

—— Nicolai von Eggers Mariegaard, »Objects of history / Objects of ideology«

—— A B S T R A C T ———

In this article I present some preliminary thoughts on what lessons might be learned from modern developments in critical thought if one wants to take up once again Michel Foucault's project. I start out by discussing a few elements in Slavoj Žižek's critique of ideology as well his critique of Foucault, and then go on to discuss Agamben and later Derrida, both in relation to Foucault, in order to articulate what I see as some of the most poignant elements of Foucault's archeological method. Throughout the article I try to introduce to the archeological method what I call 'split objects'. Even though I will not claim it is unproblematic to bring Žižek, Foucault, and Agamben together, I nevertheless see some affinities, and what I suggest is reading them in such a way that they can work as productive discussants of each other in order to revitalize an archeological critique of ideology.

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—— Keywords: Foucault, Agamben, Žižek, the Real, limit experience, critique of ideology, psychoanalysis, objects.

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■—OBJECTS OF HISTORY / OBJECTS OF

IDEOLOGY, How to make a Foucauldian

critique of ideology after Žižek and

Agamben?—■

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What are the 'research objects' when one is doing critique of ideology? There are of course many possible answers, but since 'critique of ideology' is not a discipline proper, the question is begging. For Jacques Derrida the strategy was to deconstruct the dominant way of thought from within through a deconstruction of literary and philosophical texts. For Louis Althusser, critique of ideology amounted to constructing a science beyond ideology. For Roland Barthes in his *Mythologies*,¹ everything from Tour de France and how the Frenchmen liked his steak to the technology of the camera became objects for ideology critique – and this has of course been followed up in the mostly American tradition of 'cultural studies'. With Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*² we find a critique of the instrumentalization of rationality and industrialization of culture, which are both exploited for capitalist profit maximization. For Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*,³ the main concern was social movements and groupings and their discursive strategies; i.e. to analyze the public sphere and public opinion as a battlefield. And already in Karl Marx we find apparently two different ways of engaging in a critique of ideology: The earlier Marx with an analysis of political class relations and interests (*The Communist Manifesto*,⁴ *The 18th Brumaire*,⁵ etc.), and the late(r) Marx with his critique of political economy (capitalism) as such (*Grundrisse*⁶ and *Capital*⁷).

One of Slavoj Žižek's great achievements has been to find a systematic way to combine many of the insights provided by the earlier critiques of ideology. Žižek makes use of Derrida's deconstruction from within, of Barthes' fascination with everyday cultural objects, of Adorno and Horkheimer's work on cultural industry, and so on. Especially in his writings from the 90s, Žižek is preoccupied with working through the postmodern critique of ideology, not in order to go back, but to go forward to a more substantial, revolutionary critique of contemporary ideology. In other words, Žižek accepts that we live in a postmodern society with a variety of political and

cultural projects, but the only political project really worth fighting for is anti-capitalism, since it is the only way to really change things. Žižek expresses this ambition in the terms of structurally necessary *capitalist antagonisms* and *class struggle*. As he says in his enlightening debate with Ernesto Laclau and Judith Butler, published in 2000 as *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*:

— The class-and-commodity structure of capitalism is not just a phenomenon limited to the particular »domain« of the economy, but the structuring principle that overdetermines the social totality, from politics to art and religion.⁸

Or, as he says in *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, the internal antagonisms of capitalism forms a sort of 3+1-structure: Ecological crisis, technological advances such as biogenetics, intellectual property + class struggle.⁹ Big problems for capitalism as they may be, the first three 'crises' can be solved or contained within a capitalist framework. For example, the ecological crisis might be contained through a combined effort of global policing and charity, without losing the basic capitalist mode of structural exploitation; or it might be solved through green technologies. But the fourth can never be solved within capitalism, since structural exploitation *is* capitalism. As Ellen Meiksins Wood says in her definition of capitalism: »Only in capitalism is the dominant mode of appropriation based on the complete dispossession of direct producers who (unlike chattel slaves) are legally free and whose surplus labour is appropriated by purely economic means.«¹⁰ This does not mean that capitalism is not in need of extra-economical means in securing labor power (police, laws, etc.). It means that capitalism *is* the very structural layout of global society, where one (small) group of people benefit from this layout, and another and larger group of people are exploited. This layout of society is, in other words, what cannot be changed within the framework of capitalism. This is also why Žižek, in his latest book, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*, asks the following question when it comes to defining ideology:

— But would it not be more appropriate to characterize as 'ideological' any view that ignores not some 'objective' reality undistorted by our subjective investment but *the very cause of this unavoidable distortion*, the real of that deadlock to which we react in our projects and engagements?¹¹

In other words, what is ideological is not some subjective position caught up in political engagement, but a position that does not address the cause for one's political engagement.

When it comes to ideology, one is necessarily caught up in the struggle and has to take sides whether one likes it or not. Not taking sides would more often than not amount to siding with the dominant position. In this way, critique of ideology differs from other types of critique in that it acknowledges its own (necessary) subjective, political stance in the very critique it puts forward. There is no properly objective position. There is no 'view from nowhere', when one is speaking about capitalism and the ideological foundations of global society and our everyday lives. Either one is speaking from the position of the dominated class, or one is speaking from the position of the dominating class. In Žižek's definition, ignoring the ideological implication of the theoretical, scientific, philosophical work one is doing makes it ideological as such. »Philosophy is class struggle in theory«, as Althusser put it in an interview from 1968 entitled, »Philosophy is a revolutionary weapon«. ¹² Or, as Žižek puts it in *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*:

—As Marx already recognized, the 'objective' determinations of social reality are at the same time 'subjective' thought-determinations (of the subjects caught up in this reality), and, at this point of indistinction (at which the limits of our thought, its deadlocks and contradictions, are at the same time the antagonisms of objective social reality itself), [as Frederic Jameson says] »the diagnosis is also its own symptom«. ¹³

This is where we come to Foucault. Whereas one of Žižek's great achievements has been to come up with a sound and solid critique of ideology, ¹⁴ one of his less great achievements has been to discredit nearly all forms of historical approaches to the critique of ideology, especially Foucault's. In a way, this is a bit puzzling, since Foucault's historical approach seems to be almost the historical counterpart to Žižek's definition of a critique of ideology as one that is always articulating the inner antagonisms and limitations of contemporary thought by scrutinizing the (historical) conditions of possibility for thinking and knowing as such. Nowhere is 'the diagnosis also its own symptom' more than with Foucault, since Foucault is always confronting our most profound assumptions about what we know and how we think we know what we know; including his own thought and academic work. In his essay on Deleuze, »Theatrum Philosophicum«, Foucault gives the following account of what it means for the present to engage in historical thought: »The present is the throw of a dice [...] in the same stroke, both the dice and the rules are thrown.« ¹⁵ Or as Foucault also puts it, the task is »to write a history of the present«, not as a »history of the past in terms of the present« but as *a rewriting of the present through the past* ¹⁶. That is,

Foucault thinks with history in order to discover and reveal what are the dominating power-knowledge beliefs, institutions, and practices of the present.

Žižek's critique of Foucault is not that he doesn't undermine the ideological presumptions of the present, but that he is doing it too much. Žižek has criticized Foucault on many occasions, but I believe his critique can be boiled down to a single two-sided argument: Foucault's historicism is too radical and therefore too relativist. With Foucault, there is no longer a foundational structure of society, and there can therefore never be an argument in the way of »it's the economy in the last instance«, as Althusser liked to say, or »it's capitalism in the last instance«, or »it's class struggle in the last instance«, as Žižek would probably say. Let me quote one of Žižek's (very technical) refutations of Foucault at length:

— The crucial point here is to distinguish historicity proper from evolutionary historicism. Historicity proper involves a dialectical relationship to some unhistorical kernel that stays the same – not as an underlying Essence but as a rock that trips up every attempt to integrate it into the symbolic order. This rock is the Thing *qua* 'the part of the Real that suffers from the signifier' (Lacan) – the real 'suffers' in so far as it is the trauma that cannot be properly articulated in the signifying chain. In Marxism, such a 'real' of the historical process is the 'class struggle' that constitutes the common thread of 'all history hitherto': all historical formations are so many (ultimately failed) attempts to 'gentrify' this kernel of the real.

We must be careful here to distinguish between *Verwerfung* and *Verdrängung*, between foreclosure and 'ordinary' repression. The Real *qua* Thing is not 'repressed', it is foreclosed or 'primordially repressed [*unverdrängt*]' – that is, its repression is not a historical variable but is constitutive of the very order of symbolic historicity. In other words, the Real *qua* Thing stands for that X on account of which every symbolization fails – in its very unhistoricity it sets in motion one new symbolization after the other.¹⁷

In other words, what Foucault does not account for, according to Žižek, is the fact that every thought constellation through history, every philosophical theory, religious or scientific explanation, ultimately attempts to cover up the fact that everything remains fundamentally inexplicable – that there is always something which we cannot explain, something that hinders society in becoming a closed, smooth, harmonized whole. That every system of thought is also a *Denkverbot*: There is something which cannot and shall not be said, and

which the whole theory is constructed upon in order to hide. According to Žižek, every theory attempts to hide its inner lacks and fundamental inconsistencies, and Foucault is reproducing this attempt when he presents historical formations of thought and their genealogical connection to present day thought. In Lacanian vocabulary, we get Symbolic Orders (systems of thought) without the Real (paradoxes, inconsistencies, lacks). There is no room for the Real in Foucault's thought, or as Joan Copjec has put it: Foucault tries to make the Real *real-tight*; he tries to push together the cracks in historical thought systems in order to present them as sealed totalities.

Žižek then – and this is the other side of Žižek's argument – relates the abovementioned critique of Foucault to Foucault's theory on domination and power. In *The Ticklish Subject*, Žižek reads Foucault's famous dictum »where there is power, there is resistance« as a way of thinking, that resistance is produced by power itself. That is, resistance is not something outside of power and therefore has no positive meaning outside the field of power. Not only that, but Foucault's theory of power also means,

— that resistance is co-opted in advance, that it cannot seriously undermine the system – that is, he [Foucault] precludes the possibility that the system itself, on account of its inherent inconsistency, may give birth to a force whose excess it is no longer able to master and which thus detonates its unity, its capacity to reproduce itself. In short: Foucault does not consider the possibility of an effect escaping, outgrowing its cause, so that although it emerges as a form of resistance to power and is as such absolutely inherent to it, it can outgrow and explode it.¹⁸

It is in this way that, for Žižek, Foucault's thought can be seen as »the ultimate ideological operation«, which is »the elevation of something into impossibility as a means of postponing or avoiding encountering it«. ¹⁹ With a Foucauldian approach, we get a redoubling of systems of thought, since what one is not able or allowed to think within a thought system, one is still not able or allowed to think when one is confined to reconstructing the positive appearances of the thought system. Foucault's historicist credo means he is not able to get to the negative inner core thought systems, such as the fundamental class struggle in modern ideology.

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Although Žižek's critique is philosophically interesting and somewhat relevant, it misses the mark – not when it comes to the popular reception of Foucault, but when it comes to

Foucault's own work. Or to put it more clearly: One can perhaps read Foucault as Žižek does, and certainly many have done so,²⁰ but it is also possible and arguably more interesting to read Foucault in another way.

In his more recent work such as *The Kingdom And The Glory*²¹ and *The Signature Of All Things*²², Giorgio Agamben has made a noticeable 'turn' towards Foucault. Whereas Foucault played a role as philosophical inspiration in Agamben's earlier writings, in *The Kingdom and the Glory* Agamben sets out, in a way, to *do* what Foucault did. And *The Signature Of All Things* (published in Italian a year after *The Kingdom and the Glory*) can in many ways be read as a reflection upon what this actually means.

In *The Signature Of All Things*, Agamben discusses the methodology of 'archeology'; a notion he has taken from Foucault and further developed. The word archeology refers to two things. On the one hand it refers to an *arché*; that is the *emergence* of a certain object / idea / concept / phenomenon / problem. In line with Foucault's essay on »Nietzsche – genealogy, history«, Agamben makes it clear that the *arché* (emergence) should not to be understood as an *Ursprung*, but as an *Entstehung*: The object that comes into being was in a way already there, it is not a miracle, but at a certain moment in history it was suddenly perceived as *this* very object. For instance, madness was in a way already there, but at a certain moment in history it became the opposite of reason, an object for knowledge, something to be treated, etc. To conceptualize the moment where an object becomes this very object, Agamben speaks of a *signature*. Agamben gives the example of a painting by Titian, on which Titian has written his signature. Only through this signature does the painting by Titian really become a painting by Titian. If it did not have this signature, the painting would have been treated differently and found a different place in history. Even though we do not reflect upon, nor perhaps notice the signature written into the painting, it still guides our perception and our interpretation of it and makes us see the painting as *this* very painting. In the same way, signatures are written into concepts, ideas and objects that make them appear before our gaze as those very objects. To come back to the example of madness: Only because reason at a certain moment in history is written into the phenomenon of madness do we perceive madness as we do.

Secondly, the notion of archeology refers to the archive. It is through the concept of the archive that Foucault defines archeology in *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Even though Agamben does not discuss the notion of the archive very much, he makes a very interesting comparison. Whereas the archive for Foucault signifies a collection of all that is uttered, written, and produced in a certain epoch, that which will allow us to

reconstruct the conditions of possibilities for knowledge and thought systems in this epoch (whereby we get an idea about the conditions of possibilities for knowledge in our own epoch), Agamben points to the (obvious) connection between the archive and the unconscious. Agamben quotes the Italian philosopher Enzo Melandri as follows:

— Critical history thus has the role of a therapy aimed at the recovery of the unconscious, understood as the historical »repressed«. Ricoeur and Foucault, as just mentioned, call this procedure »archaeological«. It consists in tracking genealogy back to where the phenomenon in question splits into the conscious and the unconscious. Only if one succeeds in reaching that point does the pathological syndrome reveal its real meaning. So it is a matter of a *regression*: not to the unconscious as such, but to what made it unconscious – in the dynamic sense of repression.²³

The phenomenon in question is thus not investigated as a closed, perfect object in relation to a thought system in its totality. Quite the opposite: archeology investigates phenomena in so far as they emerge as internally split, or even better, not fully symbolized or 'symbolizable' objects. When reflecting upon the purpose of archeological research, Agamben then makes the following remark:

— It is not merely a question of bringing the repressed, which comes back in the form of a symptom, to consciousness, as the vulgate of the analytic model would have it. Nor is it a matter of writing the history of the excluded and defeated, which would be completely homogeneous with the history of the victors, as the common and tedious paradigm of the history of the subaltern classes would have it. Melandri makes it clear that archaeology is to be understood precisely as a regression and as such it is the opposite of rationalization.²⁴

Agamben's definition of the purpose of archeology here is quite radical. Agamben is clearly responding to the critique that Foucault supposedly tried to write the history of the excluded and defeated such as madmen or sexual minorities. However, Agamben says, this is not the case. On the contrary, archeology is going back to the moment, where a disruptive phenomenon became successfully repressed (symbolized) in order to break the symbolic order open once more. By going back to the traumatic experience, it is possible for us to see how we have constructed a meaningful world around this experience in order to repress. By confronting ourselves with it, we make it possible for our whole world to fall apart.²⁵

Agamben goes on to equate the disruptive phenomenon to the trauma in psychoanalysis:

— The idea that the present might be given in the form of a constitutive inaccessibility is bound up with Freud's conception of trauma and repression. According to this conception, an actual experience – a train crash, an infantile scene (generally concerning sexuality), a drive – is repressed into the unconscious either because of its traumatic character or because it is for some reason unacceptable for consciousness. It thus enters a stage of latency during which it seems as if it had, so to speak, never taken place. Yet during this stage neurotic symptoms or oneiric content begin to appear in the subject, bearing witness to the return of the repressed.

Even though the traumatic phenomenon has been repressed, it re-surfaces in symptoms. Even though the symbolic order (the dominant ideology) has managed to get a grip of the disruptive phenomenon, the phenomenon suddenly shows its ugly face every now and then in inexplicable or otherwise uncanny events. In this way, archeology is not as much an investigation into the past as an investigation of *remnants* of the past that have an impact in the present. Instead of just diagnosing cracks and paradoxes in the dominant ideology, archeology follows these cracks and paradoxes back in time to the trauma which initiated the ideological cover-up in the first place. In this way, archeology functions as a contemporary critique of ideology which strategically locates places for intervention. As Agamben concludes his argument:

— The analogy between archaeological regression and psychoanalysis now seems clearer. In both cases, it is a question of gaining access to a past that has not been lived through, and therefore that technically cannot be defined as 'past', but that somehow has remained present. [...]

Let us elaborate the specific temporal structure implicit in a philosophical archaeology. What is at stake in it is not properly a past but a moment of arising; however, access to such can only be obtained by returning back to the point where it was covered over and neutralized by tradition (in Melandri's terms, to the point where the split occurred between the conscious and the unconscious, historiography and history). The moment of arising, the *arche* of archaeology is what will take place, what will become accessible and present, only when archaeological inquiry has completed its operation. It therefore has the form of a past in the future, that is, a *future anterior*.²⁶

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Is the above reading of Agamben's re-appropriation of Foucault not moving far beyond what Foucault had in mind? Foucault never spoke of his own work in terms of psychoanalysis; nor in the words of critique of ideology for that matter, since for Foucault the term ideology was caught in the binary system: ideology (lie) / true science (truth) – that is ideology as a critical term was, for Foucault, always linked to some form of dogmatic Marxism which he wanted to distance himself from. And yet I think the above is very close to what Foucault had in mind.

In a 1981 interview, Foucault discusses what he had been trying to do over the years.²⁷ He explains that he has always tried to ask how a 'new' object came into being as an object of knowledge (*objet à connaître*). Foucault is here using the more philosophical term *connaître* for knowing, instead of the scientific or everyday term *savoir* – the difference between *erkennen* and *wissen* in German. Although Foucault sees an intimate connection between *connaissance* [*Erkenntnis*] and *savoir* [*Wissen*], he makes it very clear that his theory has not only been about the emergence of objects of scientific knowledge, but he has been trying to write about objects in the frame of *l'histoire de l'émergence de la connaissance*; i.e. Foucault has tried to write about different objects inside a framework of the history of epistemology – or more precisely, he has been writing a history of the emergence of objects of knowledge. Or maybe better yet: A history of the emergence of objects at the moment when it became possible to know of them as those very objects.

As Foucault makes clear in the interview, there are at least two things one should take into account about his *histoire de l'émergence de la connaissance* which has *objets à connaître* as its research objects. First of all, it is not driven by the curiosity of the antiquarian but by the passion of the critical philosopher. Foucault several times mentions Kant's question: What is enlightenment? According to Foucault, this question is also the question: »What are we? What are we today?«²⁸ It is thus an attempt to write a 'history of the present'.²⁹

Secondly, this history is not a history about 'closed objects' of knowledge. As Foucault says, he is writing a history of problematization,³⁰ which means taking or investigating the thing as a problem (*la chose comme problème*). Or perhaps more precisely, that the object (the thing) investigated *is* the problem. In this way, what Foucault wrote about in *History of Madness* was not madness, but how reason emerged to cover up *the problem with madness for reason*, but in a way that madness is still at the core of reason (madness is internalized, studied, dominated, included as an object for reason and at the same time excluded from reason in order to define reason as such). When making this point about the history of problematization,

Foucault no longer refers to Kant but to Blanchot, Artaud, Bataille, and the concept of *l'expérience limite* ('limit experience' or 'experience of the limit'). This *expérience limite* can be understood as both in- and external. Madness is the outer limit that reason cannot go beyond, but at the same time, it is in the kernel of reason that one encounters madness. Reason became reason and madness became madness during a period of French history that Foucault calls »the great confinement« (part one, chapter two of *The History of Madness*). Here, the madmen were confined in mental asylums in order to be studied and treated by a new type of scientist. The madmen were taken to the center of reason, the new science, in order to be completely excluded. This is how Foucault reads Descartes's famous sentence in the *Meditations*, where Descartes excludes the possibility of himself being mad: »How could I deny that these hands and this body are mine, except by comparing myself to certain deranged people [*insani*] [...] But just a moment; these are madmen [*sed amentes sunt isti*], and I should be no less extravagant [*demens*] if I were to follow their example.«³¹ As Foucault points out in his reply to Derrida, who in the essay »Cogito and the history of madness« had criticized Foucault's reading of Descartes,³² the madmen are first identified through the medical vocabulary: *insani* – persons, as Descartes also points out, whose brains are »clouded by the violent vapors of black bile«³³ – and then they are excluded from reason through the juridical vocabulary: *amens* and *demens*.³⁴ Madness is thus what one encounters at the heart of rationality through rigorous meditations, and at the birth of rationality as we know it, but only as an excluded, uncanny, and yet intrusive object. »But what if I was mad?! No, I can't be ...«

In this way, the *History of madness* was a history of the thing (madness) as a problem. To translate Foucault into Lacanian terms, one could say that Foucault is writing the history of the Real *qua* Thing – and since one cannot write the history of the Real itself, one is forced to write a history about how the Real is a problem, resists symbolization, and yet at some point is covered (almost) successfully by symbolization – but from where it still resurfaces in symptoms and moments of meaninglessness. Thus, as Foucault explicitly says himself, it is the genealogy of problems that interests him

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Derrida was very well aware of the deceptive status of the object of madness in Foucault's history of madness. In a lecture in 1991, which was held to mark the 30th anniversary of the *History of Madness*, Derrida makes the following remark:

— This is perhaps one of the meanings of any history of madness, one of the problems for any project or discourse

concerning a history of madness, or even a history of sexuality: is there any witnessing to madness? Who can witness? Does witnessing mean seeing? Is it to provide a reason? Does it have an object? Is there any object?³⁵

And yet, one might say, we still have this idea of madness. We try to see it. We try to describe it. We try to isolate the phenomenon. It is an intrusive split object; identified yet not identified and in constant need of re-identification. After a long reading of Foucault's use of Freud in *The History of Madness*, Derrida concludes that in his discussion of Foucault's Freud, he does not want to say that

— Foucault contradicts himself when he so firmly places the same Freud (in general) or the same psychoanalysis (in general) sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other of the dividing line [between liberation and subjection of madness], *and always on the side of the Evil Genius* – who is found sometimes on the side of madness, sometimes on the side of its exclusion –reappropriation, on the side of its confinement to the outside or the inside, with or without asylum walls. The contradiction is no doubt in the things themselves, so to speak.³⁶

The object (of madness) is primordially split; it is split in its very existence, or our very ability to think it at all. As Derrida says: »The contradiction is no doubt in the things themselves, so to speak«. In his *History of Madness*, Foucault tries, through a philosophical engagement with history, to re-open this split in the object of madness, not settling for any finalized or relieved philosophy of madness. The object of an archeological critique of ideology thus becomes some version of what is known as *das Ding* in psychoanalysis; »the Real qua Thing« as Žižek labels it, or *hors-signifié* as Jacques Lacan defines *das Ding* (in Seminar VII), in other words as non-signified, or beyond the signified³⁷. As the American psychoanalyst, Bruce Fink, has construed this definition: »*Das Ding* appears as the unsignified and unsignifiable object within the Other (or 'Other-complex) – *in* the Other yet more than or beyond the Other.«³⁸ We could also call this Other, or Other-complex, ideology: the system or the language 'out there' lending us its words whenever we are to describe our world, our current situation, and who we are. By adding a historical dimension, archeology may play an essential part of a critique of ideology in reopening the unsettled traumas of our present day (capitalist) reason; not by opposing it from the outside, but by thinking it through thoroughly.

To sum up, what I propose is a critique of ideology that makes use of archeological methods as here defined, i.e. a way of

revitalizing some of Foucault's ideas about the history of the present as a history of problematization, rewriting the present through the past by scrutinizing the archeology of split objects. I do not claim that what we get is Foucault's »real« project or what Foucault »really« meant. Also, I do not claim that Žižek, Foucault, and Agamben do or say the same thing, or can be brought together unproblematically. Nevertheless, I see some affinities, and what I suggest is reading these thinkers in such a way that they can work as productive discussants of each other in order to revitalize an archeological critique of ideology. Such an archeological critique of ideology would take the problems (the Things) of present day ideology and trace them back to the moment of traumatic experience, or limit experience. In order to do so, I propose to take split objects, or somehow *unsymbolizable* objects, as research objects. To see how these objects are symbolized, yet not fully symbolized. To become aware of their intrusiveness, and at the same time realize how they are not fully comprehended. To go back and understand how an object – as madness to reason – became *this* very object only by being repressed, by being symbolized and how it still bears witness to some remnants of the Real. ───────────────────────────────────■

■ ─ ENDNOTES ─

- 1 Roland Barthes: *Mythologies* (New York, 1972 [1957]).
- 2 Theodor Adorno & Max Horkheimer: *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford, 2002 [1944]).
- 3 Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe: *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London, 2001 [1985]).
- 4 Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* in *MEW vol. 4* (Berlin, 1990 [1848]).
- 5 Karl Marx: *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Napoleon* in *MEW vol. 8* (Berlin, 1988 [1852]).
- 6 Karl Marx: *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* in *MEW vol. 42* (Berlin, 1983 [1858 / unpublished]).
- 7 Karl Marx: *Das Kapital (erster Band)* in *MEW vol. 23* (Berlin, 1990 [1867]).
- 8 Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek: *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (London, 2000), 96.
- 9 Slavoj Žižek: *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* (London, 2009), 91.
- 10 Ellen Meiksins Wood: *The Origin of Capitalism – A Longer View* (London, 2002), 96.
- 11 Slavoj Žižek: *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* (London, 2012), 3.
- 12 Louis Althusser: »Philosophy is a revolutionary weapon« (<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1968/philosophy-as-weapon.htm>, [1968])
- 13 Žižek: *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*, 2.
- 14 Although Žižek is often reproached for having an ob-

scurantist and inaccessible both style and line of thought, I think it is clear that Žižek has a thought through, balanced and convincing basic theory. His 'stream of consciousness' sort of style and his enormous production bears witness to a stable groundwork – a sort of thinking machine – which allows him to run all sorts of phenomena through quickly. Although this has its own problems, especially concerning the actual subversive potential when Žižek himself is transformed into 'culture industry', this does not mean that Žižek is not a stringent thinker.

15 Foucault quoted in Heiko Feldner & Fabio Vighi: *Žižek Beyond Foucault* (Basingstoke, 2007), 15.

16 Foucault quoted in Feldner & Vighi: *Žižek Beyond Foucault*, 16.

17 Slavoj Žižek: *The Metastases of Enjoyment* (London, 2005 [1994]), 199.

18 Slavoj Žižek: *The Ticklish Subject* (London, 1999), 256

19 Foucault quoted in Feldner & Vighi: *Žižek Beyond Foucault*, 97.

20 In this way, I think Žižek's critique of Foucault is more a critique of Laclau and Butler, who seems to represent, each in their own way, the Foucault that Žižek is criticizing.

21 Giorgio Agamben: *The Kingdom and the Glory* (Stanford, 2011 [2007]).

22 Giorgio Agamben: *The Signature of all Things* (New York, 2009 [2008]).

23 Melandri quoted in Agamben: *The Signature of all Things*, 97.

24 Agamben: *The Signature of all Things*, 98.

25 This can be read as almost analogue to the earlier quote from Žižek, stating that »in Marxism, such a 'real' of the historical process is the 'class struggle' that constitutes the common thread of 'all history hitherto': all historical formations are so many (ultimately failed) attempts to 'gentrify' this kernel of the real« (Žižek: *The metastases of enjoyment*, 199). Investigating the archeological roots of class struggle, as Marx to some extent did, would therefore be a sort of radical archeology, possibly confronting us with the Real of society: a rewriting of the present through the past.

26 Agamben: *The Signature of all Things*, 102.

27 Michel Foucault: »Michel Foucault à l'Université Catholique de Louvain en 1981« (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=132QZ_C3ovs, 2012, [1981]).

28 Foucault: »Michel Foucault à l'Université Catholique de Louvain en 1981«.

29 The front figure of the Zapatista movement in Mexico, Subcomandante Marcos, comes extremely close to Foucault's definition of his own work, when Marcos states that we need a new critical science or critical approach that will »study history, but not a history of the past – it is happening in this moment

in any part of the world. It is a way to understand: who we are, what we want, and what we are able to do« (Subcomandante Marcos: »Subcomandante Marcos y la Cuarta Guerra Mundial« (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA8uWDZdE4o>, 2006)).

30 Foucault also discusses this point in the opening chapter of *History of Sexuality, 2*.

31 Descartes quoted in Michel Foucault: »My body, this paper, this fire« in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (New York, 1999 [1971]), 401.

32 Jacques Derrida: »Cogito and the History of Madness« in *Writing and Difference* (London, 1978 [1964])

33 René Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy in The Philosophical Works*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1967 [1641]).

34 Foucault: »My body, this paper, this fire«, 401f. According to Derrida, he never contested this argument in the first place (cf. Jacques Derrida: »To do justice to Freud« in *Critical Inquiry* 20:2 (1994), 240).

35 Derrida: »To do justice to Freud«, 228f.

36 Derrida: »To do justice to Freud«, 250f.

37 Lacan quoted in Bruce Fink: *The Lacanian Subject* (Princeton, 1995), 95.

38 Fink: *The Lacanian Subject*, 95.