profit” (27). Meanwhile his wife is disgusted with her marital duties “and she prayed God for an ending. She devoutly wished her husband to die“ (29). The merchant and his wife believe that if they are devout subjects of religious ideology, their fates will be favourable for them. A comical effect is achieved as the wife’s prayers for the husband’s death are just as devout as the husband’s prayers for good fortune.

In the society of medieval London presented in *TCT*, the religious ISA extends its influence everywhere, including legal processes. “The court of the king’s bench” “was God’s world” (165), where “...both judge and sergeant believed that any juror who followed his conscience was surrendering to the voice of God...” (167). The lives of men who stand trial is literally in the hands of God, whose will is expressed by the jury.

Even though the religious ISA is everywhere in social life, the common people do not live their lives in a state of religious frenzy. The people of Clerkenwell have the same cynical

distance to ideological practices that Slavoj Žižek talks about with modern reference: “Cynical distance is just one way – one of many ways – to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy: even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, we are still doing them”, he points out (1989, 33).

Whether one is a fervently obedient ideological subject or one with a somewhat indifferent attitude is not important as long as one is a practicing subject. Conviction is not necessary in participating in rituals. Hamo, one of the protagonists of *TCT*, who is somewhat simple, “took part in the rituals of the community by rote, without conviction of any kind. He did not consider himself part of the friars’ common life or fervent faith” (17). A cynical attitude towards religious ideology is expressed frequently in the novel:

‘God be with you and his cross comfort you, Thomas.’  
 ‘You are pious this morning.’  
 ‘I have been proclaiming. Hallelujah!’ Robert Skeat, the druggist, was well known for his somewhat ironic attitude towards the Church’s devotions. (90)

Žižek argues that “‘social reality’ is in the last resort an ethical construction; it is supported by a certain *as if* (we act *as if* we believe in the almightiness of bureaucracy, *as if* the President incarnates the Will of the People, ...)” (1989, 36). The people of Clerkenwell act as if God incarnates the will of the people, even though in reality “God’s will” serves to secure the submission of people and the reproduction of society. The fact that many of them harbour a cynical, sceptic attitude towards the idea that they are acting out of God’s will has little significance, because as they continue to act according to the “as if”, they are supporting the ethical construction through habit and convention and thus cementing social reality, as Žižek points out (1989).

Lewis notes that “As Ackroyd illustrated in his biography of Thomas More, a rich round of ceremonies and rituals regulated the medieval world...” (2007, 130). “Ceremonies were not limited to feast days and celebrations of the holy calendar in medieval times; rather, they were part of everyday life”, Lewis adds (2007, 131). Religious ceremonies, which are obvious

examples of material practices of the religious ISA, are a notable element in *TCT*. The people of Clerkenwell enjoy a mystery play, a pageant, a parade and a procession. Bakhtin and Medvedev argue that

All the products of ideological creation – works of art, scientific works, religious symbols and rites, etc. – are material things, part of the practical reality that surrounds man ... They become ideological reality only by being realized in words, actions, clothing, manners, and organizations of people and things – in a word: in some definite semiotic material. (1978, 7)

Each of the citizens has a part to play in the procedures, which are an important part of what constitutes ideological reality. Everyone is offered a social position in the proceedings. In the “traditional procession of poor men” (114), the poor also take “their place in the vast hierarchy of need and service” (114).

Chapter nine, *The Reeve’s Tale*, describes in detail “the second day of the mysteries held each year in Clerkenwell” (77). Ackroyd mocks the pious aspect of the proceedings to highlight their everyday, trivial aspect. “It was only the first of many obscenities passing between the boy and the donkey, culminating in a mock attempt by the boy to penetrate the beast’s rear end” (80). The procedures have little to do with religious frenzy, but keeping God and the dogma of the Old Testament there in the everyday lives of the citizens reinforces the place of the ideological symbols in social reality and helps to maintain their authority. “In the role of the Creator... [The clerk of Mary Abchurch] seemed to command authority over the hundreds of citizens assembled. He was, after all, playing the angry deity of the Old Testament. His mask augmented and amplified his voice” (79).

In medieval times the head of the state, the king, was considered to be the image, or the replacement, of God. The anointed monarch was the ultimate symbol, in which state power and religious authority were united. One of Ackroyd’s trivial characters, a miller, contemplates on seeing King Richard in person: “The miller had noticed then how the king had behaved as if he were in the pages of a psalter” (122). He sees the king as a perfect,

ageless symbol: “It was as if time itself had been suspended. To Coke Bateman, Richard seemed neither young or old, but somehow the age of the world” (123).

The miller is looking at the figure of King Richard in a window of a convent: “In this stained window he seemed to be no different; in five hundred years, in a time beyond the imagining of any then in life, he would still be kneeling there in quietness and piety” (123). It is difficult for the miller to think of the threat that hangs over Richard: “How could this image of sacred order be subject to distress and change?” (123). The ageless image of the king gives the miller a sensation of security, stability and coherence. He cannot imagine that the unity of society could ever be threatened under the protection of such a perfect ideological symbol.

Ideology also provides “semiotic closure” (Eagleton 1991, 2). Things regarding royalty or religion are above the common people of Clerkenwell. The miller is unable to see the king or his image at the level of phenomenal reality: “His nature was prone to awe and wonder in the contemplation of majesty” (124). A minor character, Gabriel Hilton, knows that to question God’s word or images is beyond him: “As his father had taught him, it were best not to mingle heaven and earth” (46).

The characters in *TCT* construct their world on standard ideology, whereas in *Hawksmoor* the protagonist, Nick Dyer, creates a place for himself in the world by adhering to an alternative ideology. Throughout *Hawksmoor* the reader learns about Dyer’s satanic doctrine. Dyer, as Aleid Fokkema (quoted in Link 2004, 522) writes, “imposes his own [Satanic] pattern on the world around him to make it cohere”. “*Hawkmoor’s* occultism, as a set of (ritualized) words and practices intended to manage fear, takes the shape of alternate knowledge...”, Link notes (2004, 522). He argues that “these systems of belief which organize experience are as important as formal methods for organizing knowledge, regardless of their content” (Link 2004, 522). Dyer talks about “the Creed which Mirabilis school’d in [him]” (*Hawksmoor*, 20). He explains the doctrine of their sect: “We baptize in the name of



the Father unknown, for he is truly an unknown God; Christ was the Serpent who deceiv'd Eve, and in the form of a serpent entered the Virgin's womb; he feigned to die and rise again, but it was the Devil who truly was crucified..." (21). The sect ties various divine signs together with some less divine:

And this further: *demon* from *daimon*, which is us'd promiscuously with *theos* as the word for Deity; the Persians call the Devill *Div*, somewhat close to *Divus* or *Deus*; also *ex sacramenti* is expounded in Tertullian as *exacramentum* or *excrement*. And thus we have a Verse: Pluto, Jehova, Satan, Dagon, Love,/ Moloch, the Virgin, Thetis, Devil, Jove,/ Pan, Jahweh, Vulcan, he with th'awfull Rod,/ Jesus, the wondrous Straw Man, all one God. (21-22)

The configuration of Dyer's world view is ridiculous. By presenting it, *Hawksmoor* questions the validity of any symbolic structure and illustrates the possibility, if not the necessity, of arbitrariness in all symbolic belief systems – they are all the same “*excrement*”. The novel also reveals the dangers of constructing the world on symbolic structures as well as the dangers and ridiculousness of false etymology.

*TCT* is packed with all sorts of beliefs and superstitions, which have an ideological task of explaining and structuring the world. For example, absurd astronomical and medicinal beliefs are numerous in the novel. The prioress's physician tells her that “she would prosper in this world if only she would eat shrimps. Shrimps recovered sickly and consumed persons because they were the most nimble, witty and skipping creatures...” (*TCT*, 88). According to Mortimer, superstition was a major part of medieval life: “Perhaps the strangest aspect of this credulousness and superstition is the widespread belief in prophecy”, he states (Mortimer 2009, 75).

Religious prophecy is at the centre stage in *TCT*. Richard's fall is hastened by the prophecies of the mad nun of Clerkenwell, Clarice, who is in the end revealed to be the head of Dominus. Clarice spreads her prophecies from underneath her nun's dress: “You see from my dress that I am devoted to God. Why fear me then?” (45). The dress, which is ideological material, proves that she is a servant of God and thus has a right to express his will. Clarice

claims that God, speaking through her, warns of the great perils that face London under the rule of Richard, although it is Dominus that had planned the terrorist attacks that Clarice is prophesying.

According to Mortimer, the production of prophecies for political purposes was a common medieval practice: “The political prophecies of medieval England are an extraordinary phenomenon. For several centuries writers have produced mystical texts which purport to describe the political vicissitudes of the future” (2009, 76). Mortimer points out that in 1399 prophecies were used in the struggle of power between Henry and Richard’s supporters: “Just as Richard’s accession in 1377 had been compared to the coming of Christ, now Henry was himself compared to the Saviour” (2008a, 176). “Prophecies were searched out in old chronicles and reinterpreted to show that it was God’s will that Henry should put an end to Richard’s rule” (Mortimer 2008a, 177). The prophecies were a part of legitimizing the scandalous process of dethroning the anointed monarch, which had only happened once before in the history of England (Mortimer 2008a, 166). Prophecies were tailored to fit political needs. Mortimer argues that “political prophecies thus have this self-fulfilling element, and people accordingly place trust in them” (2009, 76).

The functioning of political prophecies disguised as divine prophecies summarizes the way in which Ackroyd illustrates the functioning of ideology in the novel. Not everyone believes blindly in the divine nature of the prophecies; some may suspect that Clarice is “a harlot” or “a jangler” (50). However, most people cannot see the true origin of the prophecies and the hidden power relations behind them. People do not dare question the symbolic power and religious authority that back them up, and may only accept what is to come – “follow her with open mouths” (135). People will simply follow the one who wins the struggle for power; they “... will roll their dice with the winner” (151).

*TCT* depicts the violent upheavals that the struggle for power between Henry and Richard's supporters causes. Ackroyd describes the medieval society as ruthless and violent in general. Public beatings of humans and animals are described vividly. Murders are everyday events in the city and drowned new-born babies have become a danger to fishermen's nets in the Thames (142). Mortimer points out that, in truth, medieval England was extremely violent: "A streak of violence runs through the whole population ... boys are bound to grow up with an understanding that there is nothing wrong in a man exercising violence against children, servants, animals and women" (2009, 60-1). "It is a calamitous century, no doubt about it; but people cope", Mortimer continues (2009, 246). Music and dancing, plays, popular games and so on were important in bringing joy to the hard lives of medieval people (Mortimer 2009).

Popular practices and everyday conventions may at first glance seem to have little to do with Althusser's ideology. There are no ideas that form our thinking behind them, nor is it easy to locate them within an ISA. Nevertheless, they contribute to the ideological: that which makes one's existence feel natural and helps to maintain the coherence and continuity of society. Also the most commonplace acts, "the familiar and friendly language of greeting" (149), serve the effect of creating harmony in the lives of the citizens. "'What do you?' 'How is it with you?' 'How do you fare?' 'God give you good day.'" These phrases were a form of perpetual renewal, so that each day was joined to others in the line of harmony" (149).

Songs and other popular activities are frequent in *TCT*. However, they fail to perform their ideological task of making the world feel safe, harmonious and natural – making people cope. There is always a mysterious shadow attached with the popular. A pious and lovely song, "Oh one that is so fair and bright..." (70), that ends chapter seven has lost its grace as it is told before the song is sung in its entirety that a fishmonger who had suffocated three children had sung it at the moment of his hanging, and the fishmonger's mother, who had

whipped him daily, had sung it for the boy at bedtime to comfort him. Similarly, the chant “Lords wax blind, and kinsmen be unkind, death out of mind when truth no man may find” (67) offers more confusion than comfort. A monk reminds a minor character, a lawyer, of a folk fable that tells about a group of revellers who were partying on church ground and were cursed by a priest to dance eternally in a circle. “The dancers gradually sank up to their waists in the ground” and “some say that the dead had joined them in their revelry” (103), the monk finishes the fable. The law-man “had barely recalled the legend of the doomed dancers; it was for him one of those dim far-off things which he associated with his childhood” (104). But as he is making his way home, “he could hear music in the air, and the sound of someone singing ‘This world is but a whirligig’” (104). The noises were coming from the tavern where “he saw a circle of revellers, holding hands and dancing in a ring” (104). Ackroyd constantly disrupts popular practices by shadowing them with mystery, arguably to draw attention to their ideological essence.

Whereas in *TCT* popular songs, fables and chants have a mysterious shadow, in *Hawksmoor* they are simply abhorrent. For example, a group of small children chant: “What are you looking for in the hole? / A stone! / What will you do with the stone? / Sharpen a knife! / What will you do with the knife? / Cut off your head!” (*Hawksmoor*, 27). The ideological task is inverted: they make the world seem cruel and hostile instead of harmonious and safe.

*Hawksmoor* is packed with chants, songs and rhymes that echo between the two time frames. Thomas Hill, the protagonist of a chapter set in the twentieth century, learns the same superstitions that Dyer did hundreds of years ago: “...if you say the Lord’s Prayer backwards, you can raise the Devil” (29) and so forth. “Popular music and verse from the eighteenth century persisting in the twentieth, and the living knowledges of an oral tradition and the everyday, present themselves as more durable than any structure” Link points out (2004, 528).

Link contemplates why the resonance of popular practices between the historical periods is uncanny: “If such resonances are uncanny, they are so insofar as they attest to the unexceptional nature of the individual subject in the context of a community brought together in the banal. They therefore threaten the discrete subject with dissolution in the greater world of the popular” (2004, 530).

In conclusion, in both novels ideology and its practices make up a symbolic, and at the same time concrete, structure that surrounds people. The structure that ideology provides makes society coherent and ensures people’s submission. The fact that Ackroyd’s depiction of medieval life in *TCT* reflects authentic medieval reality rather well gives authority to his unique concept of history, which will be studied in chapter five.

#### **4.2 There is no space for individuality within the structures of ideology**

In the previous subchapter, I looked at the representation of how ideology pervades the characters’ lives in *TCT* and *Hawksmoor*, but I did not focus on how existence within ideology is problematized in the novels. In this subchapter, I will examine how the power of ideology that disposes of individual space is represented through the existential suffering of the protagonists.

According to Althusser, the fundamental problem is that being a subject is not a problem for us: “...the ‘obviousness’ that you and I are subjects – and that that does not cause any problems – is an ideological effect, the elementary ideological effect” (1971, 161). “[O]ne of the effects of ideology is the practical *denegation* of the ideological character of ideology by ideology”, Althusser states (1971, 163-4). “What really takes place in ideology seems therefore to take place outside it”, he points out (Althusser 1971, 163). Hence, it is difficult to represent and to problematize existence within ideology. Yet, Ackroyd has found ways of doing it. His protagonists are social outcasts, anomalies in the almighty structure of ideology.

From the point of view of the protagonists, the reader gets a rare glimpse on individual experience of ideology enclosing the subject.

Two central characters in *TCT* and the protagonist of *Hawksmoor*, Nick Dyer, are all orphans, which is hardly a coincidence. Althusser argues that the first institution that offers the individual a subject position is the family institution (1971, 164). According to Althusser, there is a position of a gendered subject already awaiting the new-born, and the position is reinforced as the child is brought up (1971, 164). Hence, Althusser's proposition: "individuals are always-already subjects" (1971, 164). The orphan characters' position as a subject is fragile, because the family institution has not been there to create and then reinforce the position.

Althusser (1971, 168) argues that it is the mirror duplication between the subject and the central Other Subject that ensures the functioning of the religious ISA, which he uses as an example but notes that the same applies to all ideological apparatuses.

The structure of all ideology, interpellating individuals as subjects in the name of a Unique and Absolute Subject is specular, i.e. a mirror-structure, and doubly specular: this mirror duplication is constitutive of ideology and ensures its functioning. Which 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 into subjects in a double mirror-connexion such that it subjects the subjects to the Subject, while giving them in the Subject in which each subject can contemplate its own image (present and future) the guarantee that this really concerns them and Him, and that ... those who have recognized God, and have recognized themselves in Him, will be saved. (Althusser 1971, 168)

In the first chapter of *Hawksmoor*, the protagonist Nick Dyer is trying to survive in the streets of London after the plague had taken both his parents. He is adrift and struggling, until he finds salvation, "the Thread in [his] Labyrinth of Difficulties" (*Hawksmoor*, 18). Little Dyer cannot believe his luck as Mirabilis, the leader of a satanic sect, hails him: "he pointed at me...: There is the Hand as plain as can be, says he, do you see it plainly above his Head? He was elevated to a strange Degree and call'd over to me, Boy! Boy! Come here to me!" (18). Mirabilis offers Dyer an alternative, satanic Subject to mirror himself to. He guarantees Dyer,

on behalf of the Subject, that Dyer will be saved if he recognizes himself in the Subject. "... I will save you from Ruin, little Faustus, if you come with me and that will be a Surety" (18-19).

Mirabilis starts calling Dyer Faustus, which foreshadows the fact that he is, in fact, destined to be ruined. Stephen Greenblatt (1980) discusses the act of self-naming of the protagonists in Christopher Marlowe's plays. Similarly to Mirabilis and Dyer/Faustus, Marlowe's heroes try to break free from ideology as they cannot exist without the sensation of being able to create their own identity; it is "as if the hero continues to exist only by virtue of constantly renewed acts of will", Greenblatt argues (1980, 213). The heroes are trying to regain their autonomy, "their names and identities given by no one but themselves" (Greenblatt 1980, 213). However, one's identity is never an autonomous construction that could rise above cultural and ideological structures. One of Marlowe's protagonists, Barabas, exemplifies this: "Like all of Marlowe's characters, Barabas defines himself by negating cherished values, but his identity is itself, as we have seen, a social construction, a fiction composed of the sleaziest materials in his culture", Greenblatt notes (1980, 209). Barabas's vain attempts to attain individuality merely show "the tragic limitations of rebellion against his culture" (Greenblatt 1980, 209). Also Dyer and Mirabilis adhere to an alternative system of values, but attaching themselves to a different ideology does not change the fact that their identities are ideological products. In the Althusserian view of ideology, it makes no difference which Subject takes the central position. Larrain points out that "Individuals are not necessarily recruited and constituted as subjects obedient to the ruling class, the same mechanism of interpellation operates when individuals are recruited by revolutionary ideologies" (quoted in Wolfreys 2004, 116).

In *TCT*, William Exmewe, a member of two secret groups, Dominus and the Predestined men, is looking for perpetrators to perform terrorist acts in the churches of

London with the hope of creating chaos and thus weakening the position of King Richard. Hamo Fulberd, a young monk who was adopted by a monastery as an orphan child, is the perfect target for the task. Hamo is “One of God’s simple creatures, without thought” (*TCT*, 107), as Exmewe later describes him. He is easy to lure into performing the will of the central Subject, God, which Exmewe expresses to him. His subjectivity is strengthened, as Exmewe takes him under his “protection”. He “had attached himself to William Exmewe” (17) and “... in some obscure fashion, Hamo Fulberd had found a father” (17). Exmewe sees the submissive boy as the perfect instrument for his purposes. Hamo’s destiny to be ruined like Dyer, because he decides to trust Exmewe and obey his version of the will of the Subject, is anticipated as Exmewe says to him: “You are like wood. God forbid that you be carved from a wicked tree” (17).

Exmewe also leads the men of a secret sect, the Predestined men<sup>1</sup>, which has been assembled to do Exmewe’s dirty work, the terrorist acts. Exmewe has no problem feeding his ideology to these “[b]roken-down people” (73). “The helpless and the hopeless ones of this world” (73) do not hesitate in committing crimes in the name of their “high purpose” (37), because they believe that “...as Christ’s true followers, they were absolved from all sin...” and “could lie, commit adultery or kill, without remorse” (37). Exmewe “had persuaded them, that five London churches or sacred places must be visited by fire and death” (39) by telling them tales that these acts will hasten the soon coming judgment day, which they eagerly sought as they were “convinced of their sanctity” (38). The central Subject of the ideology of the Predestined men is divinely righteous also in sin and so are they, as they see themselves in the divine image of the Subject. The Predestined men are convinced of the fact that they are

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<sup>1</sup> Ackroyd notes that the ideology of the predestined men was close to that of the Lollards (*TCT*, 208). The Lollards challenged the authority and the doctrine of the Catholic Church. They claimed that it had been corrupted by temporal matters and believed that faith should be based on the scriptures and not on the rituals of the Catholic Church.



the true mirror images of the Subject and therefore they have no doubt that they will be saved come judgment day.

Exmewe tries to persuade one of the Predestined men to perform the third terrorist act by convincing him that God has chosen him: “The first two wounds have been opened with the help of Almighty God. Now, with the help of the same, go to the third. ... Robert Rafu, God is here!” (106). But Rafu does not want to risk being caught in the act and Exmewe turns to Hamo. He argues that Hamo’s duty is to answer to the will of the higher Subject: “What else is there for you upon this earth? You are already marked” (110). Here is an allusion to the fundamental catch of ideology – the subject *must* accept his duties, position and destiny out of his *free will* and “[i]f he does not do so, ‘that is wicked’” (Althusser 1971, 157). Hamo recognizes that he has no choice but to accept the destiny that is designed for him: “The nun had told him that she had been summoned. And this, too, was his purpose. He must accept his hard fortune: that was all” (110).

Clarice, the nun that Hamo refers to, is the third orphan character in the two novels. She has been raised by the convent of Clerkenwell. Her mother, a nun, had died in childbirth and she only learns the identity of her father halfway through the story. Clarice confronts the man who had worked at Clarice’s convent when she was brought up by the nuns: “But you did not claim me. Or recognise me” (84). The father responds: “I suffered with you when you were beaten with candles”. She too has lacked the wholeness and safety provided by the family ISA and although her later stages remain a mystery, it is clear that she has become a destructive force. Clarice is ready to destroy people to reach her target, which is to be the voice of the divine Subject: “God is with us and now, through us, He will guide the destiny of this kingdom” (206), she declares at the very end.

Clarice is the key to the mystery plot. She, and in a sense the plot, originated in the tunnels under the convent of Clerkenwell. In the last chapter, *The Author’s Tale*, Ackroyd

tells tales disguised as historical facts about the characters and the events. One of the tales tells the reader that “[the convent’s] underground tunnels can still be seen, however, in the basement of the Marx Memorial Library at 37a, Clerkenwell Green”<sup>2</sup> (207). Perhaps he is hinting from which angle the mystery that is his text ought to be approached.

All the central characters whose inner thoughts are narrated in *TCT* and *Hawksmoor* are outsiders. Thomas Hill, the protagonist of chapter two in *Hawksmoor*, is another social misfit. The schoolboy “had been living in the dark world of his own anxieties, and no infliction of reality could seem more terrible than that” (*Hawksmoor*, 39). “The semiotic ‘noise’” of “songs, chants, rhymes, graffiti poetry, tour-guide cliché, and advertising” that makes up the background of the modern time frame (Link 2004, 526-7), which should appear perfectly natural to people, seems strange to Thomas: “the bright posters and the glossy photographs shining in the neon light” are to him “as strange as any objects brought up by a diver from the floor of the ocean” (38). Thomas finds safety inside the educational ISA, where there is a place for him, “[b]ut when the bell rang he would walk out into the asphalt schoolyard uncertain and alone...” (29). He tries to lose his fear of being different by mimicking other children: “And Thomas, too, joined in the excitement: he experienced no fear and in a curious sense he felt protected as he jumped up and down ... still shouting with the others (30). Thomas hopes that by adopting the customs of the others, he too can become a legitimate part of society. As he learns the beliefs of other children, he does his best to install the patterns of correct thinking into his brain: “All these things he stored up in his memory, for it seemed to him to be knowledge that he must possess in order to be like the others” (29-30). He hopes to become a part of the social structure by taking part in its practices and conventions. However, Thomas is unable to shake the eerie feeling of being different. Ideology is not working in his case. The world around him and his place in it do not feel natural to him.

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<sup>2</sup> The information about the tunnels of the Marx Memorial Library is accurate, but whether they are connected to the convent or not is not established.

*Hawksmoor* tells the stories of two men, both called Ned, who lose their minds and subject positions, fall out of the structures of society altogether and become drifters. Similar stories are told in both time frames. The interesting aspect of the stories of the vagrant Neds is the reversed process of interpellation and the insight that one cannot exist without the familiar structures of ideology, where one has a place and a fixed relation to things, institutions and other people.

The seventeenth century Ned was a printer in Bristol, fell into debts and “his Creditors ... pressed upon him at so hard a Rate that he was in great fear of being taken by the Sergeant to the Kings-Bench...” (64), after which he crumbled under pressure, left his trade and family and become a vagrant.

The twentieth century Ned had also been a printer in Bristol. His story is told in more detail. Moreover, this Ned had always been an outsider:

his temperament was a diffident one and he found it difficult to speak to his colleagues ... This had also been his position as a child. He had been brought up by elderly parents who seemed so distant from him that he rarely confided in them, and they would stare at him helplessly when he lay sobbing upon his bed. (71)

One day Ned suffers a mental breakdown and the world around him turns strange, “... and then he knew what was meant by madness” (73). He stays in his room for days held captive by his fears of the world outside his room. “... [H]e asked himself, What is wrong? What is missing? (74). Ned is missing the feeling that the world is natural. In his state of madness his relation to the world is overturned. The subject positions that tie Ned to society disappear. His identity and mind are dissolved from social reality, and he becomes a drifter who exists outside society. Ned spends pages in his strange adventure into otherness before he is killed.

The seventeenth century Ned is killed by Dyer, who needs human sacrifices for his churches and the twentieth century Ned is killed by the mystery murderer whose identity is never revealed. The case of the Neds illustrates the process of dissolving the subject from

ideology, instead of ideology enclosing the subject, which is what happens with Dyer and the protagonists in *TCT*. It is shown in *Hawksmoor* that people cannot exist outside society and its ideological structures. Thomas Hill tries to be a part of the structure but does not succeed. He becomes another sacrifice. Thomas dies as his erratic fears cause him to escape into one of Dyer's churches and fall into a hidden pit that Dyer had built under each of his churches. All the central characters in both novels are outsiders who either get sucked into ideology or are spat out of it and destroyed. The ones that survive temporarily inside ideology have their autonomy and agency obliterated by it.

In the previous subchapter, I looked at how the two novels depict ideological practices that form social reality. Bakhtin and Medvedev note that “[s]ocial man is surrounded by ideological phenomena ... [that] comprise the ideological environment, which forms a solid ring around man” (1978, 14). For Althusser, ideology is “a structural feature of any society”; he sees it as “a ‘cement’ which introduces itself into all parts of the social building”, whose purpose is “to secure cohesion among men and between men and their tasks” (Larrain 1979, 155-6). The representation of ideology enclosing people can be seen in both *TCT* and *Hawksmoor*. Whereas Larrain speaks of ideology as “social cement”, stone is a repeated metaphor for ideology in both novels.

Hamo feels the inevitability of ideology: “He saw nothing ahead of him but darkness, as if he were trapped in a vaulted space of cold stone. He had an image of God, laughing, as he doled out dooms and destinies” (*TCT* 95-6). He has no autonomy or agency. Hamo's destiny is formed by an external agent and there is nothing he can do to change it; it is set in stone. “He put his head against the cold stone, and wept. He could smell the stone around him; it smelled of forgotten things, primeval stone quarried from the bedrock of ancient seas. The world was of stone” (128).

Clarice, too, knows what it is like to be a mechanistic part in the cold structure that surrounds the lives of men:

The story of the tunnels had reached her, even as a child, and she had often wondered why the other nuns treated her as if she were some unregarded piece of the convent itself. She did indeed recall some place of stone that seemed to her to be secret. It was full of wailing and of anger. She associated stone with tears and iniquity. (84)

Dyer feels that his destiny to be ruined is already carved in stone: “The heaviness of Stone did so oppress me that I was close to Extinction ... There was some thing that waited for me there, already in Ruines” (*Hawksmoor*, 52). Mirabilis tells Dyer “let Stone be your God and you will find God in the Stone” (51). Mirabilis parallels God, the fundamental building block – the central Subject of religious ideology, and stone, which symbolizes the material existence of the abstract structure that is ideology.

Hamo sees layers of stone enclosing the men who he is watching: “To the boy it seemed that the friar and the carpenter were imprisoned by stone, enshrined by stone – that endless ages of stone lay above their heads, and that they could only find their way beneath it in subdued voices and with tired gestures” (*TCT* 15). Hamo feels that the endless layers of time are overpowering people and forcing them to operate under old structures of thought and old patterns of behaviour. The Marxist view of the layers of past generations weighing on people is expressed in the famous passage from Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language. (1852, 5)

The metaphor of stone as ideology is developed to the extent that stone is given characteristics of ideology. At a secret gathering of Dominus, the group concludes that they must stay concealed. “In the meantime we must be still as any stone. No one must know of our devisings” (75). Ideology, too, has to be still and occult in order to work. A doctor follows a member of Dominus to another secret meeting that is held inside a tall stone tower. The doctor admires the stone construction:

He knew it to be of great antiquity; in the torchlight he could see the blocks of rough stone in the mortar at its base ... The physician was filled with sensations of power and of purpose as he looked upon it; it had already completed its destiny, and now persisted in time through its indomitable will ... This was deaf stone. Whatever dark business was conducted within its walls, it would never be whispered abroad. (139)

The ability of ideology to endure time and carry power without revealing it is inscribed there in the stone of the tower.

The mayor of London believes that Clarice and her prophecies are “as true as a stone in the wall” (64). The mayor’s words become ironic when it is kept in mind that stone symbolizes ideology in the novel. The stone on which society is built – ideology – is a solid construction, yet a deceitful one.

“Conspiracy, religious fanaticism, and terrorism: the entire novel is testament to the repetitive patterns of history”, Lewis argues (2007, 130). *TCT* is a statement that people fighting over the privilege to be the rightful representative of the central Subject, is what history has been all about. “Westminster had once been marsh ground, and the palace itself had been built upon an island ‘in loco terribili’. It was terrible still, filled with the passions and envies of men fighting for power; the atmosphere of fog and gloom had never left it” (198). Once again the battle for the right to be the image, or the voice, of the Central Subject of the structure of ideology was about to affect everyone’s lives; hence, “‘These are hard times,’ the knight said. ‘Stony times’” (50).

Mortimer argues that to get Henry to the throne was a difficult task: “To dethrone an anointed king [Henry] had to destroy part of the very fabric of society” (2008a, 167). In *TCT*, the process is aided by the religious prophecies. Clarice faces Richard, who is captured in the Tower and waiting for his end. Richard asks how it was possible to dethrone an anointed monarch and she answers mysteriously: “To make a mirror bright, you must first cover it with black soap” (201). Clarice is referring to the relatively straightforward process of changing the image of the central Subject, which is in the centre of the mirror-construction of ideology, by first discrediting the old one and clearing the way for a new one. Even though the process was aided by a mirror-trick, *TCT* points out that the effects of men fighting for power are often “stony” for the individual.

### **4.3 People as automatons or actors**

The importance of ideological rituals, conventions and habits in the lives of Londoners in *TCT* and *Hawksmoor* was examined in 4.1. Slavoj Žižek states that it was Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), “one of Althusser’s principal points of reference in his attempt to develop the concept ‘Ideological State Apparatuses’” (1989, 36), who first discussed the importance of habit and custom in shaping the mind. “Pascal says more or less: ‘Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe’” Althusser notes (1971, 158). The common reasoning is that a belief, or an idea, is first freely formed in the consciousness of the subject and only then does he act according to that belief or idea. However, Pascal argues that it is the ritual that precedes the belief. Žižek elaborates on the matter: “According to Pascal, the interiority of our reasoning is determined by the external, nonsensical ‘machine’ – automatism of the signifier, of the symbolic network in which the subjects are caught” (1989, 36). “... We are as much automaton as mind. ... Proofs only convince the mind; habit provides the strongest proofs and those that are most believed. It inclines the automaton, which leads the mind unconsciously

along with it” (Pascal, quoted in Zizek 1989, 36). What Pascal and Althusser are saying is that as the subject operates in the ideological world, the mind automatically adopts the beliefs and values that are inscribed in its practices. Also Bakhtin and Medvedev point out that human consciousness develops within ideological reality (1978, 14). “In fact, the individual consciousness can only become a consciousness by being realized in the forms of the ideological environment proper to it: in language, in conventionalized gesture, in artistic image, in myth, and so on”, they argue (Bakhtin and Medvedev 1978, 14).

Dyer sees the citizens of London as a mass of simple minds that only need their everyday rituals. The plague had terrorized seventeenth-century London, but it did not take long before “... the Mobb were happy againe with their Masquerades, Rush-burying, Morrice-dances, Whitson-ales, Fortune-telling, Legerdemain, Lotteries, Midnight-revels and lewd Ballads; ...” (*Hawksmoor*, 17). For Dyer, society is reduced to mechanistic processes: “And what a World is it, of Tricking and Bartering, Buying and Selling, Borrowing and Lending, Paying and Receiving; when I walk ... the Streets I hear, *Money makes the old Wife trot, Money makes the Mare to go ...*” (48). Dyer’s view of the world is identical to the one presented in *TCT*. The third person narrator draws parallels to hordes of animals and the motion of the sea when describing the inevitability of human behaviour: “All the sounds of the tradesmen and hucksters mingled in the great vaulted space, and resembled the strange buzzing and humming of thousands of bees; it was a still roar and a loud whisper, much like a sea of voices and of footsteps” (*TCT* 56-7). Dyer, too, sees the world as a bee hive: “... in this Hive of Noise and Ignorance, ... , we are tyed to the World as to a sensible Carcasse” (*Hawksmoor*, 48). For him, the world is practical, yet, reduced to nothing – a functional carcass that “the Flies on this Dunghill Earth” (17) revolve aimlessly.

Dyer’s point of view, as well as that which is presented in *TCT*, may be approached from a Marxist angle: human beings exist only to fulfill their mechanistic role in the vast



social system. People are seen as ideological animals – bees operating in their hive. In Althusser’s notion of ideology, the individual is reduced to a mechanistic part of the system aiming at the reproduction of society. “In Althusser’s account of the construction of the subject through the process of interpellation, the result of the linkage of the concept of the subject to the question of social reproduction is to reduce individuals to functional supports of the system”, Frow summarizes (1986, 76).

It was discussed in the previous subchapters that Ackroyd’s Londoners need ideology to be able to cope and play their part in the vast social system. “In a classic work, *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch taught us that the alienated city is above all a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves...”, Jameson notes (1991a, 10). He continues:

There is ... a most interesting convergence between the empirical problems studied by Lynch in terms of city space and the great Althusserian (and Lacanian) redefinition of ideology as ‘the representation of the subject’s Imaginary relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence.’ Surely this is exactly what the cognitive map is called upon to do in the narrower framework of daily life in the physical city: to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society’s structure as a whole. (Jameson 1991a, 10-11)

In both novels, the masses of London are presented as automatons that play their mechanistic role in the “vast hierarchy of need and service” (*TCT*, 114) or in “the vast Machine of the World, in which Men move by Rote...” (*Hawksmoor*, 144). Within the massive structure of society as a whole, the characters are able to operate only with the help of the cognitive map that ideology provides.

Another way in which Ackroyd represents the power of ideology over the individual is by depicting his characters as actors in a play that is written by an external agent. In 4.2 I introduced Greenblatt’s (1980) view, according to which identity is always a cultural construction. According to Bertens, structuralism claims that what we say and do does not originate in us:

to briefly recapitulate its argument: we are always part of a structure, to be more precise, we figure in a number of overlapping structures. We inevitably articulate, through whatever we do or say, the structures we are a part of. And since the structures were there before we appeared on the scene, it is more appropriate to say that the structures speak through us than to claim that we say or do things that have their origin within us. (Bertens 2008, 98)

Bertens (2008) refers to ideological, cultural, linguistic and symbolic structures. In this study, the focus is on examining the structures of ideology in Ackroyd's novels. However, the rest of the said structures, and their destabilization, are also very much present in his writing. For example Derrida's poststructuralist views on language, according to which a breakdown of the relationship between the signifier and the signified has occurred (De Groot 2010, 114), can be seen in *Hawksmoor*: "Words, words, words breeding no thing but more Wordiness which represents no thing in Nature, either, but a meer Confused Idea of Grandeur or Terrour" (*Hawksmoor*, 179-80).

Bertens notes that "in Althusser's explanation of the workings of ideology 'the subject acts insofar as he is acted by the ... system'" (2008, 92). Althusser's subjects think that they are acting out of their free will, "while in reality a pre-existing structure acts through them", he argues (Bertens 2008, 92). In *Hawksmoor*, it is explicitly stated that the characters are actors playing a part that is written for them. Detective Hawksmoor "was playing a part: he knew this, and believed it to be his strength. Others did not realize that their parts had been written for them, their movements already marked out like chalk lines upon a stage, their clothes and gestures decided in advance..." (*Hawksmoor*, 118). He "had become much like one of the cardboard figures in a puppet theatre" (199), as had everyone else, who "were being drawn by a thread which they would never see" (211).

Nick Dyer wants to free himself from the structures of ideology as he realizes that he has been just another actor on the stage: "... the world [is] but a Masquerade, yet one in which the Characters do not know their Parts" (*Hawksmoor*, 173). Dyer's birth was his "first Entrance upon the Stage" (11), and school, or to stay with the Marxist view, the educational

state apparatus, was the “Stage where [he] was put to learn” (12). He despises the fact that he has followed a script that has been written for him by others: “I have liv’d long enough for others, like the Dog in the Wheel, and it is now the Season to begin for myself” (11). He tries to become an agent in his own life. “I had looked about me and penetrated what had occurred, not let it pass like a sick man’s Dreame or a Scene without a Plot” (17).

After a play that Dyer observes at a play-house, the story suddenly takes the form of a play. He and the three men he speaks with are presented as “DRAMATIS PERSONAE” (174) and the characters deliver their lines as in a play. The same thing happens in the next chapter, in the twentieth-century time frame, when detective Hawksmoor and a tramp perform an interrogation “scene” (195) in a play form. Changing to play form in the middle of a novel is one of the clear postmodern features in *Hawksmoor*.

In *TCT* the characters are represented as actors in a continuous play more subtly than in *Hawksmoor*. The introductory words of *TCT* foreshadow Ackroyd’s idea that people are fleeting actors: (he uses the same characters that are also found in Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*) “As William Blake remarked, ‘the characters of Chaucer’s pilgrims are the characters which compose all ages and nations: as one age falls, another rises, different to mortal sight, but to immortals only the same...’”. The actors seemingly change, but essentially the same actors keep appearing in different ages. In a religious play, “Noah and Noah’s wife had performed as Adam and Eve on the previous morning” (*TCT*, 77). It is implied that people in fact do have an idea that they are participating in a continuous performance, but they are more than willing to play along.

The fact that the ark could already be seen upon the green was of no consequence; past present and future were intermingled in the small area of Clerkenwell. The audience assembled knew precisely what would occur in front of them, but they were always surprised and entertained by it. (*TCT*, 82)

Ackroyd represents life as a continuing play, which requires the participation of the actors to keep going. It was discussed in the previous subchapters that habit and convention

consolidate ideology and the values and beliefs that are inscribed in it. The continuous play, existence within ideology, may be questioned as long as people participate and keep performing their roles.

## 5. History and Marxism intertwined

In chapter four, it was established that ideology encloses the characters and obliterates their autonomy and individuality in both novels. In this chapter, the focus is shifted to examining how the fact that the subject is a product of ideology echoes through time. Having located the dominating presence of ideology in each time frame, I will next try to find Marxism and ideology in Ackroyd's representation of history.

### 5.1 The eternal space of London

Truly Time is a vast Denful of Horror, round about which a Serpent winds and in the winding bites itself by the Tail. Now, now is the Hour, every Hour, every part of an Hour, every Moment, which in its end does begin again and never ceases to end: a beginning continuing, always ending. (*Hawksmoor*, 62)

Time is described as a multidimensional space in *Hawksmoor*. Hendia Baker suggests that Ackroyd “creates a new experience of time as a labyrinth of simultaneity or the ever-present” (Baker quoted in Lewis 2007, 171-2). In *Hawksmoor*, events unfold within time, but time does not move forward. “Could it be that the world sprang up around him only as he invented it second by second ... these things were real: they would never cease to occur and they would always be the same...” (*Hawksmoor*, 159). Time does not exist as the linear concept that it is normally regarded as. “And what was the time?” detective Hawksmoor asks a witness. “Time? There was no time, not like that”, she answers. “And then she laughed, as if they had been sharing some enormous joke” (157).

The meaning of time is reinvented in the novel. In the twentieth-century time frame, Hawksmoor arrives at an excavation site, where he is able to look down into history. He is talking to the woman in charge of the excavations:

‘And how far down have you reached?’ he asked her, peering into a dark pit at his feet. ‘Well it’s all very complicated, but at this point we’ve got down to the sixth century... And there’s a lot more to find.’ She was certain of this because she saw time as a rock face, which in her dreams she sometimes descended. (161)

Ackroyd's London is a space, in which time and events build up into layers instead of moving forward. Chalupský argues that "the interrelationship between place and event continues over two and a half centuries" in *Hawksmoor* (2010, 7). This parallelism of past and present events supports Ackroyd's insistence that "the question of chronology is immaterial, for time is cyclical and human actions are endlessly accumulated and repeated around the same power-concentrating places" (Onega, quoted in Chalupský 2010, 7).

The structure of ideology, the social cement that holds society together, unites the city space, where "human actions accumulate endlessly". In both novels and in each of the layers of time, there are allusions to a mysterious, eternal fabric that encircles people. In the twentieth century, Hawksmoor "allowed the knowledge of the pattern to enclose him" (*Hawksmoor*, 214). He refers to "a pattern so large that it remained inexplicable" (157). Dyer, in the seventeenth century, talks about "the Pattern of the World" (*Hawksmoor*, 139) and "the Pattern of Humane life" (63). Furthermore, in the medieval world of *TCT*, there are allusions to a pattern through which "the events of the world must keep on breaking through" (*TCT*, 98). At the moment of his doom, Hamo's sees "the web of his fate" in front of him (*TCT*, 110). The mystical pattern or web could be interpreted as the cultural-ideological structure of each historical setting, which builds and encloses the subject. It would be presumptuous to say that the pattern equals ideology, since Ackroyd's description of it is vague and holistic. However, the pattern does have relevance to and conjunctions with ideology.

The pattern is easiest to detect in the twentieth-century time frame, because it starts to crack in the spirit of postmodernism. Bertens (2008, 107) states that all structures are inherently unstable in the poststructuralist world. Detective Hawksmoor's existential experience is poststructuralist. The world around him has no stable centre. He tries to make sense of the world, but since there are too many arbitrary images and pieces of random meaning around him, he is unable to form a complete picture of the whole. Hawksmoor is lost

within the fragments of images and meaning: “He allowed the knowledge of the pattern to enclose him, as the picture on the television screen began to revolve very quickly and then to break up into a number of different images” (*Hawksmoor*, 214).

Hawksmoor is alienated within the urban space. He is an outsider to the events, the spaces and the dialogue that unfold around him. “Hawksmoor’s estrangement from any sense of urban community is plain in that he participates in oral culture only by happenstance, and only as a witness”, Link notes (2004, 529). He does not fit in. Yet, his suffering within the surrounding structure is not as intense as that of Hamo’s in *TCT*. Hawksmoor “sensed that the pattern was incomplete, and it was for this that he waited almost joyfully” (214). The “pattern” does not crush him. Instead, the cracking structure allows him to slip through it. The fact that he is unattached to the pattern causes him to lose himself altogether at the end.

Let us consider Hawksmoor’s inability to construct a coherent representation of reality, which ideology should provide, by looking at Jameson’s account of the Althusserian explanation of the relationship between existential experience, abstract knowledge and ideology:

The existential – the positioning of the individual subject, the experience of daily life, the monadic ‘point of view’ on the world to which we are necessarily, as biological subjects, restricted – is in Althusser’s formula implicitly opposed to the realm of abstract knowledge, a realm which, as Lacan reminds us, is never positioned in or actualized by any concrete subject but rather by that structural void called *le sujet supposé savoir* (the subject supposed to know), a subject-place of knowledge. ... The Althusserian formula, in other words, designates a gap, a rift, between existential experience and scientific knowledge. Ideology has then the function of somehow inventing a way of articulating those two distinct dimensions with each other. ... What a historicist view of this definition would want to add is that such coordination ... is distinct in different historical situations, and, above all, that there may be historical situations in which it is not possible at all – and this would seem to be our situation in the current crisis. (Jameson 1991a, 12)

What Jameson is saying is that one’s position as a subject and the realm of abstract knowledge, or phenomenal reality, are two dimensions that are separated by a void. The task of ideology is to fill the void, so that the subject believes that they are able to get to reality.

The only reality that the subject has is abstract knowledge, or phenomenal reality, mediated to the subject by ideology – ideological reality. Žižek (1989, 21) points out that for Althusser, “... ideology is not simply a ‘false consciousness’, an illusory representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as ‘ideological’”.

Detective Hawksmoor is in the middle of the postmodern crisis in which ideology can no longer fill the gap between existential experience and abstract knowledge. It is only momentarily, when he is able to lose his own subject position and “did not know if he was looking out or looking in”, that Hawksmoor is able to experience a glimpse of reality: “and for a moment everything was real...” (*Hawksmoor*, 119). Most of the time, he is lost in the multitudes of meaning. He is incapable of organizing a coherent ideological map in which he could position himself: “...the letters and the images encircled him. And it was while he sat here, scarcely moving, that he was in hell and no one knew it” (199).

In chapter four, it was established that in both novels stone is an extended metaphor for ideology. As Hawksmoor starts to lose himself towards the end and finds more questions than answers, his boss takes him off the case and tells him that they “need someone to build the case up stone by stone” (201). He is unable to construct ideological reality “stone by stone”. For Hawksmoor, ideological reality is crumbling and he loses himself in the void.

Dyer, in contrast, is not lost. He has attached himself firmly to an alternative system of knowledge. He does not feel imprisoned by “the pattern of knowledge”. He thinks that he is able to expose its true nature by positioning himself to the other side of the pattern: “It is only the Darknesse that can give trew Forme to our work and trew perspective to our Fabrick”, he proclaims (5).

For Dyer, the standard structures of knowledge that his era is built on are an illusion. He visits the Royal Society, where it is declared that science can and has saved mankind from



fear and superstition. He dismisses the attempts of the Enlightenment to rationally explain and organize the world:

Thus I also dismiss the narrow Conceptions of this Generation of Writers who speak with Sir Chris. of a new Restauration of Learning, and who prattle something too idly on the new Philosophy of Experiment and Demonstration: these are but poor Particles of Dust which will not burie the Serpents. (56)

Dyer twists around the standard view that matters of faith are built in the air and rationally built systems of knowledge stand on firm ground: “They build Edifices which they call *Systems* by laying their Foundacions in the Air and, when they think they are come to solid Ground, the Building disappears and the Architects tumble down from the Clouds.” What is reality for others is a “Dreame” (12) for him. Dyer concludes that there is something in the world that “they cannot see nor touch nor measure: it is the Praecipice into which they will surely fall” (101). He foretells the postmodern crisis – the inability of ideology to fill the void between the subject’s position of experiencing the world and reality. He feels that “the Praecipice” of reality filled with “Serpents” awaits everyone. According to Williams, it is proclaimed in *Hawksmoor* that rationality will always fail to describe every aspect of the world; the novel “eerily insists that the old magic continues to have as dark and disturbing a hold over late twentieth-century society as it had over England in the late seventeenth century”, (2009, 3). “So it seems that Ackroyd is of the opinion that the world in which nothing may be trusted, in which every appearance, every identity threatens to be illusory, and where ephemerality is the governing principal, is by no means peculiar to the late twentieth century”, Williams argues (2009, 3).

In *TCT*, Hamo Fulberd shows signs of estrangement in the chaotic and violent city space. He “could not endure the sound of horses and cattle being lashed, pummelled by fists, whipped by laughing children. It broke open for him all sense of order” (*TCT*, 18). However, his world does not break into fragments like that of detective Hawksmoor’s. The ideological structure of his medieval society is solid: “The world was of stone” (128). Hamo suffers

within the inescapable structure that surrounds him: “He saw nothing ahead of him but darkness, as if he were trapped in a vaulted space of cold stone” (95).

The cultural-ideological structure that ties the time frames together varies according to time and place on the surface, but its functioning is always the same (Althusser 1971). Eagleton states that each social formation has a “particular dominated ensemble of ideologies” that has a “relatively coherent set of ‘discourses’ of values, representations and beliefs” (1976, 54), but what does not change is that the subject is always constructed within ideology (Althusser 1971). Consequently, the individuality and the authenticity of the characters are questioned in the novels.

Poststructuralism has undermined the structures that build our reality and regards the individual subject as a myth (Jameson 1991b, 4). The subject is “made up out of conflicting fragments” and “without a centre” Bertens notes (2008, 107). Ackroyd destabilizes the notion of unique identity in both novels. “Identity is made highly problematic in Ackroyd” Bertens (2008, 110) states. His characters are constructions of their respective cultural and ideological structures, which removes their uniqueness. Individual identities and individual generations blend together in the eternal city space. In *Hawksmoor*, the uncanny similarities that are drawn between the characters of the two eras hundreds of years apart are countless. For example, in the seventeenth-century layer of time, the drifter Ned knows that even death will not free him from his confinement: “Where can I go? If I leave here I must come back” (*Hawksmoor*, 65). And he does come back in the modern time frame. The time frames and identities fuse together. “How do we conclude what Time is our own?” Dyer asks (*Hawksmoor*, 55). In both novels time is a multidimensional space where the past is always present. Past generations define the living one:

We live off the Past: it is in our Words and our Syllables. It is reverberant in our Streets and Courts, so that we can scarce walk across the Stones without being reminded of those who walked there before us; the Ages before our own are like

an Eclipse which blots out the Clocks and Watches of our present Artificers and, in that Darkness, the Generations jostle one another. (*Hawksmoor*, 178)

Even though the identities of the characters in *TCT* are not mirrored to another time frame as in *Hawksmoor*, the individuality of the characters is questioned. The people of the city seemingly change as time passes, but essentially they are the same:

[Hamo] had come because he could no longer bear the sight of his familiar world; it seemed to encircle him or, worse, to enter his soul. What if this world were all that is, and was, and ever would be? What if, from beginning to the end of the thing men called time, the same people merged continually with one another? (*TCT*, 95)

When the citizens of London begin to stir with Henry's arrival at Westminster, a minor character wonders if it is the city that creates its citizens and not the other way around:

There were citizens moving about from street to street, or from lane to lane, with intense looks of fear and amazement. He observed their faces as he passed them, but he recognized none of them. He was then struck by a curious possibility. What if these figures were created out of panic and fear, out of the anger and excitement of the city itself? They might emerge at times of fire or of the death, a visible group of walkers in the night. They might appear on the same London streets through all of the city's history. (*TCT*, 163)

The past generations are never far in any of the layers of time. Transient subjects that keep reappearing through history are expanded to generations that follow each other – or rather, co-exist – in the eternal space of London. Ackroyd's characters are temporary constructions that “pass like shadows on the wall” (*TCT*, 130). People are “meer Shaddowe[s]” (*Hawksmoor*, 12) who are “in this world as in an Inne to tarry for a short space and then to be gone hence” (*Hawksmoor*, 58).

Ahearn states that “vagrants, victims, and murderers momentarily or permanently exist outside of time” (2000, 459) in *Hawksmoor*. Dyer feels that vagrants and beggars have their place “by [his] Church: they are the Pattern of Humane life, for others are but one Step away from their Condition, and they acknowledge that the beginning and end of all Flesh is but Torment and Shaddowe. They are in the Pitte also, where they see the true Face of God which is like unto their own” (*Hawksmoor*, 63). For Dyer, the true human condition is to exist in a

pit of “Torment and Shaddowe”, which is only a glass floor away for all Londoners. He pities people who do not recognize their hazardous condition. “For who can speak of the Mazes of the Serpent to those who are not lost in them?”, he ponders and talks about a Mr. Barber who “thought all the superficies of this terrestrial Globe was made of thin and transparent Glass, and that underneath there lay a Multitude of Serpents; he died laughing, at the Ignorance and the Folly of those who did could not see the true Foundations of the World” (*Hawksmoor*, 56). Thomas Hill’s mother senses the proximity of danger in the modern time frame: “The death of her husband had rendered her timorous; the ground was now made of the thinnest glass through which she could see the abysses beneath her...” (*Hawksmoor*, 32). The pit that Hawksmoor visits, which revealed time as a “rock face”, is also “covered with transparent sheeting” (160).

The glass floor could be read as another metaphor for ideology. It covers the void between the subject and abstract reality, which remains a dark and unknown realm for the human subject. According to Peck, *Hawksmoor* “focuses on the borderline between reason and darkness” and draws our attention “to the wafer-thin fragility of human reason, and makes us consider anew the murkiness beneath the surface” (1994, 444). Peck points out that “as we gain a sense of an irrational power beyond individual will”, the written character on the page, as well as the human character, “is wiped out” (1994, 444).

The shadowy past is mirrored to the present in *TCT* as well. A folk fable tells about a group of revellers who were cursed to dance eternally in a circle. “The dancers gradually sank up to their waists in the ground” and “some say that the dead had joined them in their revelry” (*TCT*, 103). The day the fable is told there still can be seen through a tavern window “a circle of revellers, holding hands and dancing in a ring” (*TCT*, 104). The predestined men comment on a killing: “You have favoured him. He has gone back. ... He is dissolved into time” (*TCT*, 59-60). “It is the dark of Time from which we come and to which we will return”

(*Hawksmoor*, 178) Dyer concludes. The eternal dimension is there in the background of the present in both novels.

The eternal nature of Ackroyd's closed city space matches Althusser's notion of eternal ideology. Ideological consciousness is the only consciousness that Ackroyd's Londoners have. Althusser argues that this has been the case throughout history: "[ideology] is endowed with a structure and a functioning such as to make it a non-historical reality, i.e. an *omni-historical* reality" (1971, 151-2). Althusser points out that his proposition is "directly related to Freud's proposition that the unconscious is eternal, i.e. that it has no history" and that "the eternity of the unconscious is not unrelated to the eternity of ideology in general" (Althusser 1971, 151-2). The unconscious and the imagination are dealt with in both novels. The past is paralleled to a dream and the imagination: "the Years that have passed and which are so much like a Dreame" (*Hawksmoor*, 55). "Time cannot be restored, ..., unless it be in the Imagination" (*Hawksmoor*, 128). "If the past is a memory, it partakes of a dream. If it is a dream, then it is an illusion." (*TCT*, 103).

## **5.2 The paradox of history and the perpetual fall**

"The structure of *The Clerkenwell Tales* – whereby each chapter is narrated from the point of view of a different character – was only partly successful. Ackroyd attempted to echo *The Canterbury Tales*", Lewis argues (2007, 133). He feels that "Ackroyd's multiple viewpoints might have worked in a short story, say, with only one or two shifts of focus" (Lewis 2007, 133). I disagree with Lewis. Ackroyd is in full control of his array of trivial characters. *TCT* is a postmodern novel that redefines history and the historical novel: Ackroyd imitates the form of *The Canterbury Tales*, borrows its characters and adds an incoherent narrative and mysterious dialogue. The result is pastiche, "blank parody" – parody that has lost its sense of humour, as Jameson (1991b) puts it. Lewis notes that "the entire novel is testament to the

cycles and repetitive patterns of history” (2007, 130). However, he fails to take into account that the temporary and arbitrary subject has a pivotal part in Ackroyd’s representation of the cycles of history. The chapters that are narrated from the point of view of the trivial characters serve to illustrate that even though the characters’ parts in the narrative are arbitrary, each must play their part.

As a skilled historian, Ackroyd is able to paint a vivid picture of London in 1399. Lewis points out that “some reviewers thought that the picture was a little too vivid, that the local detail overwhelms the rather frail narrative” (2007, 128). By emphasizing the triviality of the narrative and the characters, Ackroyd emphasizes the triviality of the layer of history in question. It is because of the questioning of historical progress and the uniqueness of historical eras that the historical events of *TCT* are downplayed in the novel. It is highly notable that the developments of Henry’s ascension from exile to the throne, which structure the novel throughout, are told very casually; they are almost hidden within the chapters. Lewis notes that Henry’s fight for power takes place “off-stage” (2007, 129). The reader hardly notices the unfolding of the events, as if they had little importance. Yet, as a renowned historian, Ackroyd could not have been unaware of the historical importance of the events of 1399. As Ian Mortimer states,

... one is left in no doubt that the ‘revolution’ which Henry instigated in 1399 was one of the most important events in English history. Its legacy ... was the single most important political concern with which Shakespeare and his contemporaries had to wrestle two hundred years later. (2008a, 12)

The physical aspect of medieval London is emphasized much more than the historical events of the year and the fragmentary stories of the people of Clerkenwell. Ahearn notes that “the detailed evocation of London geography as it persists or is modified over time” is central in *Hawksmoor* as well (2000, 459). Stone of the buildings and the social cement of ideological practices form the reality of London, while the rest remains a mystery that can be played with.

Mortimer argues that

What united [the postmodern critics] (in the eyes of historians at least) was the idea that historians cannot tell the truth about the past, or, as Keith Jenkins put it, ‘we can never really know the past . . . the gap between the past and history . . . is such that no amount of epistemological effort can bridge it’. (Mortimer 2008b)

It is implied in *Hawksmoor* that hollow historical facts do not unravel the mysteries of history: “In History class (which was known to the children as the ‘Mystery’ lesson), for example, he liked to write down names or dates and watch the ink flow across the spacious white paper of his exercise book” (*Hawksmoor*, 29). Hutcheon’s (2002) notion that in postmodernist fictions the past can only be retrieved through its residues in the present does indeed fit to both novels. The label “historiographic metafiction – fiction that is self-conscious about its historical reconstructions” (Lewis 2007, 170), could be given to *TCT* as well. Both novels indicate that the physical aspects of London – its buildings, ceremonies, customs, habits, belief systems and oral tradition – are all that can be retrieved reliably from past times. Ackroyd parodies narratives that are constructed within that physical framework. He parallels the past to imagination or a dream; it is once experienced subjective reality that can never be recovered.

For Ackroyd, the stone of the city is the only reliable storyteller. In both novels, stone imagery persists throughout the story. Whenever stone comes up in the novels the focus shifts from the present to eternity. The stone of a church absorbs the noise of contemporary London in *Hawksmoor*: “as [Thomas Hill] approached its stone wall, the noises of the external world were diminished as if they were being muffled by the fabric of the building itself” (*Hawksmoor*, 28). When Dyer leans his “Back against that Stone [he] felt in the Fabrick the Labour and Agonie of those who erected it, the power of Him who enthrall’d them, and the marks of Eternity which had been placed there” (*Hawksmoor*, 61). Ancient pagan stone formations such as Stonehenge, pyramids and obelisks are tangible evidence for Dyer that his ideology is more enduring than the Christian one. In *TCT*, stone awakens a sense of eternity in

Hamo: “He could smell the stone around him; it smelled of forgotten things, primeval stone quarried from the bedrock of ancient seas” (*TCT*, 128).

Past generations and individuals have left their marks on the eternal stone. Detective Hawksmoor tries to find traces of the elusive murderer on the stones of a church in which one of the murders occurred: “it was worth examining the blackened stones in detail, although he realized that the marks upon them had been deposited by many generations of men and women” (*Hawksmoor*, 114). At the very end, detective Hawksmoor’s real self is separate from his Image. His “own Image was sitting beside him” (216). Yet, together they leave a mark on the stone: “they looked past one another at the pattern which they cast upon the stone” (216). The eternal stone is there in the novels to remind that the stone that ideologies, or cultures, leave behind are timeless compared to transient people. Dyer cites Vitruvius’s phrase “O pigmy man, how transient compared to Stone!” twice (*Hawksmoor*, 51 and 148).

Detective Hawksmoor has a sudden sensation that individuals who have left traces of their identity on stone are confined in it: “and he had an image of a mob screaming to be set free” (*Hawksmoor*, 114). Ultimately people and the world become one with stone. “I was struck by an exstatic Reverie in which all the surface of this Place seemed to me Stone, and the sky itself Stone, and I became Stone as I joined the Earth which flew on like a Stone through the Firmament” (*Hawksmoor*, 61). To solve the enigma of the stones of Stonehenge, Dyer suggests that “Some believe they are Men metamorphosised [sic] into Stone” (61). In *TCT*, Hamo looks at a stone church in adoration: “The stone rose up, defying the rain and the wind, sealing with an act of blessedness the earth and sky. ... I only wish to look upon stone. It is my home. I wish to become stone” (*TCT*, 15).

Stone monuments function as tombstones for past generations. Dyer builds one of his stone churches, in which he hides pagan symbols, as a “Sepulture” over the “Pitte” where thousands of corpses have been laid during the plague. He believes that “their small Voices



echo in my Church: they are my Pillars and my Foundation” (*Hawksmoor*, 24). The dead are “pack’d close together like Stones in the mortar” (*Hawksmoor*, 88). The dead generations are the foundations of the ideological stone that stands as proof of past times.

“The creative powers which enable humanity to control its environment ... also enable it to prey upon itself. ... Culture is at once a document of civilization and a record of barbarism...”, Eagleton notes (1990, 219). In both novels, stone monuments are eternal marks of culture, civilization and barbarism. Dyer’s churches, which are “built on burial pits, the first literally upon that of Dyer’s parents”, give “a sense of a historical continuity that is at once inescapable and irrecoverable”, Link states (2004, 521-3). The stone churches “...[foreground] the uncanny materiality of London’s monumental signifiers and [raise] the uneasy possibility that historical progression is an illusion...”, Link notes (2004, 521).

In both novels, historical progression is questioned. Detective Hawksmoor is talking about the murder case with his assistant, but as always, the dialogue points more towards existential questions – the case of humankind:

We have to assume there is a story, otherwise we won’t find him...’

‘It’s difficult to know where to begin, sir.’

‘Yes, the beginning is the tricky part. But perhaps there is no beginning, perhaps we can’t look that far back.’ ... ‘We do nothing. Think of it like a story: even if the beginning has not been understood, we have to go on reading it. Just to see what happens next’. (*Hawksmoor*, 125-6)

In *TCT*, the dethroned Richard points out that while Clarice may have been able to prophesy his fall, and thus assist it, she is as clueless as anyone about the beginning: “You cannot prophesy my beginning”, he says (*TCT*, 201). There is no end in sight either: “If I knew the end, I could begin” (*Hawksmoor*, 114), Hawksmoor points out. The whole of the grand human narrative, history, is undermined – there is no beginning, no end and no real advancement in the middle.

Ackroyd’s questioning of historical progression corresponds to Marxist views on history. Marx and Engels (1970) argue that the human story, apart from material

development, has not begun. According to them, everything at the level of the superstructure, or ideas, is pure illusion – vapour from the material base (Marx and Engels 1970). Marx and Engels dispose of history, since it is merely a narrative of grand ideas and competing ideologies. Ackroyd illustrates that the struggle for power that goes on at the level of ideas and ideologies has little to do with how common people live their lives. “Gilbert and Magga had received the news of this great change in English history with a resignation bordering on indifference; they were not intrigued by the adventures of princes” (2003, 184). Here, there is an allusion to the Marxist notion of “the illusion of the epoch” (Marx and Engels 1970). Marx and Engels argue that the conception of history that “confines itself to high-sounding dramas of princes” (1970, 57) is absurd. There is an allusion to Marxist thought in *Hawksmoor* as well: “So Nature and Art combine in One, *he cries* and his clerk smiled for it was an Allusion” (*Hawksmoor*, 53). Art, too, is tied to the material base – the production of people’s material needs (Marx and Engels 1970).

Whereas Marx and Engels (1970) regard history as an illusion, Althusser adds a paradoxical division to their view. He divides the superstructure into ideology *in general*, which has no history, and ideologies, which manifest themselves materially and do have a history, although not an independent one (Althusser 1971). Both *Hawksmoor* and *TCT* portray a paradoxical representation of time. Ackroyd’s notion of time is reminiscent of Althusser’s notion that while ideology in general is omni-historical, ideologies do have a recorded history (Althusser 1971). On one hand, time is presented as an eternal space where people and generations merge together and on the other hand, time is an endless spiral, in which people and generations follow each other.

In both novels, there are several references to a mysterious wheel that keeps turning:

A Wheel that turns, a Wheel that turned ever,  
A Wheel that turns, and will leave turning never. (*Hawksmoor*, 66)

“The wheel will roll on” (*TCT*, 63), “It is the wheel. And I am bound upon it”<sup>3</sup> (*TCT*, 50) and “This wide world turns upon a wheel. Ancient things return” (*TCT*, 97). “The wheel” could be read as the wheel of time – the “Serpent” that “bites itself by the Tail” (*Hawksmoor*, 62). Ahearn argues that in *Hawksmoor* the ancient symbol of the serpent devouring its tail represents “an imprisonment in time, an inability to rise above the fallen world” (2000, 459). Entrapment in stone is a metaphor for entrapment in ideology in the novels. The wheel of time keeps spinning, but its circular motion is governed by eternal ideology. History does not advance linearly; it is an endless spiral. In an Althusserian spirit, stone monuments built in the name of ideologies mark time, yet at the same time they carry the marks of eternity. *Hawksmoor* is watching a priest preaching on TV: “And beyond the years, my friends, there is an eternity which we may see with the help of God’s grace. And what is so wonderful is that this eternity intersects with time, just as in this church –...” (*Hawksmoor*, 213).

In the previous subchapter, I discussed the postmodern crisis that Detective *Hawksmoor* is facing as the world around him begins to crumble. Jameson’s notion of the postmodern capitalist society that has lost “its capacity to retain its own past” and has begun living “in a perpetual present” (1991b, 10) would be a plausible explanation for why time stands still in the postmodern layer of time of *Hawksmoor*. However, the sense of a perpetual present is not limited to the modern time frame in the novels. In the enclosed city space, history resonates uncannily from the past to the present. The foreshadowing of the postmodern state can be seen in all three time frames. In *Hawksmoor*, the perpetual present of the postmodern era is continuously mirrored to the seventeenth-century layer through matching characters and matching pieces of text and oral tradition, as well as Dyer’s intuition of the eternal pit that awaits all. The perpetual present is also present in the medieval time frame of *TCT*: “Was all preordinate by Him? But if the time was prefixed, there could be no remedy through the

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<sup>3</sup> an allusion to *King Lear*

agency of grace. Man was doomed perpetually” (198). Days follow each other in an endless cycle:

‘Be cheerful. Tomorrow is not born’.  
‘But then tomorrow becomes yesterday’. (198)

“Would the world always run in this way until the day of doom? We are like drops of rain, falling slantwise to the earth” (2), The Prioress ponders.

Providence is another allegory for ideology in *TCT*. Both are inevitable by nature. The question whether all is foretold by providence perplexes the people of Clerkenwell. “The notion of providence, and the timelessness of God, induced feelings of hopelessness and lassitude” (25) among the citizens. “The choice of heaven and hell was beyond them, entirely out of their control, and therefore they could act – or refrain from acting – with impunity” (25). A learned Monk elucidates the matter: “No other thought, nor deed, can ever be but such as providence decrees. Otherwise we would be claiming that God does not have a clear knowledge, but to lay such an error upon Him would be false and foul and wicked cursedness” (100). Here we come across Althusser’s (1971) view that to go against ideology is “wicked”. This type of interpretation of the theological debate in *TCT* somewhat sheds light on the novel’s religious mysticism. Onega states that “the visionary and specifically Catholic component of Ackroyd’s world view confers on his writing a kind of marginality...” (1996, 208). *TCT* has attracted very little criticism, but there is no need to leave the novel in the margin, as its issues are much more far-ranging than mere religious intricacies.

In *Hawksmoor*, too, fatality and providence are prominent features. For example, Dyer’s phrase “It is the work of Providence, ..., that most Men are not able to foretel their own Fate...” (130) only becomes intelligible if providence is understood as an allegory of ideology, which keeps people from being agents in their own lives. Fatality – a feeling that what comes, comes by necessity – is very much present in *Hawksmoor*. “There was always so strong a sense of fatality” (116) in the crimes that Hawksmoor had investigated. Mirabilis had

early on let Dyer understand that his “Fate was already determined” (50). “We are governed by One who like a Boy wags his Finger...” (16), Dyer realizes in the beginning and attempts to escape ideology unsuccessfully. In both novels, the characters’ fates are set in stone:

Hamo saw nothing ahead of him but darkness, as if he were trapped in a vaulted space of cold stone. He had an image of God, laughing, as he doled out dooms and destinies. ... He did not care particularly whether he failed or prospered, but this was worse than all – he could not grasp what was happening to him (95-6).

The novels suggest that the subject’s autonomy and agency have been obliterated by ideology since the beginning of time. The fall of humankind is often referred to in *TCT*. The prioress’s garden is called “Out of Paradise” (1). In *The Man of Law’s Tale*, it is confirmed that Adam is “in hell till the Passion of our Lord God” (165). Henry Bolingbroke helps up the parson who has slipped and comments: “Why, you have fallen like humankind” (199)”. The imprisonment to a perpetual present, the perpetual fall, has its roots in the imprisonment in ideology which is symbolized by entrapment in stone in the novels.

Ackroyd’s characters are imprisoned in time; however, the stone layers of the past confine the artist as well. “Postmodern art acknowledges and accepts the challenge of tradition: the history of representation cannot be escaped but it can be both exploited and commented on critically through irony and parody”, Hutcheon points out (2002, 89). Ackroyd explores the past from a postmodern platform through pastiche. De Groot notes (2010, 115) that in postmodern society “we live ... in a world of surface and echo, unable to properly remember or create anything new”. Ackroyd indicates that the past cannot be remembered, even though it is always present and weighs on the living.

Arguments can be found in support of both sides of the on-going discussion on whether Ackroyd’s historiography is more modernist or postmodernist by nature. Hutcheon’s view of Ackroyd as a postmodernist, supported by several critics, does seem apt as Ackroyd highlights the irrecoverable and paradoxical nature of history. However, according to Connor, Acroyd’s circular view of time and his representation of history “as a closed and echoing

plenitude” point more towards a modernist dominant (quoted in Lewis 2007, 170). Lewis notes that, in comparison to postmodernist fictions, modernist fictions are “not so much concerned with ontology as [they are] with epistemology” and “more interested in subjectivity and consciousness than in our unstable foundations” (2007, 171). In my opinion epistemological issues outweigh ontological issues in the two texts that have been examined in the thesis. Ackroyd deals constantly with the subjectivity and the consciousness of the individual in regard to society, ideology and history. History as a “closed and echoing plenitude” is continuously highlighted with enduring popular tradition and imagery of entrapment in time. There are postmodern themes in the novels as well, such as undermining and relativizing all aspects of the world and addressing the relation between the world and the text (Lewis 2007, 171), but they are less notable.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to interconnect the representation of ideology dominating the individual subject in a specific historical setting with the depiction of the human subject being dominated by ideology throughout history in *TCT* and *Hawksmoor*. I have employed Louis Althusser's theory on ideology to locate allusions to ideology interpellating or constituting the individual as a subject within society. Althusser and Marx and Engels's views on historical progression have been compared to Ackroyd's notion of history.

In the first part of the analysis, I looked at Ackroyd's representation of the relationship between the individual and ideology. It was concluded that ideology, through institutions and their material practices, dominates the everyday lives of the characters. The novels depict the citizens of London as masses, whose behaviour within the structures of ideology has become inevitable. The characters have three options: to be a part of the mass that is constructed by and operates within ideology, to attach oneself to an alternative ideology or to become detached from ideology, which is to become completely disconnected from society. What is clear is that there are no autonomous individuals free from ideology. Heavy layers of stone that have mounted up with time represent the timeless power of ideology over the individual. Ackroyd leaves a small space for individuality only for his protagonists. Their narrow individual space is filled with existential suffering.

In the second part of the analysis, the relationships between present and past generations, ideology, time and place were examined. The respective cultural-ideological structures of each time frame construct the present generation in the novels. The individuality of the characters is questioned as they are built on an external structure and do not have a core of their own. Individuals and individual generations become entangled in the eternal space of London.

The structure of ideology that keeps the eternal space of London coherent and the generations separate becomes exposed as it starts to crack in the twentieth-century time frame in *Hawksmoor*. In the postmodern crisis of signification that detective Hawksmoor faces, reality becomes impossible to represent – a dark, unknown pit. Nick Dyer, the seventeenth-century protagonist, foretells that the true human condition is to exist in a pit of darkness outside of time. The poststructuralist notion of the fragmentary and temporary subject is echoed to past times and the myth of the individual subject is destroyed. It is suggested in the novels that as the subject is constructed on a flimsy artificial structure, a glass floor that is bound to shatter, the true human condition is to float in the darkness.

Ackroyd relativizes the passing of time. Time does not move on in the novels; entrapment in ideology and its perpetual present is eternal. Mankind has suffered a perpetual fall from freedom and agency. The past is compared to a dream. The nightmare of eternal entrapment in time keeps popping up to the characters' consciousness. The dream is uncannily compared to reality when, for example, oral tradition is shown to persist over time.

Furthermore, the enduring presence of the stone of London is juxtaposed to the fleeting nature of the characters that inhabit the city. Stone monuments are at the same time markers of a history of ideologies moving forward and tombstones for the buried generations that only existed to contribute to the making of that history. The individual is metamorphosed into the stone of society and time. People are born entrapped in stone and keep rebuilding their own prison all over again without ever being truly born.

It has been shown in the thesis that there is a Marxist aspect in the notion of history presented in *TCT* and *Hawksmoor*. Jameson argues that to use history responsibly is to read it for traces of the “uninterrupted narrative” of class struggle and to bring to the surface of the text this “repressed and buried reality” (quoted in Shiller 1997, 539), which is what Ackroyd does. He points to a Marxist meta-narrative in history. It is implied in the novels that history



has been about entrapment in ideology, which has ensured the reproduction of society through time. Ackroyd suggests that as long as we are entrapped in ideology human history cannot begin. The subject without ideology exists in darkness outside time and place and the subject within ideology is eternally predestined to repeat the circle of history.

Ackroyd, however, does leave a window of opportunity for the empowerment of the individual. In a pivotal chapter of *TCT*, *The Monk's Tale*, a learned monk suggests, through a metaphor, that things are preordained for the subject caught in ideology, but entrapment in ideology is not a necessity: "It is not necessary that things happen because they have been preordained but, rather, that things that do happen have indeed been preordained. It is a subtlety worthy of a great clerk, is it not?" (100). Ackroyd seems to be saying that it is possible to be free from ideology and begin the true human narrative, as the Marxists put it, but it would require the understanding of the paradox of history: there is a story, but the story is external to the subject. Human subjects do not make history; they only feature in it. They merely play their parts in a story written by an external agent.

The novels point to another paradox of history as well: the past cannot be recovered; nevertheless, its significance must be understood. We must understand what the human story has been about to be able to change its course. Until then we are caught in a perpetual present – unable to remember or move on; humanity remains a child "begging at the doorstep of eternity" (*Hawksmoor*, 216).

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