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EASA 2018 Staying, Moving, Settling
P136: Systemic crisis, Anti-systemic Movements: Marxist approaches to capitalist restructuring and social reproduction in contemporary global scenarios of movement and stability

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An anthropology that takes position instead of pictures - Tracing the Potential of Subjectivity for Anthropology

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Short abstract

We argue that the current resistances to neoliberalism remind us to depart from stagnant forms of social analysis. We show the relevance of (Post-) Marxisms put forth by Lacan, Žižek and Deleuze and Guattari to understand social transformation in a world shaped by neoliberal oppression.

Long abstract

Following Balibar, with Marx, theory and practice became intrinsically linked. Dissolving the dichotomy between anthropological theory and practice is now more urgent than ever, if anthropology strives toward holding future social value for those involved. We argue that with the help of (post-)Marxist theoretical currents, anthropology should be reoriented towards progressive social change.

The first of these examples is centred around a critical understanding of the subject along the lines of Lacan and Žižek and their understanding of dialectical materialism. An examination of the ethnographic example of Greece after the imposition of harsh austerity measures after the financial crisis of 2010 may show the various ways in which the split subject position is a key factor in understanding modes of interpellating a subject under neoliberalism and how progressive resistance may arise from that.

Secondly, ways of resisting neoliberal interpellation are reflected on by a reading of the Zapatista movement through Deleuzian political philosophy. Deleuze gives social scientists theoretical tools to understand the deterritorialization of subjectivities in the Zapatista struggle. In forming a political assemblage, Marxist guerrilla members and indigenous people engaged in processes of becoming that made the creation of a flexible, autonomous region possible. In rejecting the subjectivation processes of a neoliberal governmentality, the Zapatistas put forth a shifting process of emancipation trying to create a "world in which many worlds fit".

We conclude that the current resistances to neoliberalism remind us to depart from stagnant forms of social analysis and show the relevance of contemporary Marxisms to understand social transformation in a world shaped by neoliberal oppression.

1.) Anthropology as the affirmative 'No!'

By now it cannot be doubted that Anthropology takes place within the highly exploitative capitalist world system. In our times characterized by an increasing and repeated accumulation by dispossession, climate crises, worsening exploitation of workers, deepening racist sentiments and a surge in nationalist, right-wing and fascist movements across the world, Anthropology needs to be oriented towards progressive societal change. We argue that our science has an emancipatory kernel or at the very least the potential to show contingency, possibility and chance since it is able to contest the neoliberal dogma of late capitalism: “There is no Alternative” (Fisher 2009). Our paper argues that what is able to achieve this orientation of Anthropology toward emancipatory struggles is an Anthropology of the Subject Position. Already Foucault argued that anthropology is a so-called counter-science in the sense that:

“[...] ethnology [...], is situated within the particular relation that the Western ratio establishes with all other cultures; and from that starting-point it avoids the representations that men in any civilization may give themselves of themselves, of their life, of their needs, of the significations laid down in their language; and it sees emerging behind those coherence, within the dimension in which its relations occur with each of the three great positivities (life, need and labour, and language): thus, ethnology shows how, within a given culture, there occur the normalization of the broad biological functions, the rules that render possible or obligatory all the forms of exchange, production, and consumption, and the systems that are organized around or on the model of linguistic structures” (Foucault [1966] 2002, 411-412).

As a counter-science Anthropology holds a unique position for the contestation of oppressive structures and systems. Yet, this Foucauldian classification of anthropology does not go far enough. Being grounded in the everyday struggle of people, for Anthropology it is not just about challenging an episteme or a knowledge system. Rather it should be imperative for anthropologists to take part in, provide support for and stand in solidarity toward emancipatory struggles around the world. Even though Anthropology has a long tradition of being the handmaiden for colonial and capitalist control, our method of participant observation and our way of being “[...] in the way of theory” (Biehl 2013) still holds emancipatory potential today. Therefore, our paper aims to show three distinct points: First, it argues that it is imperative for anthropologists not only to observe societal changes and emancipatory struggles but to actively take part in them. Not in the tradition of an Applied Anthropology or an Action Anthropology,

but as an engagement with struggles around the world in which the anthropologist gets informed by concepts, tactics and becomings in a particular case that will contribute to emancipation globally and not only within one particular site of struggle.

Second, we argue that the event of struggle is the site in which people start to represent themselves. Therefore, no representation by anthropologists is necessary in this case, but our committed participation. We need to take into account that through participation in these emancipatory struggles also our own subject positions as anthropologists change, we are ourselves subject to constant becomings, a marked difference to previous anthropological approaches.

Third, Anthropology should engage the subject position, subjectivity, and becoming since capitalism does not only shape our bodies but also our subjectivities towards its goal of exploitation and appropriation. Governance and capital accumulation always occur through the process of remaking of culture and the inner transformation of the human subject. Therefore, in a setting of social struggle, state violence and repression we should also focus on an investigation of subjectivity and the subject position since modes of subjectivity intertwine with particular configurations of political, economic, as well as medical institutions. In this sense subjectivity can be considered constitutive of the material forces and the means of contemporary value systems in societies.

This endeavour, so we argue, leaves Anthropology in the position to be a science of the affirmative 'No!'. We as anthropologists are in the position to say no to a capitalist world whose dire consequences all of us have to face on a daily basis. Yet, "[...] [N]egation does not signify nothingness" (Clastres [1974] 2007, 20). Rejecting today's predicaments is not a call to dwell in cynicism and perplexity. Rather, "The negative becomes a power of affirming: it is subordinated to affirmation and passes into the service of an excess of life. Negation is no longer the form under which life conserves all that is reactive in itself, but is, on the contrary, the act by which it sacrifices all its reactive forms (Deleuze 1983 (1962): 176)".

From a strong No! in our times not a simple blueprint for revolution or for a utopian society arises. What does emerge however, is the chance to become once more and to see that even though we are subject to global workings of capitalist forces of repressive subjection, another world is possible. Herein lies what Žižek (2017) calls 'The Courage of Hopelessness'. From the predicament that we radically oppose our current circumstances the realisation arises in that there is no clearly discernible alternative to our current world visible just yet. The philosophical courage in Anthropology's affirmative No! lies in the fact that we do not only help ourselves realize in what deep shit we truly are, but that through our engagement with global struggles

and through the questioning of our becomings and subject positions, we might help ourselves to imagine the alternatives we desperately are looking for today.

2.) Where one hits a wall, both might break through - On Theory and Practice

Following Etienne Balibar, Karl Marx did for philosophy, what anthropology needs to do for itself. Marx commenced a becoming toward anti-philosophy, or anti-anthropology for our purposes, that takes seriously its position in the field of social conflicts (Balibar 2007 (1995): 4). Marx went beyond philosophy, as Balibar argues, by not establishing a “uniform discourse“ but rather a “potential plurality of doctrines“ (Balibar 2007 (1995): 4). His is a “[...] permanent oscillation between ‘falling short of’ and ‘going beyond’ philosophy (Balibar 2007 (1995): 4)“ that states propositions as “conclusions without premises“. If Anthropology is to take Marx seriously, not only philosophy cannot be the same after Marx (Balibar 2007 (1995): 4), but Anthropology can be neither. It is not about describing the world, but changing it, and as Anthropologists we are much closer to the changes in the world than most other sciences can be.

If it is really the task to change the world and not describe it, theory and practice take on a new relationship. From the discussions about the primacy of either theory or practice we go toward the aim of transforming the world using both theory and practice. “Where one hits the wall, the other might break through, not as a substitute for the other but as a relay or assemblage of two heterogeneous actions: theory and practice (Nail 2015: 7).“

When trying to take part in struggles “against neoliberalism and for humanity“ - as the Zapatistas have deemed their orientation - the Anthropologist enters a context in which it is not about who she is, but what she is: “[O]ne who ‘resists’ (Tormey 2006: 12).“ The Anthropologist enters a space with people who have grown tired of being spoken for, who have risen to “open a crack in history“ which is only possible through doing, through action. “There is no more representation, there is only action: the action of theory and the action of praxis in a web of relations and relays (Translated from Foucault and Deleuze 1977: 87).“ It is an action, a doing, towards another future and in negation to what exists. A struggle that is united fundamentally in the desire for “(an)other world(s)“ (Maeckelbergh 2011: 1). It is this desire, that permeates struggles more than theory or ideology ever could. It is the desire for/of creation, for/of production, of the fleeting subject, that lies at the heart of contemporary struggles and that is too often neglected, when approaching the context with a dogmatic or doctrine. In a time, where the question of representation is highly conflictive, and the Anthropologist is still trying to

position herself in a struggle that might be termed not hers to fight, we must keep in mind that there is something that unites all elements that enter the assemblage of struggle: A subjectivity, which is shaped by capitalist and state mechanisms of capture, and holds an immanent desire that cuts loose those captures time and again. The subjectivity talked about in this paper is the “ability to negate the existing and create something that is not there yet (Translated from Holloway 2002: 38)“, an ability to let the desire create lines of flight that escape the mechanisms of control and capture that neoliberal capitalism puts upon it. Where the anthropologist enters the assemblage of struggle, her subjectivity enters the same process of deterritorialization that makes another way of life possible. It is the subject position of each element of the assemblage, which enters a becoming otherwise blocked by the codes and axiomatics of neoliberal capitalism. Becoming is understood as the “[...] existential stage, in which life is immanent and open to new relations and trajectories (Biehl and Locke 2010: 317).“ This becoming constantly undoes and redoes each subject position, and the Anthropologists subject position becomes the relay of theory and practice. It is there, that Anthropology is most valuable in creating a practical-theoretical relay that is open, constantly collapsing and reassembling itself anew. “Sustained ethnographic engagement can help to produce a counterinterpretation, that, by taking seriously the local desires and struggles at becoming, evokes the potential for alternative solidarities and political life in the region - “a people to come (Deleuze 1997)“ (Biehl and Locke 2010: 327).“ As the elements of the struggling assemblage change and are changed, so is the anthropologist. So it might not be about positioning oneself on the map of struggle, as it is always in the process of changing and becoming, but about taking position in the sense of stating one’s solidarity, one’s commitment to be part of a doing, collaboratively creating a “direct theory“, a term coined by Noël Sturgeon, that theorizes through doing and does through theorizing (Maeckelbergh 2011: 3).

That is our task, to be part of a change, to work for the potential of change, to be sensitive to the becomings of people as they strive to come to terms with the intolerable conditions neoliberal capitalism is imposing. We, as anthropologists, have to keep in mind, that in a context, where theory and practice, though heterogeneous components, are inextricably linked in action, so are struggles and subjects. Struggle does not cause the subject position, nor does the subject position cause the struggle, but both are heterogeneous components of an emancipatory project and process themselves.

Emancipatory struggle rests on a notion of unpredictability. Gone is the time where the intricate program of a vanguard or party suffice to lead the revolution to a glorious future and ‘free‘ the masses on their behalf. Neoliberal capitalism and its confluence and appropriation of state

forces is an ever-shifting entity itself, that only in changing everything can keep everything the same. It is in this time, that struggles have been created, which understand the necessity of flexibility and of prefiguration. It is also these struggles that understand the notion of subjectivity much better, than the struggles of old. The subject position itself is non-static, making it static are acts of capture, identification and categorization coming from neoliberal capital, but also the party-centric and representational movements of the old left. It is not argued that to build a struggling collective, certain forms of guiding becoming are not necessary, but the acts named above block becoming, stop the flows of desire and force the subject position to become static to be exploited for their gains. To understand that the subject position itself is ever changing and contested, contemporary struggles are creating forms of struggle that enhance rather than block processes of becoming. A becoming that works on the level of the subject position. It is imperative then, to approach emancipatory struggles with an understanding of subjectivity that sees both theory and practice as components of said struggle. “The undecidable is the germ and locus par excellence of revolutionary decisions (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 550).“ The results might be uncertain, but it does not seem an option anymore to focus on a transcendent point of rationality, god, or else for contemporary struggles but on the fleeting subjects desires in a space that constantly changes it and is changed by it. In emancipatory struggle, we believe, that where the subject position hits a wall, theory and practice might break through.

3.) The Endgame: Becoming vs. Capitalist Subjection

CLOV: There 's one thing I'll never understand. Why I always obey you. Can you explain that to me?

HAMM: No. . .

Samuel Beckett (Endgame)

Samuel Beckett in “Endgame“, creates a context in which the two major concerns of this part of the paper seem to come to the forefront via the backdoor.

In a barren room in a nondisclosed location surrounded by a post-apocalyptic wasteland, Hamm and Clov live a miserable and repetitive life. The servant Clov, who is the only character in the play able to move, seems to detest Hamm, the master, who is blind and incapable of walking but still holds power over Clov, who does not even understand why.

The play describes a day, that seems to have been repeating itself for a long time, in the shelter Hamm and Clov live in together with Hamm's parents, Nell and Nagg, who both rest in two bins filled with sand and die during the play. A day that is controlled by Hamm even though he is incapable of exerting physical force on Clov, who does not want to be there. This situation can be used to set the stage for the following contest of Becoming and Capitalist subjection. It is Hamm, who has taken control of Clov's body and mind in different ways. He is the one holding the keys to the larder, controlling the access to food, he has captured and controlled what Clov could become, for longer than Clov can remember. Clov, even though he is the only one able to move, does not dare to contest, even though he detests the situation, he is too afraid. But he is also the only one capable of production, of creation, of becoming. He creates a toy dog, but only for the enjoyment of Hamm. Scared of the apocalypse outside, without knowing how far it reaches, Clov remains in place wishing for his end. Hamm somehow has blocked Clov's becoming, but Beckett's play also shows, that this blockage, this subjection is never complete. Uncountable repetitions of a day as the one shown in the play might have repeated themselves, but it is this day, that Clov decides to leave. The reader is not sure if he ultimately leaves, Clov himself does not seem to know what is coming, but on this day, he knows, he cannot remain. It was not rational to obey Hamm, and it is now not rational as he leaves. His desire for that which does not yet exist has finally broken the blockage and he exits. Clov is in the same position as all the emancipatory struggles of our time. Not knowing why, he ever obeyed a master, that is himself a slave of the situation, his becoming blocked by an assemblage of fears, powers and neurotics he nevertheless becomes. His becoming break the hold of the existing on Clov and enable him to move toward something that does not exist yet and is not yet known. This is what emancipatory struggles set out to do. Clov's subject position is as blocked as it can be, but nevertheless, like all subject positions, there is a potential for becoming, for creation, for difference.

Why he stayed for so long and how it came about that he potentially left might be figuratively what this part of the paper reflects upon.

This chapter aims to clarify one major contradiction at the heart of today's regime of the global capitalist system that an Anthropology of the Subject position needs to take into account if it wants to realize emancipatory potential. It is argued that this major contradiction at the centre of capitalism's hold over our lives is the one between capitalism's repressive subjection mechanisms and Becoming. This contradiction of capitalism touches upon many different aspects of its (dis-)functioning but has, if anything, only briefly been identified so far. Harvey

(2014) for example, in his major work “Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism” is on different occasions close to finding this additional contradiction that would offer a new angle towards his theorizing on the relation between freedom and domination (Harvey 2014, 203). He might not be far off when he says that:

“None of the freedoms that capital needs and demands has passed uncontested. Indeed from time to time the contestation has been fierce. Capital’s freedoms clearly rested, many people recognised, on the unfreedom of others. Both sides, Marx noted, had right on their side, as capital sought to extract as much labour time as possible from the workforce while the workers sought to protect their freedom to live their lives without being worked to death. Between two such rights, Marx famously said, force decides” (Harvey 2014, 208).

However, what Harvey shies away from is a true engagement with the questions if the Marxian argument that both sides are right still holds up today. In the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari one could also argue that the two sides are weighed differently now. One side, the side of capital, forces us into a de- and reterritorialization along the lines of capitalist axioms, whereas on the other side stands the class of human and non-human actors that are slaves to capital and subject to its forces of domination.

We struggle in a time, where the capitalist system has surpassed the necessity of an elite group of subjects, to organize and enforce the capitalist axiom. In times of workings on the subject position itself it becomes clear, that a strict dichotomy however useful to organize a struggle, is not sufficient anymore. Even though the State is what makes the distinction of the governors and the governed possible (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 416), and the governors are still agents of capital working against an emancipatory future, every element of the world market assemblage is subjected to the processes of capitalist axiomatization.

“The bourgeois sets the example, he absorbs surplus value for ends that, taken as a whole, have nothing to do with his own enjoyment: more utterly enslaved than the lowest of slaves, he is the first servant of the ravenous machine, the beast of the reproduction of capital, internalization of the infinite debt. "I too am a slave"-these are the new words spoken by the master. Only as personified capital is the capitalist respectable (Deleuze and Guattari 2000 (1983): 254).”

This is not to deny that the dominant force striving toward emancipation is not class struggle anymore or that class interests do not play a role any longer. On the contrary. What this

deleuzeguattarian insight might offer us is the fact that while class struggle is the main arena of emancipatory struggle, we need to rethink our prefigurative strategies ((Maeckelbergh 2011) in this battle to open up spaces for alternatives that are worth fighting for and that our actions become more than mere reactions in the struggle against Capitals forces of subjection.

Our paper engages with the question of how capitalism is able to constantly re-appropriate the subject position under different circumstances and how it makes us, in the true sense of the word, subject to its oppressive axioms. Contesting this appropriation of our subject positions is the space where the true emancipatory potential for Anthropology might rest.

As a starting point for a clarification of how Anthropology might be able to deliver weapons in the struggle against this process of capitalist subjection mechanisms the Lacanian Split Subject understood in a Žižekian tradition will be taken as a starting point.

This conception of the subject is being looked at to give way to a problematization of our concepts, rather than to actually make an universal truth claim about the subject position of every human being. Tsing might help to negotiate the often-voiced criticisms against a presumably universal framework of anthropological engagement. She writes:

“Universals are effective within particular conjunctures that give them content and force. We might specify this conjunctural feature of universals in practice by speaking of engagement. Engaged universals travel across difference and are charged and changed by their travels. Through friction, universals become practically effective. Yet they can never fulfil their promise of universality. [...] All universals are engaged when considered as practical projects accomplished in a heterogenous world” (Tsing 2005, 8; Italics in original).

In identifying the constant re-appropriation of our subject position, the Lacanian split subject understood in a Žižekian tradition helps us to see that the subject is neither a substance nor a real entity. It should be understood as a void, composed out of negativity. As Lacan ([1966] 2005) shows in his text on the mirror stage “The subject appears at the interface of the ‘Real’ and the ‘Symbolic’. [...] The Real is unknowable by us; it refers to the world prior to any categorization or classification – a pre-linguistic world. The Symbolic is the instance of the ordering of the Real” (Keucheyan 2014, 184). The Real, in this sense, is not available to us. More fundamentally: The Real never allows itself to be fully symbolized, it “[...] is the point of failure of the symbolic order and the reality principle, what stops them from becoming whole, closed and complete” (Douzinas 2013, 30). The Subject is formed in the distance that separates

the Real and the Symbolic, a necessary distinction for the subject to arise in the first place (ibid.; Keucheyan 2014, 184).

The subject externalizes itself in a language to overcome the Real that is experienced as a loss, “[...] the subject creates the object (the Symbolic), but therewith ceases to find itself face to face with it, precisely because it is externalized” (Keucheyan 2014, 184-185). This is what Žižek means when he argues that the place of the subject remains empty. The separation between subject and object is abolished through the externalization in language of the subject. A lesson that explains Žižek's critique of an object-oriented philosophy. For a Lacanian in this sense this separation seems nonsensical because the differentiation between object and subject becomes too murky and muddled in order to speak of either of the two. Anthropology could be reoriented toward an engagement with the subject position and lose none of the insights currently presented by the ontological turn.

All of this helps us to understand that conceptualizing the subject as a void and as negativity does not mean that no such thing exists. Rather, the subject in this view becomes a “vanishing mediator”. A mediator “[...] that allows another phenomenon to emerge and disappears once it has performed that task (Keucheyan 2014, 184)”. Through this speaks the clastean spirit yet again: the negation of the subject does not mean nothingness. The subject is just not a concrete, actually existing collective. Rather, it becomes the condition, the mediator, for individualities and collectives to form and to realize their ideas and give the world meaning. For this to occur however, the place of the subject formally has to be empty and that this place therefore can be contested, occupied, and demanded by a number of diverse actors (ibid. 185). In other words, one could say: The contested and ultimately empty subject position is the precondition for Becoming. This should make clear the current and ever-renewing struggle around our subject positions. Capitalism's techniques for appropriating our subject positions are manifold, even though our later chapter hopes to show that some of them might stand out such as constituting us as indebted subjects in relation to capital and constructing us as the Rancierian “parts, that have no parts” in the world market.

Helpful as the theorizing about the Lacanian Subject might be in approaching capitalist subjection, one question has to be asked: Is it really enough anymore to speak of the Split Subject? Or are we rather talking about an ever-splitting subject? On the basis of an empty subject position, a recurring conflict about the appropriation of our subjectivities that is waged by capitalist axioms might necessitate a reformulation. Maybe our subjectivities are ever-splitting in the struggle, our subjectivities appearing and reappearing as vanishing mediators to voice our collective wills in our everyday struggles against capitalism's axioms.

The problem of the subject position is one of a struggle between forces that try to block change and creation immanent to the subject position and those forces that try to give the subject position to its immanent changes and flexibility, while creating a framework of an emancipatory project. When approaching this problem, one has to distinguish capitalist attempts to access and control the subject position from the struggles that attempt to on the one hand contest those capitalist attacks and on the other try to collectively access and change the subject position themselves.

Permeated by an idea of process, the deleuzoguattarian understanding of subjectivity might be useful and necessary to accomplish the reformulation talked about above. When Lacan identifies the moment of split in the subject in the mirrorstage, he might underestimate the fact that a traumatic event such as this, is not a once in a lifetime thing. Capitalism, the deterritorializing negative of all social formations might just be the force which repeats the moment of split over and over again. This moment of trauma is repeated when the higher unity of the axiom paired with state apparatuses of capture constitute the human being as a subject linked to the exterior entity of capital, of denumerable sets. It is not the one split that then engenders a split Subject, but it is countless splits through the events of a life, that create the ever-splitting subject, a subject whose essence is the struggle of how to split, how to divide and how to become anew time and again.

Social formations are based on the necessity to create a form of subject position to form a collective that can communicate and interact, but capital is the newest transcendent point, the exterior entity, that attempts to subject the subject continuously while at the same time breaking it up and reterritorializing it. To take control of one's own splittings is central to contemporary struggles. Let us now attempt to sketch the deleuzoguattarian understanding of capitalist subjection and the becomings, which counteract it.

The social field is defined by the lines of flight that run through it (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 105). For Gilles Deleuze, “[...] society is something that is constantly escaping in every direction... [...] It is really made up of lines of flight (Deleuze 2006 in Biehl and Locke 2010: 322).“ This constant escaping is created by desire, a force that constantly cracks, breaks and undoes identities and territorializations of power (Biehl and Locke 2010: 323). Deleuze and Guattari prioritize desire over power, as they argue the desiring force of production and creation to be what constantly transforms life.

For a social formation to hold up, desire, as a force of creation, has to be guided to a certain extent. The flows of desire have to be accessed and guided to achieve processes of production that can give a society a necessary foundation to subsist. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call this a territory, the inner organisation of the assemblage, that attempts to stabilise the otherwise ever fleeing flows of desire (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 378). But we live in a time that these processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization have taken a capitalist turn. It is now a time that the leading force of deterritorialization, capitalism, has uprooted and subordinated the reterritorializing force of the state via its axiomatics. These processes are now interested in a constantly shifting but ever similar subjection of the subject position to the capitalist axiom: production for the market.

Pierre Clastres describes the capitalist system of economic production as a “[...] space of the unlimited, a space without a locus in that it constantly pushes back boundaries, an infinite space of permanent forging ahead (Clastres 1994 (1974): 50).“ This pushing of boundaries, this constant transformation whilst remaining the same is very much in correspondence with the Deleuzoguattarian understanding of capitalism. “There is no universal capitalism, there is no capitalism in itself; capitalism is at the crossroads of all kinds of formations, it is neocapitalism by nature (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 21).“ For these authors capitalism is a “force of deterritorialization par excellence“, that in constantly deterritorializing assemblages and pushes its own boundaries of production and appropriation (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 527). “[D]eterritorialization is defined as the complex movement or process by which something escapes or departs from a given territory (Patton 2010: 52).“ And it is capitalism in our times that has become the driving force of deterritorializations, breaking all territories it comes upon, but not to allow becomings, but to reterritorialize the flows under its own axiomatic. Neoliberal capitalism has pushed its boundaries beyond the body of the worker, to control her subject position not only via disciplinary techniques but in the sense of the basic structuring of desire running through the subject position.

With desire as the process of production, capitalism relies on breaking open coded flows, to create a surplus of flows. This means that any territory, any order of an assemblage, any system in society is potentially opened by capitalism to create surplus of flows for absorption. However, as much as capitalism is a deterritorializing force, a negative of all social formations, it requires processes of reterritorialization of the freed flows and lines of flight to appropriate the surplus.

“While it characteristically “decodes“ flows, that is, things and people, and “deterritorializes“ the socius (the principle upon which society is based, at any given time), for the maximization of production, it also “recodes“ and “reterritorializes“ these imaginary and symbolic ways (Olivier 2014: 60).“

This absorption works in the confluence of two processes: capitalist axiomatisation and reterritorialization through the State. “[...] capitalism forms with a general axiomatic of decoded flows (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 527).“ And this axiomatic in the Deleuzoguattarian understanding is nothing other than “production for the market“ (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 567). It is this “[...] true axiomatic [...] which takes place of the old codings and organises all the decoded flows, including the flows of scientific and technical code, for the benefit of the capitalist system and in the service of its ends (Nail 2015: 60).“ In contrast to codes, that determine qualities of flows and establish their relations, and overcoding, that captures and recodes these flows through extra-economic state forces such as the political or juridical, capitalist axioms establish “[...] strictly economic equivalence between purely unqualified (decoded) flows (Nail 2015: 60).“ Now, the lines of flight are pressed into denumerable sets of economic information that can be reterritorialised by the state to absorb their surplus. Axiomatics become stopping points for the flows that capitalism deterritorializes (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 536). “[...] the States, in capitalism, are not cancelled out but change form and take on a new meaning as models of realization for a worldwide capitalist axiomatic that exceeds them (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 528; Patton 2010: 149).“

“What capitalism continually decodes at one pole, it axiomatises at the other (Nail 2015: 61).“ It decodes qualitative relationships of peoples, things, and environments only to reinscribe them with quantitative relations in the market. And it is the State, that provides the apparatuses of capture to do this, whilst simultaneously becoming axiomatised itself. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, all State and social formations under the capitalist axiomatic tend to become isomorphic in their capacity as models of realization under the world market (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 567).“ It is capitalism, which Deleuze and Guattari understand as the negative of all social formations, that has combined State apparatuses of capture and its own potentials of deterritorializations to negate social formations exempt from the capitalist axiomatic and subordinate all the flows that it creates under it.

Axiomatics as stopping points of the processes of becoming are what contemporary struggles contest on the most basic of levels. If a struggle is incapable of catching the lines of flight

that are constantly produced by social formations and capitalism, it cannot create something that does not exist yet. As long as the struggle moves on the codes established by a neoliberal order, its practices, institutions and subject positions will necessarily be reappropriated by the state and capital. Only a thoughtful, collective and resilient process of becoming can create circumstances in which the negation of what exists can also create something yet to come.

As described above, any collective body constituted through the segmentation of territorializations always has its cracks and fringes (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 427). These are constituted by what Deleuze and Guattari call “minorities“. The relation of majority and minority in the Deleuzoguattarian understanding is not just quantitative. The term majority implies a standard measure by which to evaluate the elements of the assemblage. It is the majority that assumes power and domination in a social formation with a State as the measure of unity and identity (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 123). Regardless of the quantitative number, Deleuze and Guattari term what is different from the majority minoritarian. This means that minoritarian is what becomes, what goes against identification and categorisation. It is not about acquiring the majority in political terms for Deleuze and Guattari, not about taking power, as this will always conform to the limits of the constant, in this case State and Capital mechanisms as overarching majorities, and is unable to become (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 123). The minority is the becoming of everybody and everything in the sense of one’s potential to deviate from the dominant, hegemonic model (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 123). Minorities are “[...] indistinct and fuzzy aggregates that interact, break down and reconstitute themselves in new and creative ways (Tormey 2006: 9).“ “One never deterritorializes alone [...] (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 204).“

Becoming minor means a high potential of deterritorialization, meaning a potential to free oneself of determinants and identifications that block change. In a minority, following Deleuze and Guattari, this deviation from the standard means that everything becomes political, that every position and every action is political in that it goes against the State and capitalist strata. The minority and its potential of becoming is fundamentally collective. There can be no master or vanguard in this process, as the minoritarian becoming affects every element of the assemblage and changes it, while being changed (Deleuze and Guattari 2003 (1975): 16-18). And finally, to become minoritarian is to begin at the subject position itself. At the point that is used to define and confine humans lies also the potential to become minoritarian and begin to escape from the neoliberal clutches toward a more emancipatory

future yet to come. As a struggle deterritorializes the subject position, understanding and accepting that being a subject is a process in itself.

“[...] the idea of becoming: those individual and collective struggles to come to terms with events and intolerable conditions and to shake loose, to whatever degree possible, from determinants and definitions [...] (Deleuze 1995 in Biehl 2010: 317).“

Contemporary becoming's intolerable condition is neoliberal capitalism. It is capitalism that introduces the axiomatics, the stopping points, for every becoming that people aspire to. However, as capitalism itself is not static, the struggles contesting it cannot be either. It is about taking back control over one's own, collective becomings, aspiring to create something yet to come in a precarious context. The political strategy that realizes such a necessity for openness and flexibility, in which theory and practice, the struggle and the subject positions of its elements go hand in hand is what Marianne Maeckelbergh calls “prefiguration“, “[...] the creation of alternatives in the here and now (Maeckelbergh 2011: 3).“ “Prefiguration relies on the creation of a process that transforms those involved through practice (Maeckelbergh 2012: 231).“ “‘Process’ refers simultaneously to the active building of another world and to the political structures needed to govern that world (Maeckelbergh 2011: 2).“ Prefiguration is creating the structures needed for a more emancipatory future in the present, trying them and afterwards adjusting or dispersing them. This process of prefiguration is the only way to be able to act and react as a movement “against neoliberalism and for humanity“, as the Zapatistas have termed their international assemblies, to the processes of capture, reterritorialisation and axiomatisation of the state-capital assemblage as described earlier. Prefigurational processes remove the temporal distinction of the present struggle and the future goal (Maeckelbergh 2011: 4) by constantly restructuring the assemblage of decoded flows that escape capitalist processes. It is “[...] a creation of the past and a nostalgia for the future at the same time (Nail 2015: 78).“ And it is that confluence of a process traversing time and going beyond static understandings of the assemblage of the struggle, that we will later try to comprehend via ethnographical accounts.

4.) Become you Fools! Learning from global struggles in ethnographic literature

In parallelism of what Badiou calls the revival of the Communist Hypothesis this chapter will show two ethnographic examples that demonstrate how an anthropology of subjectivity

might enable anthropology not only to generate new insight and maybe even reach a deeper level of understanding, but how anthropology might actually engage itself in an emancipatory struggle for a better world yet to come. It tries to identify shortcomings of current anthropological theory and practice and aims to underline the importance of recognizing one's own becoming in the subjective struggles against capitalism. Just as the Communist Hypothesis never truly vanished from the hearts and minds of radical progressive movements worldwide, so is the specter of the subject as a concept still haunting Western Academia today (Žižek 2009).

What primarily concerns this paper, is how the lines of flight come free and escape from all forms of capture and appropriation described above. How do struggles create and use these lines of flight that start at the subject position, that start at the boundary of neoliberal capitalism itself somewhere deep in each and everyone of us humans.

Whilst the Deleuzoguattarian writings on first glance paint a dark picture regarding the possibilities of progressive social change, still, their perspective positions the production of something new, the desire for change as central to life as such. And social contexts described in the following are examples for this desire to create something new, that evolves from the insight that the world must not stay as it is. Change seems inevitable, but only in collective efforts of becoming is there the chance of it actually producing something not as easily appropriatable by capitalist and state forces aiming to reduce it to their codes, hierarchies, categorisations and identifications. As such, in the Deleuzoguattarian universe, humanity seems to correspond to the volcanic islands of history, in its possibility to connect under the surface and spontaneously erupt without obvious further notice. "Humanity, as it exists, is [...] volcanic (translated from Holloway 2002a: 166)." And it might just be capitalism itself, that sets the stage, as it continually sets and repels its own limits and with that creates flows escaping its own axiomatics time and again (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987)).

On the basis of an Anthropology of the Subject Position engaging with the ethnography of Greece after the crisis of 2010 shows one predicament very clearly: The Greek people are not made to suffer under austerity measures that lead to impoverishment, depression, suicide, homelessness, and hunger in order to balance the countries deficit at one uncertain point of time in the future. The people of Greece are forced to suffer so that others in the EU can go on dreaming their dream undisturbed (Žižek 2015). As it is shown by an anthropological engagement with the subject position in the case of Greece this dream that others are so unwilling to wake up from is neoliberal debt-based capitalism. In this regime money has been

reconceptualized as debt, more or less emerging out of thin air by states lending money from mostly private banks and bankers (Harvey 2017; Roos 2013; Pettifor 2017).

An analysis of the subject position in Greece clearly shows the dominant force in our times that appropriates our subjectivities and restricts a manifold 'becoming', is neoliberal capitalism. The forces of subjectivation which capitalism has put forward during its history took different shapes to justify the exploitation of the many for the repeated accumulation by dispossession benefitting only the few. Today however, the case of Greece can show two very defining features of today's capitalism: Debt constitutes capitalism's Real (Douzinas 2013, 23-31) and the Indebted Subject Position is a prime means of subjecting us to capitalist mechanisms of control and domination.

Debt obviously has the power of being constitutive of social relationships, but this position too often fails to truly clarify the relationships and subjectivities that arise from the position of being indebted. Debt, this paper argues along the lines of Maurizio Lazzarato, is a power relation inseparable from the production of the indebted subject and the subject's morality (Lazzarato 2012, 11). The subject position of indebtedness is intimately linked with a shift in the perception of temporality and time, it is used to moralize and dominate as well as it is an apparatus to enforce measures and discourses that otherwise would be deemed highly amoral. Indebtedness thus is not simply one way among many others of bringing about social relations. Debt, is at its core a repressive power apparatus that works through hindering Becoming and that subjugates us under capitalist axioms (Lazzarato 2012, 2014, 2015).

The main condition that indebtedness in neoliberal capitalism inflicts upon the subject is the creation of a specific morality (Lazzarato 2012, 30). This morality of indebtedness is according to Lazzarato exemplified by the fact that it is shaped by being indebted primarily to capital and not to the community, one's ancestors, or other entities (ibid. 31). This morality brought about by indebtedness exploits the ethical actions of the subject and it evokes through a moral discourse the entrepreneurial work on the self. The self-normalizing effects of the neoliberal image of the 'entrepreneur of the self' is key here, since it mirrors the demand addressed to the indebted subject to work oneself out of the position of indebtedness. All undertakings of the subject, that is stuck in this position of indebtedness, should be aimed at reimbursing and repaying the debt, thereby transforming this to the main ethical imperative of the subject once indebted. Ethical actions that are otherwise constitutive of the community and of the individualized aspects of subjectivity are mobilized in this spirit. Deeply connected to this exploitation of one's ethical action is among others forces the idea of 'confidence'. Confidence, for example that a common, more egalitarian future is possible, gets replaced with the moral

imperative to repay and reimburse one's debt. Over the last years, even though it became utterly clear from the beginning, that Greece will not be able to repay its debts and reach a balanced state deficit, one of the phrases uttered more often than not by the technocrats of the IWF, the EU commission and the world bank was the display of one's 'confidence' in the fact, that the last tranche of austerity measures will be the one that leads Greece on the way of repaying its debt once and for all. Talking about 'confidence' was also time and again used in order to moralize the indebtedness of the Greek people, when it came to the 'confidence' that they will do everything to work their way out of poverty which was inflicted upon them in the first place through the employment of harsh austerity measures. If once capitalism and capitalist states hoped for passive subjects, the new injunction becomes the credo of being always active in the struggle to repay one's debt (Lazzarato 2012. 145). This activity however, is empty and serves only the enforced subjugation of subjects under one specific axiom: becoming human capital, readily exploitable should the need arise (ibid.).

It is the focus on the subject position that would enable us to see how Lazzarato's writings could be connected to the ethnography of Greece during the crisis. Lazzarato shows exactly how debt is a power mechanism employed to hinder the Becoming of Subjects in the Greek context. Many examples like solidarity clinics, food markets and graffiti activism were looked at by anthropologists. What is almost always missing however is a focus on the subject position that would enable us to see how capitalism and its subjugation not only works on the level of the body or puts forth moral imperatives. The focus on the subject position in the case of Greece can enable us to see how radical the resistance of the Greek people truly was and still is and would go beyond the old mantra of attributing agency in situations of hardships that do not touch upon the true potential of the actors in the field. The example of Greece shows the constant struggle of the people to yet again break free from capitalist subjection and to appropriate their subject positions in order to become more than the slaves that are indebted to capital.

For an ethnographic example this paper thus can only focus on one thing: Cucumbers. Daniel Knight recapitulates in his fieldwork on food, resistance slogans and the economic crisis in the cities of Trikala, Karditsa and Kalampaka in western Thessaly, Greece the following conversation with an informant:

"Giannis notes that the cucumber is also a reminder that "we will get up and carry on. We can take it." Referring to a cucumber's phallic resemblance, he says that even some of the Ancient Greek heroes had to sometimes "take it up the ass" when they were away at war, and he jokingly

adds, “Ancient Greeks had huge cucumbers. Imagine that. We only have to deal with Germans!” ” (Knight (2015, 237).

This quote is not simply chosen for its comedic content, the point is not to make fun of the hardships of the Greek people. Rather, it enlightens the fact that there are multiple ways of referencing the crisis that took effect in Greece in 2010 and the fact that one is being trapped in the subject position of indebtedness. This conversation Knight had with his informant accentuates, just as Knight's text does, that the point cannot be to fetishize the suffering of the Greek People even when we are still somewhat desperately trying to attribute agency. Rather the point is to make the voices of the people we engage with during fieldwork heard and to show contradictions, resistances, transformations and to not blank out the fact that there is more to be looked at during the ongoing crisis than despair and sporadic resistance that is ultimately doomed to fail. But still this does not go far enough. What is still absent here is yet again a recapitulation of how one's own self becomes in the context of engaging in fieldwork, what possible strategies and concepts for resistance might be taken away from this ethnographic engagement and how it might relate to other struggles all around the world. As Knight's example shows, among others, food and the phallic signifier of the cucumber are used as a marker of wellbeing and of how the current situation in Greece deprives the people living there of even the most basic human needs (Knight 2015, 232). Importantly for this paper, it also highlights how severe subjective positions under capitalism, in this case the position of indebtedness, truly can become if people live in fear of returning to times of famine, violent conflict and authoritarianism (Knight 2015, 232; 234-37). Yet, it also emphasizes the possibility of resistance by means of humour and irony and it invokes a certain sense of solidarity and creativity in spite of the undoubtedly straining situation. To make sense of the resistance of the Greek people and to understand what we as subjects whose becomings are hindered in similar, yet different ways can take away from this, the focus on the subject position and on Becoming is utterly necessary.

The ethnographic situation of Chiapas, Mexico and the Zapatista resistance might be one of the instances to interact with a becoming of a whole movement. Mexico, becoming the handmaiden of neoliberal capital via the NAFTA-Agreement in 1994 experienced an alternative to the political status quo that was PRI rule. Representative politics had done nothing for the inhabitants of Chiapas in southern Mexico, a region rich in resources but neglected by the Mexican government. Chiapas was a place where it was cheaper to die, than

to live (Subcomandante Marcos 1996). The primarily indigenous population of Chiapas was experienced in struggles and resistance dating back to the times of the *conquista*. But it was the neoliberal state and its neglect, that had put them in a daring situation. Seemingly excluded from the representative democratic system and the myth of a permanent revolution under the PRI crumbling away, the uprising of an indigenous group not only surprised the global public, but also instilled hope in a political Left disillusioned by the fall of the socialist regimes. It was the Zapatistas, made people that do not have a part in the neoliberal system, that rebelled and resisted, creating a long lasting movement of process and openness and reintroducing politics into the Mexican nation.

Following Jacques Rancière, politics begins where one stops balancing wins and losses, where one reposes the question of the inherent injustice of a society that is based on a “classic“ idea of democracy and acknowledges its aporia (Rancière 2016 (1995): 9, 18). In truly marxist fashion, he sees society only having two parts, the rich and the poor (Rancière 2016 (1995): 23). The society emerges from a belief in the identification of the whole population as parts of society, presupposing a certain equality between them, but it is structured into groups that are able to give orders and those that are meant to obey. This is the aporia inherent to greek-inspired, representative democracy: The presupposition of inherent equality in contrast to the differences in power of decision-making, the separation of those who speak and those who listen to obey.

“Politics exists when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part (Rancière 2016 (1995): 24).“ Precisely this part of those who have no part made his voice heard when the Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico, took up arms on the first of January 1994. As a social and political movement that emerged from the mountains and jungles of Chiapas, Mexico, on the first of January 1994, Zapatismos longevity, flexibility, elusiveness, resistance and continuous production of alternatives to the political, economic and social system makes them a fascinating example of contemporary struggles of resistance against a neoliberal axiomatic. In the construction of an autonomous space for the subsistence of the peoples of Chiapas, they defy most labels and conceptualizations by continually changing and adapting to newly posed problems in an endeavour to create new worlds and people.

After a 12 days of armed conflict, the Zapatistas began 24 years of community building, and prefiguratively constructing a more emancipatory world. The Zapatistas are defined by a dialogue between urban Marxist guerrillas and the indigenous communities that after 10 years of organizing became the driving force of the struggle and created a unique mixture of

leftist rhetoric and ideas of dignity, justice, and freedom, and a Mayan cosmovision centered around the “Word” and long lived structures of assemblies and collective decision-making. It is a movement that “[...] prefers to listen, rather than to speak (Beleg?).” The whole Zapatista movement is centered around the “word“, be it spoken or written, constant communication and dialogue shape the Zapatista goal, disregarding any longterm dogmatic apart from “making another world possible“. The word has been created into “a weapon, a bridge, a dream, a story (Carlsen 2007: 17).“ “[...] the capacity to listen and adapt fundamentally altered not only the language but the practice and the idea of the ultimate objective (Carlsen 2007: 19).“

As that Simon Tormey sees the Zapatista movement as operating in negation to what is, not the embodiment of something that is yet to be created, a movement that “[...] prefers to listen rather than to speak“ (Tormey 2006: 14). Their project is a project of becoming opposed to the processes of capture and deterritorialization by the state and capital. Its theoretical and practical output goes hand in hand, showing that a stringent separation of theory and praxis in their particular context is futile, as the production of the word coexists with the production of the world.

“[...] Zapatismo’s rebel significance has been felt through the creation of a new kind of politics rooted in the formation of new kinds of relationships and new kinds of spaces and practices which embody the principle of inclusivity, democracy, dignity, and hope (Khasnabish 2010: 203).“

“They are Indians, gendered, dynamic and have histories (Couch 2001: 253).“ “They, too, change through the process of struggle (Couch 2001: 253).“ And these human beings form a collective assemblage, in which one change affects and alters the whole assemblage, that tries to adapt, react and act through a collective process of decision-making.

It is a space that welcomes and affirms difference on a very basic level, the level of the subject position. “Who [one] is carries less significance than what [one] is: one who ‘resists’ (Tormey 2006: 12).“ It is here that theory only breaks through the wall because practice opens it. The practice of resisting allows the subject positions of the Zapatistas to remain in process, to become time and again. The masks they wear in public are not only to contest being silenced and made faceless by neoliberal capitalism and the state. It is also to symbolize, that to categorize, to identify a human being is not what an emancipatory struggle should do.”If the

face is a politics, dismantling the face is also a politics involving real becomings, an entire becoming-clandestine (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 220).” The Zapatistas contest the state and capital by expressing themselves as the social subjects that are many things at once: indigenous peoples, peasants, citizens, human beings and many more (Stahler-Sholk 2010: 278). Their subject position is one of resistance, understanding that entering the dominant structures of power without the notion of ultimately overcoming them is fatal. The Zapatistas are the Deleuzoguattarian minorities. As the late Subcomandante Marcos, a spokesperson and writer in the Zapatista resistance once put it:

“Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa, Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Isidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, an Indian in the streets of San Cristóbal, a kid gang member in Nez, a rocker in the Cité universitaire, a Jew in Germany, an ambassador in Sedena [Defence Ministry], a feminist in political parties, a communist in the post-Cold War, a pacifist in Bosnia, a Mapuche in the Andes... In short, Marcos is any old human being on this planet. **Marcos is all the rejected and oppressed minorities, who resist, explode and say ‘Ya basta!’** He is every minority now finding its voice and every majority obliged to shut up and listen to the storm. He is every excluded group in search of words, their own words — something that will ultimately give a majority to the eternally separate, us. Everything that troubles power and clear consciences – that’s what Marcos is (Subcomandante Marcos 1997).”

And that is not only what Marcos is, but what the Zapatistas are as a movement, a minority with shifting, ever-splitting subject positions. The Zapatistas exist in their becomings. Joao Biehl and Peter Locke see becoming as the existential stage in which “[...] life is immanent and open to new relations and trajectories (Biehl and Locke 2010: 317).“ It is this stage that the Zapatistas created with their armed rebellion and that they protected, expanded, changed and questioned through their existence. For Deleuze and Guattari, “[b]ecoming-minoritarian [...] is called autonomy (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 124).“ It is only through autonomy, meaning not only to instate one’s own laws, but also to take control of one’s own problems, that a collective can constitute a deterritorialization, that is not immediately reterritorialized by State or capital (Nail 2015: 116). “[...] by using a number of minority elements, by connecting, conjugating them, one invents a specific unforeseen, autonomous becoming“ and becomes revolutionary (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 124). The Zapatistas project of autonomy constructs a non-apodictic politics, one that proceeds by “[...] experimentation, groping in the dark, injection, withdrawal, advances, retreats (Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 536).“ “Revolution is redefined as a question rather than an answer (Couch 2001: 254).“ This concept of becoming lends itself to an

anthropological inquiry and writing of struggles that not only use but create the flows of desire fleeing from the captures and codings to make another world possible.

Thus the Zapatista movement is a process of becoming minoritarian, of creating an assemblage fleeing from State and capital forces that devies the majorities, the “police“ measure. It creates a space of autonomy that is constantly deterritorializing, political and collective. “Becoming minoritarian is [...] posited as an [...] affirmation of difference through the rejection of attempts to reduce difference to the same (Tormey 2006: 6).“

Emancipatory struggles should prefiguratively create structures that might exist in a world yet to come, and as these are questioned, rearranged and maybe dismantled so are the subject positions of those, that enter these processes, who come to understand that being Zapatista seems to mean openness, reflexiveness and a respect for the process of struggling against the intolerable conditions of capital and state, and becoming other than one is, beginning at the deepest level: one’s subject position.

The Zapatistas are the part that resists the rich, the governing, the demanding, which is precisely the moment and requirement to make politics possible (Rancière 2016 (1995): 24). As Thomas Nail speaking about John Holloway puts it, the Zapatista “[...] struggle is one not only against the state and capital, but against the entire system of political classification/representation as such.“ (Nail 2015:25). Holloway sees the unity of the process of classification (of capital accumulation) as the unity of struggle in our times, not the unity as members of a certain class or other kinds of classifying identity (Holloway in Nail 2015: 25). But the scream of “¡Ya Basta!“ by the Zapatistas as those who have no part was more than just refusal but the “[...] affirmation of the potential to recover a new means of living, a ‘power-to’ or capacity of new action (Nail 2015: 26).“

Neoliberalism had made the Zapatistas the “part of those who have no part“, those that were not even countable, solemnly neglectible. Here we can identify something like a convergence of Deleuzian and Rancierian thought, as Deleuze and Guattari “[...] point out that ‘capitalists’ and ‘proletarians’ are both subjectified in terms of the flows of capital, that is, constituted by capital as subjects, but the former are ‘subjects of enunciation [speaking subjects] that form the private subjectivity of capital’, and the latter ‘subjects of the statement [spoken subjects at the receiving end of capitalist discourse] subjected to the technical machines in which constant capital is effectuated’(Deleuze and Guattari in Olivier 2014: 61).“ That is one of the aspects, why the freeing of the word and the fighting for a voice was so crucial for the success of the Zapatista rebellion. The convolution of the neoliberal axiomatic and the Mexican government constitutes what Ranciere calls the “police“, that attempts to subordinate the Chiapan

communities to abstract and geometric analytics, applying identities to them, that would make it possible to count them in an electoral process but that discount their complexities and subjectivities. In the hegemonic discourse, what Rancière calls “police“, the confluence and equation of the parts of society, the organization of power, the distribution of the positions in society, and the legitimization of that process, is termed “politics“. But for Rancière this is precisely the process of suppressing politics (Rancière 2016 (1995): 39). And it is this process that the Zapatistas contest with their collective becomings, forming subject positions that are minoritarian, escaping the mechanisms of capture driven by the capitalist axiom. And anthropology can become an ally of those struggles as it can “[...] help to produce a counterinterpretation that, by taking seriously local desires and struggles at becoming, evokes the potential for alternative solidarities and political life in the region [...] (Biehl and Locke 2010: 327).“

5.) Anthropology with/out a mirror – Toward a world in which many worlds fit

The Anthropology of the subject position might give rise to new insights when interacting with emancipatory struggles around the world. It might reclaim a politics of the subject position, that not only changes the participants including the anthropologist herself, but also work for a future that has overcome the intolerable conditions neoliberal capital imposes. Such an Anthropology will be permeated by contradictions, moving and oscillating with the changes the Anthropologist goes through. But nevertheless it is a necessary step, if Anthropology wants to be what it can be: a counter-science taking position to support emancipatory struggles.

As with theory and practice, that are related through action, an Anthropology of the subject position relates the philosophical and the literary in the Deleuzoguattarian sense. Anthropology is uniquely equipped to relate these to vital elements of the Deleuzoguattarian theory.

First, philosophy in this sense means creating new concepts that attempt to bring about new earths and new peoples breaking with established or self-evident forms of understanding (Patton 2010: 41, 137). These concepts themselves hold a potential of becoming as they can never stay the same. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari understand a “concept“ as a fragmented multiplicity that always emerges out of the assemblage and is addressed to a certain problem (Deleuze and Guattari 2014 (1991): 23-24, Deleuze and Guattari 2013 (1987): 43). “A concept is a brick. It can be used to build the courthouse of reason. Or it can be thrown through the window (Deleuze 1980: 16)“. This work wants to put forth a brick. Namely, in the sense that the anthropological engagement with the subject position and Becoming is already twofold in this sense. On the

one hand it can be used to reformulate certain fundamental assumptions of anthropology and helps to contribute to the constant reworking of our discipline, ergo: to offer a brick for the building of the courthouse of our science. On the other hand, by means of standing in solidarity with emancipatory struggles it hopefully can add to a rejection of our current predicament. This paper surely will come short in reformulating certain key assumptions of anthropology or rework its fundamental insights. Nonetheless, it hopes to be thrown through some well-established windows.

Second, the literary aspect of the Anthropology of subjectivity means its capability to engage with the desires and becomings of people in struggle on a deeper level. “For Deleuze and Guattari, the ethnologist could best be seen as an act of art in life (Biehl 2013: 585).” In that sense Anthropology not only creates concepts, but also is engaged in the writing of a minor literature, a literature going against the hegemonic narratives of academia or society, that is at once a deterritorializing force contesting the capitalist axioms, with that creates a context where every writing becomes political in itself and finally always and already is a collaborative chain of different becomings (Deleuze and Guattari 2017 (1976): 27). “The ethnographic ethos of ambivalence, ambiguity and openness inflects our own subjectivities in the way we try to portray our main characters: as living people on the page, with their own mediated subjectivities, whose actions are contingent without being inevitable, caught in a constricted and intolerable universe of choices that remains the only source from which they can craft alternatives (Biehl and Locke 2010: 321).”

From the engagement with Lacan and thinking about the subject position anthropology is offered another insight. If Lacanian psychoanalysis is the discourse of the unconscious, it is at the same time a discourse upon the unconscious, a discourse that is always already beyond itself (Homer 2005, 12). The same holds true for a discourse on culture or maybe in an even broader sense the anthropological discourses. The necessarily ever-changing conception of what Anthropology is and the impossibility of immediately grasping the different concepts and Becomings we are faced with in the field and as ourselves is reflected in this exact circumstance. Our discourses on society and culture always take place upon our societies and cultures themselves. None of our informants, the actors in the field or even entities that we are ascribing non-human agency to is to be found within a closed system that would be subject to no change. The same is true for us anthropologists. It is this fundamental insight that anthropology needs to contend with and that helps us understand what is acknowledged by the insight that ethnographic work and the writings that emerge from our fieldwork experience begin in the

midst of social life, rhythms, affects, surprises and urgencies (Biehl, Locke 2017, x; Biehl 2013, 578).

This combination is the entrypoint for the anthropologist to contribute to and become with emancipatory struggles in the world. The combination of theory and practice, of philosophy and literature is the reason why Anthropology must engage with struggles today. It is capable of processes of translation, that no other science seems to be able to produce. Judith Butler writes: “Thus, the question for such movements [radical, emancipatory movements] will not be how to relate a particular claim to one that is universal, where the universal is figured as anterior to the particular, and where the presumption is that a logical incommensurability governs the relation between the two terms. It may be, rather, one of establishing practices of translation among competing notions of universality which, despite any apparent logical incompatibility, may nevertheless belong to an overlapping set of social and political aims “(Butler 2000, 167; [annotation M.E., C.S.]). Besides producing a radical minor literature, subjecting ourselves to an emancipatory Becoming in the field and elsewhere, this is another key task of today’s anthropology. It should aim at establishing practices of translation between radical movements, taking part in them, standing in solidarity toward and with them in order to produce a new world, a world in which many worlds fit.

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Last Access: 07.08.2018.