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An anthropology that takes position instead of pictures

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. 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 various dogmas of neoliberal capitalism. We want to show that what is able to put forth this potentially radical orientation of anthropology toward emancipatory struggles is an anthropology of the subject position.

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 is and needs to be more thoroughly oriented towards progressive societal change. That is why anthropology is needed today. 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). We want to show 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, we aim to show three distinct points:

First, we argue 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, representation by anthropologists cannot be the singular focus 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 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 2007 [1974], 20). Rejecting today's predicaments is not a call to dwell in cynicism and perplexity. Rather,

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> "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.

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" (ibid.). His is a "[…] permanent oscillation between 'falling short of' and 'going

beyond' philosophy" (ibid.) that states propositions as "conclusions without premises" (ibid.). If anthropology is to take Marx seriously, not only philosophy cannot be the same after Marx (ibid.), but anthropology can be neither. It is not about describing the world, but changing it, and as Anthropologists[1]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 Deleuze and Foucault 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, 3 in 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. Whilst understanding 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. Anthropology mirrors this predicament very clearly and is

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therefore more relevant than ever.

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We now aim 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 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 deleuzoguattarian 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. Anthropology is more relevant than ever because it is able to engage 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, the subject of 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 point of departure. This conception of the subject is being looked at to give way to a problematization of our concepts, rather than to actually make a universal truth claim about the subject position of every human being. Anna 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).

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 (2005 [1966]) 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.

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 clastrean 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.

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. Anthropology needs to contend with the insight that 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 mirror stage, 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 that anthropologists are looking at 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, 280 in Biehl and Locke 2010, 322-323). 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 (ibid. 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.

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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 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" (ibid, 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" (ibid.). 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" (ibid., 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 reascribe 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 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 (ibid., 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 (ibid., 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, 170 in Biehl and Locke 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). In Maeckelberghs understanding 'process' means the building of a different world and of the political organization

necessary to govern it at the same time (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).

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. 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 and Locke 2017, x; Biehl 2013, 578).

This combination is the entry point 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.

[1] Auf Wunsch der Autoren wurde die Groß-und Kleinschreibung nicht redaktionell überarbeitet.

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