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Reconstructing the Critique Of Ideology: A Critical-Hermeneutic and Psychological Outline

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Abstract

In this paper I outline a program for a critique of ideology (IC) that can be transformed into a psychological gnothi sauton *(know thyself). Using Marx's metaphor of a* camera obscura *as a starting point for my theoretical reconstructions, I reinterpret the* Critique of German Ideology *as the source for social epistemologies. Various, apparently incongruous texts focusing on social categories such as class, gender, ethnicity, culture, modernity, and so on, can then be reinterpreted as belonging to the genre of IC. After this reconstructive move, I focus on human subjectivity and discuss how a broad concept of IC may contribute to psychological knowledge and practice. This entails an analysis of ideology-critical texts from the perspective of subjectivity, which involves an exploration of the ways in which a reflection on one's own social situation contributes to "know thyself" and to social change. On the background of a critical-psychological project, I concludethat an insight into one's own dependencies, biases, and prejudices, and into contradictory social realities – in which our subjectivities are embedded – can call us to act against various forms of oppression.*

The Problem

In this argument, I develop an outline for the *subjectivization* of the critique of ideology (ideology critique, IC). By the term *subjectivization* I do not mean the application of psychological concepts in order to understand ideology or IC, but I rather follow the question of what IC means from the perspective of an agentic subject. From this distinctly non-Freudian perspective I provide a psychological interpretation of IC. This interpretation follows Holzkamp's (1983) notion of a *psychology from the standpoint of the subject* without sharing the conceptual network developed in this program. Indeed, if one asks for a historical foundation, one could go back to the classical Greeks, who coined the slogan of *gnothi sauton* (know thyself).

Knowing yourself in this perspective does not imply focusing on the *false consciousness* of others, but rather looking at the limitations of one's own *horizon* (Gadamer, 1960/1997). Gadamer, who borrowed the term from Nietzsche and Husserl, introduced the term *horizon* to refer to everything that can be seen from a particular perspective. By *horizon* I mean the conscious and unconscious extent of one's epistemological and ethical-political perspective. Already in Gadamer's writings the term had a normative connotation: Having "no horizon" is not as good as having a horizon, and having a narrow horizon is not as desirable as having an expanded horizon. Because I do not think that it is possible for an adult person to have no horizon, the focus is indeed on the breadth and depth of one's perspective.

Normatively, from the perspective of an agentic subject, the goal would be to deepen and broaden one's horizon in order to develop a more extensive understanding of the social world, which would set the foundation for a better praxis. This assumption is based on the notion that a person with a broader and deeper horizon is able to contextualize various other perspectives and practices. It should be mentioned that Gadamer talked about the "right horizon of inquiry" (p. 302) and I suggest that various critical traditions are excellent candidates for such a horizon. Finally, I suggest that an extension of one's own horizon does not follow a linear or even a dialectical path but rather a path of search, failure, and rescue -- a journey exemplified by the story of Odysseus. In this sense, a self-reflection regarding one's own ideological limitations is not straightforward but rather a rhizomatic odyssey (see also Teo, 1998).

From such a perspective one can argue that history has demonstrated that social reality is more complex than was analyzed 150 years ago. In addition, one cannot and should not neglect the developments in the critical social sciences in the last 40 years. The question remains regarding which concepts should be integrated into an IC, which ones should be left out, and how does one develop a coherent theoretical system. The present outline

will not discuss a theory-based system of IC but rather avoids this task by centering on the perspective of the subject. From such a standpoint a conceptual, theoretical system is less relevant than concrete stepping-stones that help broaden and deepen one's horizon. Admittedly, it may turn out that some of these stones may be ideological themselves but this cannot be determined a priori. Thus, I give *various* traditions of critical thought the benefit of the doubt in suggesting that there is something to be learned from them for "my" own subjectivity.

Regarding a *reconstruction* of Marxist IC, I am inspired by two approaches that promise a heuristic engagement with the material. First, I am guided by Habermas (1976), who in his reconstruction of historical materialism, distinguished between restoration (restoring the original theory), renaissance (renewal of a tradition), and reconstruction. For the purpose of my argument (IC from the perspective of an agentic subject) a restoration would be too limited, and a renaissance would be unnecessary. Instead, in my view, the most appropriate approach is a reconstruction that analyzes IC with the goal of synthesizing something new. This is done in order to achieve one of the original theoretical goals of IC. It is based on the belief that IC needs a reconstruction because it has not realized its potential from a psychological point of view.

I am also guided by Derrida's (1993/1994) *Specters of Marx* that provide a *hauntological* reading of Marxist theory, a reading that looks at the specters that are haunting Marx, but also at all social scientists who attempt to follow in his footsteps. Derrida emphasized that Marx's texts show an "irreducible heterogeneity" (p. 33) and quoted Marx as famously saying: "What is certain is that I am not a Marxist" (p. 34). Marx (1983) and Engels pronounced in the *Communist Manifesto*: "all that is solid melts into air" (p. 207) – including their own theories. But Derrida also underlined in his reading of Marx one aspect that is relevant for my interpretation: "few texts in the philosophical tradition, perhaps none, whose lesson seemed more urgent today, provided that one take into account what Marx and Engels themselves say … about … their intrinsically irreducible historicity" (p. 13). Derrida argued (and I agree) that Marx was self-reflexively aware of the historical situatedness of his own ideas.

In terms of *ideology critique*, more current theoretical concerns regarding Marx's notion of *false consciousness* have been expressed. I am aware that IC has become problematic in critical thought with poststructuralists and especially with Foucault (2000, p. 119), who argued that ideology is a useless concept because it is in opposition to truth (and postmodernists no longer believe in truth), because it refers to a subject (and poststructuralists no longer believe in a subject), and because it is secondary to the material determinant (which clearly is too simple). My solution to this problem is that false consciousness indeed no longer requires Truth, but is based on the notion of a narrow and shallow horizon; that a narrow horizon (or consciousness, if one prefers) is experienced (often in hindsight) as a feature of "my" person, and as

such, is of interest to psychology; and that a narrow horizon is not *determined* by economy but *embedded* in cultural-historical and political-economic realities.

Ideology Critique and Beyond

Historicity also means acknowledging that the "critique of ideology" has a long tradition in Western philosophy. Plato (427-347 BCE) made the distinction between appearance and essence in his *Allegory of the Cave* that ranks among the best-known accounts regarding the problems of knowledge (Plato, 1997, *Republic*, Book VII). Yet, false consciousness (the focus on appearances) in this narrative is a problematic concept from a critical perspective. The story has an elitist meaning because many of "us" will remain ignorant whereas *Truth* can only be embraced by a few. From a psychological perspective, it is easy to embrace the notion that "they don't get it, but I do; I embrace Truth, and in embracing Truth I will be persecuted." I should also mention, as is well known, that Plato was endorsed by Christians, who reconstructed the person who escaped the cave as Jesus Christ. In a theory of ideology critique from the perspective of agentic subjectivity one has to be alert towards tendencies to dismiss persons who have not embraced one's horizon as having a false consciousness and who need to be converted, or as in the past, even eliminated.

Aristotle (384-322 BCE) devised tools for what we would now call scientific thinking in philosophy, an approach that was predominant in Western thought until the rise of empiricism (see Aristotle, 2001, *Organon*). There still exist studies in psychology that point out that individuals do not display correct syllogistic thinking (see Wetherick, 2002). Ideology critique from this perspective means a critique of the lack of rigorous scientific thinking in the world that needs to be overcome through scientific education. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) in his *Novum Organon* introduced the well-known *Idols of the Mind* that refer to biases in knowledge due to the philosophical system we endorse, seductions by language, cognitive biases that we have as humans, and biases that are rooted in personal preferences (Bacon, 1965). A critique of ideology would involve pointing to these biases.

What distinguishes Marx from such reflections, and the reason why one can argue that Marx introduced a paradigm shift into the discussion of false consciousness, is that Marx developed the idea that our *social situatedness* leads to systemic biases and proposed a mechanism for these biases. That our mind has distorted views of the social world (as in optical illusions) and works upside down as in a *camera obscura* (Marx & Engels, 1845/46/1958) is not a matter of cognition but of social embeddedness (see Teo, 2001). False consciousness belongs to society, divided into classes, but also to the individual because the consciousness of a single individual is in connection with the whole of society and part of the whole of society. On the subjective level it means that "my" mind has distorted views of the social world and "my" social situated-

ness leads to biases. It should also be mentioned that Marx argued that false consciousness has consequences in preventing social justice and that a critique of ideology enables us to do something about this when we commit to praxis.

In terms of a mechanism, Marx argued that societal and personal consciousnesses have economic roots and life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by life. Because the ideas of the ruling class are always the ruling ideas, "morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of the mind, thus no longer retain the appearance of independence" (Marx, 1983, p. 170). This famous formulation suggests that a superstructure consisting of forms of social consciousness rises above an economic foundation. The mind changes and develops historically, with production (labor) being the carrier of this development.

For Marx, the starting point for all *social epistemologies* is that social knowledge (including knowledge in the social sciences) depends on social interests, in his case, in the interests of an economic class. Marx did not provide a general method in order to establish this argument but rather introduced a general heuristic. With this heuristic he challenged in the first step traditional accounts of human nature, for example in the *German Ideology,* or traditional accounts of the establishment of value and surplus value in *Das Kapital* (Marx, 1867/1962); and in a second step he provided alternative views on the same subject matter. His alternative ideas were intended to explain what traditional theories explained but also what they could not explain.

Marx focused on class bias in his social theory. But since Marx many more strands of critical thought have influenced what one could label a critique of dominant ideology, extending what it means to argue that social categories influence knowledge. This ideology-critical function cannot only be shown for critical–theoretical reflections, but also for texts from feminism and postcolonialism, all of which have added new reflexive dimensions to the critique of ideology. Even French postmodern thinkers, despite their own opposition to Marx, can be reinterpreted as belonging to an extended family of IC.

Labor and Beyond

For Marx, labor (production) was the central category in order to understand historical development, society, and even the consciousness of the individual. Yet, later theories have advanced the notion of ideology critique, going beyond the core concept of labor. *Critical theory* was developed by German philosophers and social scientists in the 1920s at the Institute for Social Research. Horkheimer (1937/1992) in the groundbreaking prewar article *Traditional and Critical Theory* argued that traditional theory (by which he meant a positivist theory that applied logic, mathematics, and deduction for the assessment of its ideas) was ideological

in hiding the *social* function of science, the *social* formation of facts, and the *historical* character of research objects. As an alternative he proposed critical theory that would relativize the separation of individual and society, and reject the separation of value and research and of knowledge and action. As the social purpose of critical theory, Horkheimer recommended the reasonable organization of society that should meet the needs of the whole of society.

Whereas pre-war critical theory was indebted to a Marxist orthodoxy, post-war critical theory was critical of all forms of totalitarianism and authoritarianism, including the Soviet version, as well as of the Enlightenment project. Using a Kantian organization of the subject matter, Horkheimer and Adorno (1947/1982) criticized epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics as they developed in modernity. One of their main epistemological theses was that myth was already a form of enlightenment and that enlightenment fell back into myth. The authors used positivism as an example of how enlightenment fell back into a mythology itself. In their ethical ideology critique they argued that Kant is less representative of moral thinking in modernity than Nietzsche and De Sade. Enlightened individuals who succeed in this society would judge Kant's categorical imperative as ridiculous and would have a better spokesperson in De Sade's goals of self-preservation, self-interest, and personal pleasure regardless of the costs to others. Their aesthetic ideology critique targets mass culture as something that is consumed rather than experienced and deplores the transformation of art into a market commodity.

The final transformation of the labor paradigm occurred in critical theory with Jürgen Habermas (born 1929) who belongs to a second generation of critical theorists. Habermas (e.g., 1984) moved away from purposive-rational action (under which he subsumed labor) to the communication paradigm (interaction). As he pointed out, liberation from hunger (an economic issue) is not identical with the liberation from humiliation (a communicative issue). Such a reinterpretation was and is significant to many "new" social movements where oppression is not necessarily derived from the economic sphere but from the sphere of representation and the sphere of recognition (e.g., the gay and lesbian movement). Any current critique of ideology must include the domain of interaction in its conceptualization.

Psychologists have included ideological-critical studies, especially in the field of critical psychology. For example, Klaus Holzkamp (1972) argued in the late 1960s that the idea that the individual is concrete, while society is perceived as an abstraction, is ideological, that focusing on technical relevance (rather than focusing on liberation) is ideological, and that working for the powerful in society leads to those ideological biases. Ideology critique combined with praxis was advanced in Latin America with Paulo Freire (1997) who introduced *conscientization* as a tool of *deideologization*. This would allow for the oppressed to learn to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions,

and to take action against oppression. Problematization would enable a questioning of the existing order, the status quo, and the "normal," while at the same time considering alternatives.

Ignacio Martín-Baró (1994) endorsed many of Freire's ideas and contributed to deideologization by suggesting that truth should not be reached by learning from North America but by learning from the oppressed. Psychologists need to look at psychosocial processes from the perspective of the dominated, educational psychology from the perspective of the illiterate, industrial psychology from the perspective of the unemployed, and clinical psychology from the perspective of the marginalized. For the Jesuit priest, ideology critique entailed a shift away from calling atheism a sin -- but rather Martín-Baró underlined that poverty was a sin, or to be more precise, the conditions that lead to poverty are sinful. It should also be mentioned that the primacy of theory in many North American psychological approaches, as well as a focus on well paying clients in professional psychology, was rejected in favor of the primacy of practice and a focus on the oppressed.

But ideology critique should not only target capitalism and imperialism. Any advanced ideology critique must include a critique of patriarchy. The feminist literature and critique of ideology may begin with Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) (1792/1985) who suggested that sexist claims are the result of flawed reasoning (she invoked Rousseau). Feminist thinkers point out that in "science" the masculine is the norm and the feminine is the subordinate "other" (see also Teo, 2005). They are critical of the cognitive and applied consequences of living in a patriarchal society. They argue that we have a false consciousness in assuming that ideas and research about men are universal, and point out that theories and histories are written in the interests of patriarchy. Accordingly, social embeddedness means living in a patriarchal society, which should lead us to think critically about the association between objectivity and masculinity and ask whether scientific thought is based on masculine discourses, ideals, metaphors, and practices (see Keller, 1985). We should also ask whether psychology is (mis)representing women's experiences and voices and whether psychological theories are gender biased (see Gilligan, 1977). Ideology critique from this standpoint involves an extensive inquiry about the sexist ideologies in psychology in the past and present.

To a certain degree an extension of critical-theoretical, postmodern, and feminist ideas has been provided by postcolonial thinkers, who point to the Western-biased nature of psychological theories and practices. Social embeddedness means that the dominant ideology in the world is the ideology of the West and the construction of inferiority of the Non-West (see Said, 1993; Spivak, 1999). From a critical standpoint this involves an analysis of the ideological ideas of the West regarding the majority world. In psychology, this critique begins with the argument that not only the psychological subject matter is part of a wider his-

torical and cultural context, but the theories that try to capture the subject matter are part of Western theorizing and, thus, must be understood as Western models of human mental life (Teo & Febbraro, 2003). It also challenges the idea that concepts developed in the West can be applied meaningfully to different cultural contexts. Danziger (1997) argues in psychology that the "cultural embeddedness accounts for the taken for granted quality that so many psychological categories possess" (p. 191). Ideology critique needs to address these shortcomings.

Although the French postmodern tradition is not Marxist in an ordinary sense it has been ideological-critical and has more connections to Marx than might appear. Derrida's debt to Marx has been articulated by Derrida (1994) himself and includes his deconstruction of some of the most deep-seated ideas of Western culture. Lyotard (1979/1984) who critiques modern thought includes an explicit rejection of Marxist ideology but his ideas become comprehensible only on the background of Marxist ideas. Most disciplines do not have a *political metanarrative* that suggests that through knowledge humanity could become an agent of its own liberation or that science would relieve humanity of superstition, bondage, ignorance, and oppression and emancipate it into freedom and dignity. Indeed, Marxism had this vision. For disciplines such as psychology the *philosophical metanarrative* of the progress of knowledge and the progressive unfolding of truth was much more important.

The most important figure for psychology is Foucault who provided a critique of established views on the self and was of course a member of the Communist Party of France (see Eribon, 1991). But from a current perspective I see his contributions as extensions of ideology critique. Form a general postmodern perspective, social embeddedness does not only involve class but also a historical time, an endorsement of grand narratives and the loss of their credibility, as well as phallocentrism and phonocentrism. Critical thought emanating from the postmodern perspective has been applied extensively to psychology (e.g., Gergen, 1985) and need not be repeated here.

I would like to add another discourse to the critical tradition, namely Frankfurt's ideas on bullshit and developments from thereon. A core feature of Frankfurt's (1986/2005) definition of bullshit is a lack of concern with truth and an indifference towards reality. Yet, bullshit is not false but phony, a bullshitter is not a person that lies but rather bluffs, and faking things does not mean that the bullshitter gets them wrong. The bullshitter misrepresents what he/she is up to. Although Frankfurt focused on public life, this can also be applied to the human sciences. What comes to mind are, for instance, scientists in the service of the tobacco industry. This leads me to the program of *agnotology*, which has been defined as the cultural production of ignorance (see Proctor & Schiebinger, 2008); in my view, this represents ideology critique in new bottles.

In terms of theoretical consistency it needs to be pointed out that some of the positions that I endorsed as ideology-critical are indeed contradictory to each other. But I do not believe that ideology critique is a fixed system, nor do I believe that it is a system that requires an origin or a primacy or a root. Instead I think that what Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) have described as a rhizome does a better job of capturing the essence of its meaning. They applied the term, borrowed from botany describing root systems, to the development of philosophical thought and the writing of intellectual texts. Accordingly, metaphysics can be understood as something where everything is derived from a single source; modernity as a system with many sources; and postmodernity as a situation where branches grow back into the soil, where old parts die out, and where new branches are formed continuously. A rhizomatic process then seems particularly relevant for human subjectivity that seeks to be critical of ideology. But rather than describing it as a root system I would like to describe this process as a journey, not straightforward to a single destination but laced with difficulties.

Ideology Critique and Subjectivity

Ideology critique in the context of subjectivity has dual meanings for my purposes. First, IC is about reflexivity regarding oneself, which refers to self-reflexivity of the subject, and second it may concern reflexivity regarding the discipline (i.e., the self-reflexivity in the discipline of psychology). For the former, I would like to substitute the metaphor of a rhizome (Teo, 1998) for a more concrete experience, and use Homer's (1961) *The Odyssey*, a core text of Western civilization, as a parable of the search for a more comprehensive ideology critique from the standpoint of the subject. The point is to use Odysseus as a metaphor for search. In contrast, Horkheimer and Adorno (1947/1982) identify Odysseus as a symbol of exploitation and patriarchal society. For instance, they suggest that the enjoyment of art for the ruling classes is only possible on the back of workers -- as illustrated when Odysseus is tied to the mast and listens to the songs of the Sirens while his working sailors must have their ears plugged with beeswax. Certainly, one could accuse these German-speaking authors themselves of being tied to the mast of elitism.

In my usage of Odysseus, his journey could stand as a parable for the search of a broader and deeper horizon, in this context, regarding ideology critique. The journey involves many different paths, some taken with joy, others forced upon oneself, not knowing where the next step will lead. The only certainty is that Odysseus wants to come home to Ithaca, to a practical usage of IC. I suggest that a better understanding of ideology critique and epistemological peace is possible only after a long turmoil. Thus, Odysseus is the subjective part of the rhizome, which is understood as a network of ideology critiques that contain class but many other categories, some of them mentioned above. Focusing only on class would mean years of captivity on Calypso's island.

Ideology critique is a journey of trial and error. It is likely that one would begin with one's own social situatedness, beit class, gender, or race. But what I suggest is not to stop with one category but rather to use it as a stepping-stone for further explorations. I consider it useless from the perspective of subjectivity to spend time on discussions about whether class or gender should have primacy in this type of reflection. Of course, this does not mean *not* recognizing important conceptual and social nuances that distinguish gender and class. But, ideology critique from the perspective of the subject is about widening and deepening one's horizon about ideology. My assumption is that a wider horizon is a better horizon because it allows for a more complex understanding and for the drawing upon a broader array of sources for one's decisions and actions. Still this might include that a specific decision was wrong, even if it was based on a broader understanding of the complexities of human reality. It should be added that horizon can be understood as a feature of a subject, and even if a person's horizon is limited by cultural-historical and political-economic realities, it is not determined by it. Extending one's horizon includes engaging in a dialogue with oneself, a dialogue with texts, and a dialogue with the *other* and the *Other*.

Each journey has to start somewhere but if one does not want to begin with one's own situatedness, I recommend a journey that involves tradition – the tradition of critical thought in human history. I would suggest reading the classical texts of Marx and Engels who have achieved excellence in the critique of ideology, but I would add the text of "bourgeois" thinkers I. Kant and F. Nietzsche. Kant's critiques of human reasoning and in particular his *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1781/1998) laid out a process of investigation that challenged certain unquestioned assumptions. Friedrich Nietzsche's critical studies, for example, his reflections on the history of morality and his questioning of how morality restricts human development (Nietzsche, 1887/1998) laid out a program, critical of any self-misunderstandings. This textual engagement and learning by models of critique would allow for a better understanding of the many ideology-critical texts of the 20th and 21st century.

Regarding reflexivity and the critique of ideology of psychology as a discipline, one cannot avoid Habermas (1967/1988), whose critiques of positivism and of the notion that sciences and technology can themselves become ideologies are still relevant. Habermas's critique of positivism easily applies to the discipline of psychology in its abandonment of self-reflection, in suggesting that the meaning of knowledge is defined by what academic psychologists do, and in its removal of the knowing subject from any reflection. There are exceptions to such an assessment at the margins of the discipline. Morawski (2005) argued that the issue of self-reflexivity has historical groundings in more and less known psychologists. While William James reflected on this issue in the context of the psychologist's fallacy, in which the psychologist assumes the objectivity of his or her own psychological standpoint, Horace Mann Bond showed how one's own

social situation, such as one's own ethnicity or race (researcher or subject), can contribute to the findings of racial inferiority, and Saul Rosenzweig identified experimenter and subject effects during experimentation.

Other cases for the promotion of reflexivity have been proposed by the historian of psychology G. Richards (1996) to whom the concept is central for any historiography and the historian of the human sciences R. Smith (2005). Richards argues convincingly that psychology produces its own subject matter, and that psychological realities are constructed through the discipline of psychology, while Smith makes the case that psychologists always work with unfounded presumptions that can be challenged, or as I would add, need to be challenged in a process of self-reflection. Smith also argues that psychological knowledge of humans changes the subject matter, which follows the concept of the social kind quality of psychological categories and their looping effects (Hacking, 1994).

When it comes to challenging and critiquing the status quo of the discipline of psychology, I recommend a critique of the *context of discovery*. This involves an analysis of why researchers are interested in studying what they study and includes reconstructions regarding underlying cultural, political, economic, and personal interests and identifying or challenging the social origins of hypotheses, concepts, and theories (see also Danziger, 1997). It also includes an analysis of class, race, gender, heterosexuality, ableness, age, and its impact on research hypotheses, methods, and results. Self-reflexivity entails asking why "I" am interested in what I am studying, in my case why I am interested in the critique of ideology in psychology. I would also add that such analyses should include a reflection on the nature of concepts in psychology.

A critique in the *context of justification* involves identifying selective sampling or selective data reporting, as well as the reliability, validity, and objectivity of the concepts and instruments used, or the presentation of correlation as causation, and so on. A critique in this tradition investigates the logic of research. A critique in the *context of interpretation* entails an analysis of the relationship between theory, data and discussion and assesses the quality of the interpretation of data in psychological studies. In such a critique, one would look at how empirical findings of differences are interpreted and at the consequences of interpretations of differences on the Other, the public, or academic discourses (Teo, 2008). A critique involving the *context of practice* would look at the purpose of professional psychological practices in terms of power in society.

The Purpose of Ideology Critique and Praxis

The practice of ideology critique can never be static but must be dynamic, and critical thought needs constant revisions. It took Odysseus many years to return, but ideology critiques do not have an endpoint or a happy ending. Ideology critique from the standpoint of the subject means that "I" have false consciousness -- not "You" have false consciousness (or better, instead of false consciousness, "I" have a limited horizon). Although I suggest that a broad and deep horizon is the *condition for the possibility of meaningful knowledge* but does not guarantee it, the purpose of ideology critique from a Marxist tradition is not idle self-reflection, but rather the development of better ethical-practical activities. This is what the concept of an *agentic subjectivity* refers to. Indeed, Odysseus, the white, "upper class" male adventurer remains a limited figure. However, it would be wrong to accuse him of wasting time in his seemingly endless adventures. From the perspective of subjectivity the search for the extension of one's horizon, for the identification and critique of ideology, is not a vain enterprise. In advancing the critique of ideology as an epistemological project rather than a political-practical project, shortcomings need to be mentioned. Indeed, the extension of one's horizon regarding IC remains "bourgeois" if it is done for the sake of finding only personal peace and "coming home to house and wife."

This perspective must be combined -- in a critical tradition -- with the praxis of changing social reality and establishing social justice. What this means must be spelled out in concrete socio-historical contexts. The focus here was on advancing the practice of ideology critique but not on a reflection on praxis itself or on how we could establish social justice. However, I believe that an insight into one's own dependencies, biases, and prejudices, an insight into one's ideologies, and into one's existence in contradictory social realities, in which our subjectivities are embedded, is a precondition to act meaningfully against various forms of oppression and are the stepping-stones for a better praxis.

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