The Symphony of Capitalism in Hadestown the Musical

Goluža, Martina

Sveučilište u Zadru
Universitas Studiorum
Jadertina | 1396 | 2002 |

Repository / Repozitorij:

University of Zadar Institutional Repository
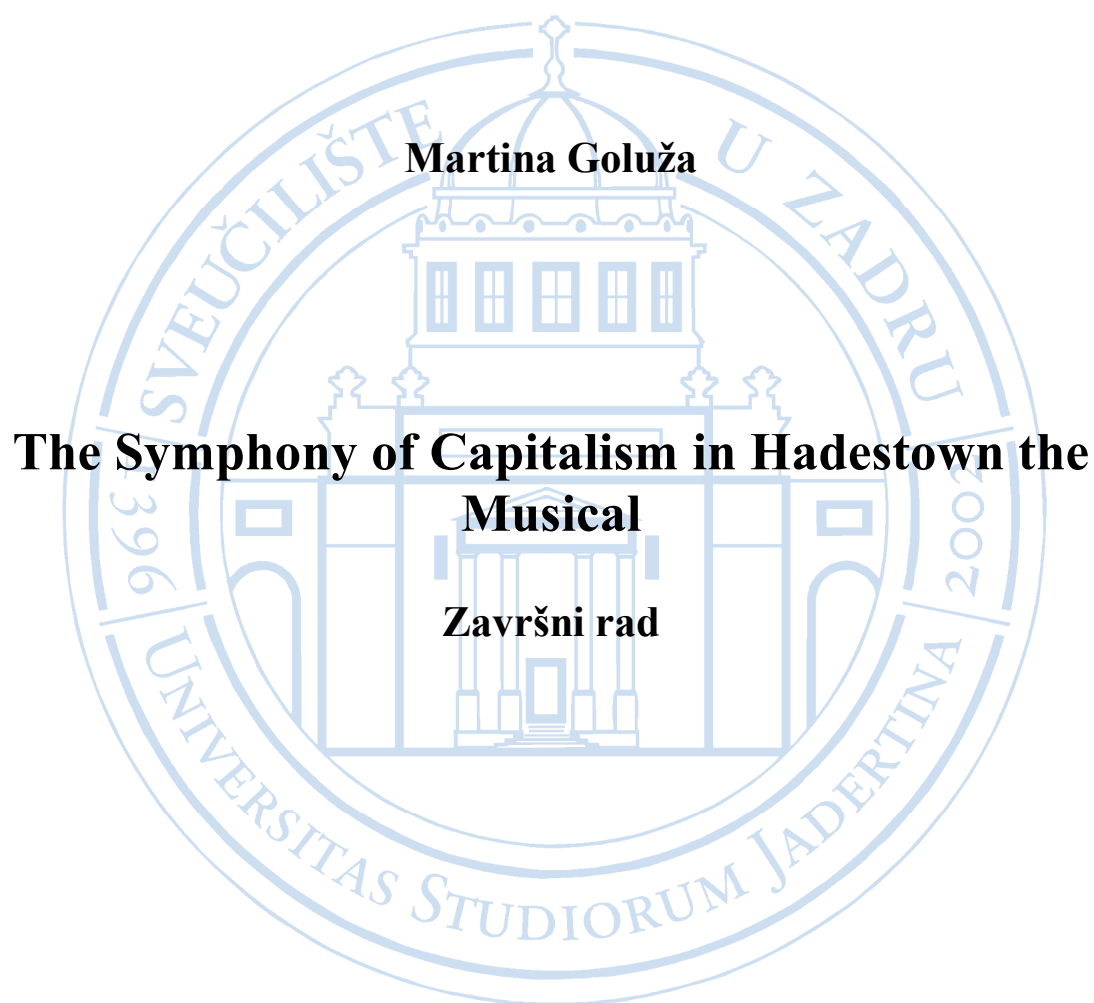
zir.nsk.hr

dabar
DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJI

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku
Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni

Martina Goluža

The Symphony of Capitalism in Hadestown the Musical

Završni rad

Zadar, 2021.

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku
Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni

The Symphony of Capitalism in Hadestown the Musical

Završni rad

Student/ica:

Martina Goluža

Mentor/ica:

Dr.sc.Zlatko Bukač

Zadar, 2021.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Martina Goluža,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **završni** rad pod naslovom **The Symphony of Capitalism in Hadestown the Musical** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

Izjavljujem da ni jedan dio ovoga rada nije iskorišten u kojem drugom radu pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj, obrazovnoj ili inoj ustanovi.

Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 22. rujan 2021.

Table of contents:

1. Introduction

The eight-time Tony award winner *Hadestown* is a modern day musical rendition of the old Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and the myth of Hades and Persephone with music and lyric composed by Anaïs Mitchell and directed Rachel Chavkin. Mitchell recreated the Underworld from the mythical realm of the dead into a factory town, Hadestown, presided over by Hades who is a wealthy, industrial mogul willing to fulfill the grand promise of a better future with merely a sign on the dotted line. *Hadestown's* Eurydice is a hungry young girl left to fend for herself as her lover Orpheus is too busy trying to fix what is wrong with the world. The magnanimous Hades offers her a chance for a better life and she accepts his offer. Devastated by Eurydice's departure, Orpheus follows her to Hadestown and attempts to save her but as it is in every version of the myth, he ultimately fails.

The musical made its Broadway debut in 2019, but its evolution has been long. It first started as community theatre project in Mitchel's hometown Vermont in 2006, became a concept album in 2010, went on a touring concert, it was performed off-Broadway at New York Theatre Workshop in 2016, enjoyed time on the West End Stage in London before gracing the Broadway stage in 2019. The lyrical and musical genius of Hadestown guaranteed its success but what amplified the buzz surrounding the newest Broadway hit were the social circumstances in which it was created. Mitchell's version of the King of the Underworld and a song, *Why We Build the Wall*, she wrote a decade ago now seemed to have prophesized the arrival of Donald Trump and his plan to build a wall almost too accurately.

Proudly displayed on the banners of the Walter Kerr Theatre is the musical's slogan "Come see how the world could be", yet for the most part the musical portrays the world exactly the way that it is: both people and nature subordinated to the

demands of capitalism. The aim of this paper is to put the musical in an Althusserian framework and examine how ideology functions in reproducing capitalism. The first part of the paper will look into the relationship between desire and capitalism and how it translates to the formulation of Hadestown. Secondly, the theory of ideology as devised by Louis Althusser including his notion of interpellation will be explored through the characters of Hades and Eurydice. Finally, the musical's focal song *Why We Build the Wall* will be analyzed in terms of the concept of "affective ideology" as proposed by Peters and Protevi (2017).

2. Way Down Hadestown

2.1. A Song Of Love

There have been many interpretations of the classic Greek myth of Hades and Persephone. In some variations Hades is the big bad villain who steals Persephone away and drags her to Underworld, in others the marriage between the god of the dead and the goddess of spring was ordained by Zeus; in some the two hate each other, in others, *Hadestown* included, the tale of Hades and Persephone is one of love: *"Hades was king of the Underworld / But he fell in love with a beautiful lady/ […]/He fell in love with Persephone / […] / The lady loved him and the kingdom they share"* (Mitchell, *Epic I*, 2019). Whichever version in question, the myth symbolically reflects the cycle of life and death, the comings and goings of the seasons, an equilibrium, a world in tune: " *Down below and up above/ In harmony and rhythm/ The Gods sang a song of love/ And the world sang it with them*" (Mitchell, *Epic I*, 2019).

It is an unlikely pairing that these two make. In Greek mythology, and its subsequent Roman appropriation, Hades is known as the god of the dead, lord of the

Underworld as well as all the riches found under the ground: *"King of silver/ King of gold/ And everything glittering/ Under the ground/ Hades is king/ Of oil and coal/ And the riches that flow/ Where those rivers are found/"* (Mitchell, *Epic II*, 2019). Persephone is known as the goddess of spring, and like her mother Demeter, a goddess of vegetation; following her marriage to Hades, the queen of the Underworld: *"Oh, queen of flowers/ Queen of fields/ Queen of the green and the growing Earth"* (Mitchell, *Epic I*, 2017). While the two represent a complete antithesis to one another, they are perfectly balanced, and as long as the two are aligned the world stays in tune.

But for the world to stay in tune, for the world to prosper, Persephone has to leave the Underworld for six month out of each year which Orpheus illustrates in *Epic I*: *"But without her above, not one flower would grow/ So King Hades agreed that for half of each year/ She would stay with him there in his world down below/ But the other half, she could walk in the sun/ And the sun, in turn, burned twice as bright/ Which is where the seasons come from/ And with them, the cycle/ Of the seed and the sickle/ And the lives of the people/ And the birds in their flight"* (Mitchell, *Epic II*, 2019). And although the musical (due to its limited format) does not provide further background to the love story between Hades and Persephone besides what little Orpheus provides in *Epic I* and *Epic III* the relationship was harmonious.

In this analysis, this harmonious relationship represents what would be an ideal socialist society. This type of union of Hades and Persephone would then represent the State, its base founded on a socialist economy where individuals depend on the State to provide and to equally distribute goods and services among people. The *song of love* then represents the superstructure and like Orpheus sings in *Livin' It Up On Top*: *"To the patroness of all of this, Persephone/ Who has finally returned to us with wine enough to share/ Asking nothing in return except that we should live/ And learn*

to live as brothers in this life/ And to trust she will provide/ And if no one takes too much, there will always be enough/ She will always fill our cups" (Mitchell, *Livin' It Up On Top*, 2019) promoting ideals of community, collectivism and equality. The underlying symbolism of their union then serves as an indicator of an equitable society, however Hermes says: "*That was long ago/Before we were on this road*" (Mitchell, *Road To Hell*, 2019). Because as it is with all Greek myths this one too abounds with tragedy. And despite the love between the two, in the case of *Hadestown* the absence does not in fact make the heart grow fonder: *"His black gold flows (Oooooh) / In the world down below (Oooooh) /And her dark clouds roll in the one up above/And that is the reason we're on this road/ And the seasons are wrong/And the wind is so strong/ That's why times are so hard/ It's because of the gods/ The gods have forgotten the song of their love"* (Mitchell, *Chant*, 2019).

When Orpheus is referring to the seasons being wrong and the wind being so strong, he is referring to a society divided by the capitalist machine, a society that is rife with inequality, poverty, hunger and climate disasters: "*Every year, it's getting worse/ Hadestown, hell on Earth! / Did you think I'd be impressed/ With this neon necropolis?/ Lover, what have you become?/ Coal cars and oil drums/ Warehouse walls and factory floors/ I don't know you anymore/ And in the meantime up above/ The harvest dies and people starve/ Oceans rise and overflow/ It ain't right and it ain't natural/*" (Mitchell, *Chant*, 2019). This capitalist machine is personified in Hades and his creation Hadestown.

2.2. The Music Of Machinery

Todd McGowan ("The Introduction") explains how subject in capitalism are sustained in a continual state of desire, always on the edge of attaining what they

desire but not quite which produces a satisfaction subjects do not recognize as such. He clarifies that for the capitalist subject, satisfaction itself is dissatisfying which allows them to, at the same time, enjoy themselves and believe that a new commodity will bring about complete satisfaction. His argument is that it is not that capitalism fails to satisfy but that capitalist subjects are not able "to recognize where their own satisfaction lies" (11). In this sense, capitalist subjects cling "to the image of their own dissatisfaction and thus to the promise, constantly made explicit in capitalist society, of a way to escape this dissatisfaction through either the accumulation of capital or the acquisition of the commodity" (11). This promise of a better future is considered by McGowan ("The Introduction") as the foundation of capitalist ideology: "the future embodies a type of satisfaction foreclosed to the present and dependent on one's investment in the capitalist system" (12).

To further McGowan's argument, Andrea Hurst (2020) invokes Sigmund Freud and his account of the human psyche. As she explains, according to Freud the human psyche is "configured as lacking and desiring due to the necessary restrictions socialization places on libidinal drives" (4), the restrictions creating "an alienating sense of loss which is unsatisfying and perpetuates the desire to refill the void" (4), and while Freud assumes that desire might be appeased to some extent, complete satisfaction is elusive and therefore desire never stops. It is on this basis that Hurst argues that "overt ideology of capitalism" operates on "lack", a "feared state of displeasure, unhappiness or dissatisfaction" that can only be "remedied by the presence of something that produces the contrasting" (4). She then relates this argument to the promise McGowan cites as the "fundamental gesture of capitalism" (McGowan, "The Introduction", 11) explaining that "dissatisfaction in the present goes hand in hand with the promise of a better future" (Hurst, 2020, 4). And in line

with capitalist ideology, Andrea Hurst (2020) points to desire as what stands between present dissatisfaction and the "more complete satisfaction" (5) promised in the future. She also elaborates on the fact that characteristic for capitalist ideology is that dissatisfaction is encouraged in order to direct desire towards *more* and towards accumulating capital for the future. This excessive accumulation, explains Hurst is the final assumption of capitalist ideology – the more you accumulate the less dissatisfied you will be. The tragedy however is that capitalism banks on the inevitable disappointment of the attainment of the desired object which is not at all the object desired. Hurst clarifies this: "Since achieved objects become mere ordinary objects of fleeting enjoyment, they disappoint desire, leading us to renew the pursuit. Since every commodity will fail in this way, capitalism sustains its subjects in a constant state of desire" (5).

Putting this in the context of the musical, Persephone's six months long absence produces a lack "a feared state of displeasure, unhappiness or dissatisfaction" (Hurst, 2020) in Hades which he remedies by refashioning the cold and dark Underworld into hot and bright Hadestown that could resemble the world up above that Persephone leaves him for. Reshaping Hadestown into the image of the upper world is essentially Hades' desire for Persephone materialized: "*Lover, you were gone so long/ Lover, I was lonesome/ So I built a foundry/ In the ground beneath your feet/ Here, I fashioned things of steel/ Oil drums and automobiles/ Then I kept that furnace fed/ With the fossils of the dead/ Lover, when you feel that fire/ Think of it as my desire/ Think of it as my desire for you!*" (Mitchell, *Chant*, 2019). But no matter how bright or how hot Hadestown becomes it does not stop Persephone from leaving prompting an even profounder dissatisfaction in Hades: "*His loneliness moves in him crude and black/ He thinks of his wife in the arms of the sun/ And jealousy fuels him and feeds him and fills*

him/ With doubt that she'll never come/ Dread that she'll never come/ Doubt that his lover/ Will ever come back" (Mitchell, *Epic II*, 2019) causing him to accumulate more and more: "*And Hades is King of the scythe and the sword/ He covers the world in the color of rust/ He scrapes the sky and scars the earth/ And he comes down heavy and hard on us*" (Mitchell, *Epic I*, 2017).

But that is only half of the story. Both Hurst and McGowan agree that capitalist ideology only partly explains capitalism's staying power. What makes the capitalist system so resilient is that it does provide real satisfaction, the explanation which can be found in the later works of Freud. Hurst (2020) summarizes: "what we find satisfying is the invigorating disturbance to our psychic equilibrium created by the absence of what we desire" (6). The satisfaction lies in "the anticipation and thrill of the chase" (6) of acquiring the object, being happy that the object ultimately disappoints us allowing us to continue to desire which in turn ensures that the satisfaction of the chase continues to be available and accumulation continues. As noted in McGowan ("The Conclusion"): "While the accumulating subject [consciously] aims at obtaining the ultimate satisfaction in the future, this subject [unconsciously] satisfies itself in the present through the sacrifices that it makes to obtain the object that it seeks" (241). This translates to the musical in the sense that Hades "the accumulating subject" is consciously building Hadestown so that he can eventually capture Persephone and permanently bring her back to the Underworld: "*Lover, everything I do/ I do it for the love of you*" (Mitchell, *Chant*, 2019) but he is also dependent on her leaving because it provides him with the opportunity to keep accumulating wealth in Hadestown. But what capitalism does is it represses this form of satisfaction and it is precisely what makes it such a resilient system – it derives

success from "privileging accumulation at a conscious level" while obscuring the fact that "we are attached to loss rather than presence" (Hurst, 2020).

Hence, when Orpheus sings that "*the gods have forgotten the song of their love*" (Mitchell, *Chant*, 2019) is to signify Hades' subjection into the capitalist ideology: "*Now I sing a different song/ One I can depend upon/ A simple tune, a steady beat/ The music of machinery/ You hear that heavy metal sound?/ The symphony of Hadestown*"(Mitchell, *Chant (Reprise)*, 2019).

3. The King of The Mine

3.1. The Almighty Mr. Hades

The seminal essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971) written by Louis Althusser begins by recounting Karl Marx and his argument that no social formation would last long if it did not "reproduce the conditions of production at the same time it produces, and in order to be able to produce" (2). In order to do so it must reproduce the forces of production and the relations of production. Productive forces denominate the means of labor like the machinery, the tools, the factories, and the relations of production refer to social relationships individuals enter to produce and reproduce their means of life. The forces of production in *Hadestown* are represented in "*In the factory/ And the warehouse/ […]/ In the mine/ The mill/ And the machinery*" (Mitchell, *Way Down Hadestown (Reprise),* 2019), and the relations of productions are reflected in the deals Hades makes with souls for a job in Hadestown: "*Miners of mines, diggers of graves/ They bowed down to Hades who gave them work*" (Mitchell, *Epic II*, 2017). And because Hades owns the forces of production: "*That everything and everyone in Hadestown I own*" (Mitchel, *Papers ("You're not from around here*

son) [Intro], 2019) the mode of production in Hadestown is the capitalist mode of production.

In Marxist theory, the State is responsible for reproducing the conditions of production and according to Althusser (1971), the State functions through two sets of apparatuses: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). The Repressive State Apparatus in Hadestown is embodied in Hades: "*Mr. Hades is a mean old boss/ With a silver whistle and a golden scale/ An eye for and eye/[...]/ To the king on the chromium throne/ [...] /To the bottom of a Sing Sing cell*" (Mitchell, *Way Down Hadestown*, 2019). Within the RSA the notions of boss, king and chromium throne represent the government and the administration; the silver whistle embodies the army and the police while the golden scale stands for the court; the refrain "eye for and eye" reminiscent of the Hammurabi's code of laws represents the legal systems; the Sing Sing cell stands for the prison. What distinguishes the RSA from the ISAs is that it functions by violence and "consists essentially in securing by force (physical or otherwise) the political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production which are in the last resort relations of exploitation. Not only does the State apparatus contribute generously to its own reproduction […], but also and above all, the State apparatus secures by repression (from the most brutal physical force, via mere administrative commands and interdictions, to open and tacit censorship) the political conditions for the action of the Ideological State Apparatuses" (Althusser, 1971, 19-20).

On the other hand, the Ideological State Apparatuses include institutions such as religious, educational, political, legal or cultural apparatuses which function primarily by ideology. As there is a plurality of ISAs they are unified "by the ruling ideology, the ideology of the ruling class" (19) and all ISAs contribute to reproducing capitalist

relations of production, but each ISA has a proper way of doing so: "The political apparatus by subjecting individuals to the political State ideology, the 'indirect' (parliamentary) or 'direct' (plebiscitary or fascist) 'democratic' ideology. The communications apparatus by cramming every 'citizen' with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc" (23). In the case of *Hadestown*, this ruling ideology is the capitalist ideology which is also personified in Hades who offers the promise of a better future which, to cite McGowan ("The Introduction") once again, "functions as the basis for capitalist ideology" and is "the fundamental gesture of capitalism" (11). In a world where it is "*Hard and getting harder all the time/ […] / Dark and getting darker all the time*" (Mitchell, *Wedding Song*, 2019), where "*There is no food left to find*" and "*It's hard enough to feed yourself*" (Mitchell, *Chant*, 2019), there is wealth in Hadestown "*Every little penny in the wishing well/Every little nickel on the drum/ On the drum!/ All them shiny little heads and tails/ Where do you think they come from?/ They come from/ Way down Hadestown*" (Mitchell, *Way Down Hadestown*, 2019) and "*It's there you'll find the king of the mine/ Almighty Mr. Hades*" (Mitchell, *Road To Hell*, 2019) who can offer you "*A ticket to the underworld*" (Mitchell, *When the Chips are Down ("Songbird vs. rattlesnake") [Intro]*, 2019).

To further his thesis on how exactly ISAs function by ideology Althusser (1971) first presents his two theses. The first thesis is: "Ideology represents the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence" that is to say that through ideology "men represent their real conditions of existence to themselves in an imaginary form" (31), but as per his explanation, it is not the real conditions of existence that are represented but the relation to those conditions. In simple words, the relations of capitalist production are alienating and in order to cope with the reality of

those conditions, people will represent their conditions as better than they truly are; these representations then alienate them further from the real conditions. In the context of the musical, the real conditions of existence are horrible and devastating; "*Everybody hungry/ Everybody tired/ Everybody slaves by the sweat of his brow/The wage is nothing and the work is hard/ It's a graveyard in Hadestown*" (Mitchell, *Way Down Hadestown*, 2019), but at least in Hadestown there *is* work and that is better than not having anything at all.

"Ideology has a material existence" is Althusser's second thesis. As he elaborates, representations, beliefs and ideas that make up ideology have a material existence rather than a spiritual one. This materiality exists in the rituals of the ideological apparatus and in the subject. The individual adopts a practical attitude and engages in regular rituals or practices established by ideology: "his belief is material in that his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject". This second thesis is reflected in the digging, dredging and dragging of the workers, their work is the material practice of Hades' capitalist ideology "*Miners of mines, diggers of graves/ They bowed down to Hades who gave them work// […]/Digging and dredging and dragging the depths//[…]/ And a million feet that fell in line/ That stepped in time with Hades' step/ And a million minds that were just one mind*" (Mitchell, *Epic II*, 2017).

3.2. Hey, Little Songbird

The core concept of Althusser's essay is the concept of interpellation. It is through interpellation that ideology functions. Interpellation is a process via which ideology "hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects" (40). Ideology as a concept is thus dependent on the category of the subject, as Castro (2017) summarizes

"for ideology to flourish, there must be individuals present for it to work upon […] in the same way women give ideology life, ideology too offers women life by providing an identity an transforming woman into subject" (112). But this transformation from an individual into a concrete subject does not merely happen through hailing, but through the way an individual responds to the call of the apparatus. In *Hadestown*, the scene of interpellation is best seen in the interaction between Hades and Eurydice.

"*Hey, little songbird, give me a song*" (Mitchell, *Hey, Little Songbird*, 2019) sang the mighty Mr. Hades and Eurydice answered: "*Strange is the call of this strange man/ I wanna fly down and feed at his hand*" (Mitchell, *Hey Little Songbird*, 2019). Per Althusser's argument, through the act of recognizing that Hades was calling her, that it was she who Hades was addressing as the little songbird and not anybody else, she became a subject. But for Althusser (1971), Eurydice had already been a subject prior to Hades addressing her, because for him "individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subject […] *individuals are always-already subjects*". What Althusser (2014) contends with this is that even before individuals are born they are subjects because they are designated as such by the particular familial ideology they are born into. Consequently then when a political ideology begins to interpellate an individual, that individual had already been interpellated as a subject, religious, familial, legal, etc.

Hades had no previous knowledge of Eurydice, and in the act of naming Eurydice as "little songbird", she recognized it as her 'name' and answered his call, she was interpellated and then transformed from an individual into a subject; her recognizing that she is "the little songbird" shows that she was always-already a subject. In calling Eurydice by her 'name', Hades has recognized that Eurydice is an already interpellated subject. Here Hades functions as what Althusser (1971) calls "a

Unique, Absolute, *Other Subject*" (43-44). This "*absolute Subject*", according to Castro's (2017) account, "is what helps us to grapple with the question of what prefaces individuals within society […] the *absolute Subject* is how Althusser seeks to explain an interpellative source […] the Subject is thus 'doubly speculary' since the Subject *subjects the subjects* but also gives them their subjective identity" (119). As Althusser (1971) states, it is in the Subject, in which subjects envisage their own image, the absolute guarantee that everything will be all right if subjects recognize that they are subjects and act accordingly. It has been established throughout this paper that the world of *Hadestown* is out of tune, that the times are hard and only getting harder and no one feels the gravity of such a world more than the hungry young girl herself, Eurydice: "*Eurydice was a hungry young girl/ A runaway from everywhere she'd ever been/ She was no stranger to the world/ No stranger to the wind*" (Mitchell, *Any Way The Wind Blows*, 2019). So when Hades offers her a place in Hadestown: ""*Hey, little songbird, you've got something fine/ You'd shine like a diamond down in the mine/ And the choice is yours if you're willing to choose/ Seeing as you've got nothing to lose/ And I could use a canary*" (Mitchell, *Hey, Little Songbird*, 2019) she recognizes that Hades really is Hades, that she really is the little songbird, the canary and if she goes with Hades she will get what she wants: "*I want a nice, soft place to land/I wanna lie down forever*" (Mitchell, *Hey, Little Songbird*, 2019). Therefore Eurydice willingly chooses to follow Hades into Hadestown: "*She signed the deal herself*" (Mitchell, *Papers ("You're not from around here, son...") [Intro]*, 2019) and as such was "*interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection*" (Althusser, 1971).

Additionally, Castro (2017.) points that in regards to Althusser, a recognition and a misrecognition occur when an ideology interpellates individuals into subjects. In answering and accepting the hailing, an individual recognizes himself "as the subject of the call as well as a consciousness of his own consciousness" (120). It is in the full acceptance of the hailing that the subjects allow to be identified by an ideology which in turn allows subjects to recognize and know who they are. However, Castro states that "'knowing' though is only an illusion" as ideology aims to construct "a real version of reality, but in doing so, is only able to create a false sense of reality". Quoting Resch (1992), Castro relates that since ideology yields to its material conditions, ideological recognition is rooted in the real, nevertheless this relation to the real appears as an imaginary identification and is concurrently a misrecognition; "ideology only 'knows' the real in order to 'represent' it in an order appropriate to its practical goals" (Resch, 1992, as qtd. in Castro, 2017, 121). Althusser (1971) therefore concludes that the reality in question in this mechanism of recognition, subjection and guarantee is a misrecognized reality in form of recognition which is then misrecognition which is "indeed, in the last resort, the reproduction of the relations of production and of the relations deriving from them".

For John D. Cash (1989) ideologies are laden with emotion and "emotion informs, shapes, and animates them" (704). Cash notices how, even in consensual and stable societies such as Australia, everyday politics are realized through "an ideological idiom of fear, loathing, hope, despair, and desire" (704). Nevertheless, he comes to the realization that in all theories of ideology this affective dimension is disregarded. Similarly to Cash, Peters and Protevi (2017) believe that for too long ideology has been considered as a belief-centered notion only and suggest the term affective ideology in which ideology includes the affective. For them, understanding

the role of emotions in ideology is understanding that emotions are not merely individual, they are relational; emotions are "an inter-bodily force that influences subjects in the social fields they inhabit" (5). Their understanding of emotions is similar to the one of Sara Ahmed (2004): "emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments" (119). For Peters and Protevi, ideology and affect are on equal footing. As Zembylas ("Affective ideology") elaborates, Peters and Protevi's affective ideology expands the notion of ideology as an explanation for "non-coerced social reproduction, that is, how ideals and visions about society are socially and politically (re)produced" (4) to include affective dimensions as central to ideology because "affective factors constitute direct investments and attunement with ideals and visions about society" (4). What makes the concept of affective ideology distinctive is, highlights Zembylas, its uniqueness in joining the cognitive and affective elements of a set of ideals and showing how individual and collective bodies assimilate through affective attunements with ideologies: "What this understanding acknowledges is the affective power of political ideology over people, that is, how people come to invest emotionally in certain ideas" (4). What then needs to be added to Althusser's understanding of ideology, his concepts of the Ideological State Apparatuses and interpellation is that they too function through affective forces.

4. Why We Build the Wall

The musical's central song *Why We Build the Wall* is an old song. It was the first song Anaïs Mitchell wrote for *Hadestown* and it has stayed the same throughout the musical's long journey to the Broadway stage. Just before the 2016 election, in an article for *Huffpost*, Mitchell herself wrote: "'Wall' is an old song; I never expected it

to feel new again. And then Donald Trump came along. It wasn't just that Trump made the building of 'the Wall' central to his initial platform, it was the call-and-response style chants at his rallies". With the emergence of Donald Trump on the US political scene and the consequent surge of right-wing populism, the song acquired a whole new meaning. For *Vox,* Rachel Chavkin, the musical's director, recalls how the song took on a satirical edge when Trump moved towards becoming a presumptive nominee: "But he was still to most of our audiences a joke. […]And by the time we came to Broadway [in 2019], you could feel people's blood in the theater run cold, because we'd moved beyond satire". Because the song had nothing to do with Trump or his plan to build a wall on the US/Mexico border. In fact, the song was written a full decade before the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States. Yet it is eerie how a song Mitchell wrote in 2006 prophesied not just Trump's plan to build a wall on the US/Mexico border, but how he managed to capture masses and mobilize them against perceived enemies.

Although Mitchell did not have Donald Trump in mind when constructing her version of Hades, there is no denying that Hades is a Trumpian figure. Much like Trump, Hades is an embodiment of right-wing populism. Zembylas ("The Affective Modes") draws on the work of Salmela and von Scheve (2017) in identifying two mechanisms driving emotional support for right-wing populism. The first mechanism is tied to resentment. In Salmela and von Scheve's (2017) definition, ressentiment occurs when negative emotions, such as fear and insecurity, through shame, are transformed into anger and hatred towards others, immigrants, the unemployed, refugees, who are perceived as enemies. The second mechanism involves emotional distancing from social identities inflicting negative emotions and encourages "seeking meaning and self-esteem from aspects of identity perceived to be stable and to some

extent exclusive, such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, language and traditional gender roles" (567). Trump's "angry populism" (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2018, as qtd. in Zembylas, "The Affective Modes", 156) demonstrates the interplay of these two mechanisms in right-wing populism, driving emotional support through the intentional expression of anger: "Trump's supporters express anger emerging from their perceived long-standing exclusion from privilege, whether economic, social, or cultural" (156). In creating affective spaces for expressing resentment and anger, Trump is playing to "peoples fantasies" and offering them "a bellicose fantasy of return and renewal" (Anderson, 2017). At his rallies, Trump established a distinct "affective style", which Anderson (2017) defines as "an orientation to self and world that will repeat across, link, and blur the speech and bodily acts, images, stories, and pseudo-events that make up a campaign", that allowed his supporters to express and enjoy their resentment and anger against 'others'. Invoking Ahmed's argument that right-wing nationalists claim their actions to be out of love, Anderson asserts that "Trump valorized and legitimized anger, and by implication violence, as born from and standing in for love". In agreement with Peters and Protevi (2017), Zembylas ("The Affective Modes") emphasizes that the circulation of emotions in right-wing populism aims at forming affective spaces as avenues of empowerment which return self-confidence and happiness to the supporters of a populist leader producing what Hochschild (2016) names "collective effervescence [...] a state of emotional excitation felt by those who join with others they take to be fellow members of a moral or biological tribe. They gather to affirm their unity and, united, they feel secure and respected" (Hochschild, 2016, 225). Zembylas ("The Affective Modes") connects this to Brian Massumi and his notion of power primarily being affective as it works through negative emotions, resentment and anger, but through positive emotions, hope

and love, as well. It is through framing affect positively that right-wing populism attracts people who do not think to themselves as resentful and hateful.

In order to illustrate how affective ideology such as right-wing populism works in *Hadestown*, the song *Why We Build the Wall* provided here in full will be analyzed.

[HADES]

Why do we build the wall
My children, my children?
Why do we build the wall?

[COMPANY]

Why do we build the wall?
We build the wall to keep us free
That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free

[HADES]

How does the wall keep us free
My children, my children?
How does the wall keep us free?

[COMPANY]

How does the wall keep us free?
The wall keeps out the enemy
And we build the wall to keep us free
That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free

[HADES]

Who do we call the enemy
My children, my children?
Who do we call the enemy?

[COMPANY]

Who do we call the enemy?
The enemy is poverty
And the wall keeps out the enemy
And we build the wall to keep us free
That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free

[HADES]

Because we have and they have not
My children, my children
Because they want what we have got

[COMPANY]

Because we have and they have not
Because they want what we have got
The enemy is poverty
And the wall keeps out the enemy
And we build the wall to keep us free
That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free

[HADES]

What do we have that they should want
My children, my children?
What do we have that they should want?

[COMPANY and EURYDICE]

What do we have that they should want?
We have a wall to work upon
We have work and they have none

[HADES]

And our work is never done
My children, my children!
And the war is never won!

[HADES AND COMPANY]

The enemy is poverty
And the wall keeps out the enemy
And we build the wall to keep us free
That's why we build the wall
We build the wall to keep us free
We build the wall to keep us free

Why We Build the Wall is the final song in Act I of *Hadestown*. Hades enters the stage in a tailored three-piece pinstriped suit and steps before a microphone, a leader arriving at his rally. Persephone is beside him, the workers of Hadestown arranged around the stage facing the audience who plays the role of a passive spectator forced to watch a political demonstration they have no power to stop (Catenaccio, 2019). Hades, who is played by the masterful Patrick Page, sings out, asking in a low voice: "*Why do we build the wall/My children, my children/ Why do we build the wall?"* and the workers chorus unanimously answers: "*We build the wall to keep us free*", a refrain that ingrains a promise and hope for a better future, one in which they are free from the worries of not having enough. The call-and-response chant style of the song refashions the song into a rally; the workers of Hadestown are brought together around Hades who "triggers the desires and emotions of his supporters" into a scene of "collective effervescence" (Hochschild, 2016) in which the affective unity provides the workers with "new strength and confidence that they could finally influence politics and that finally something will markedly change in their live. Life isn't a bad destiny any more"(Peters and Protevi, 2017, 12). This unity is formed in opposition to an enemy which in the musical is gathered under the signifier 'poverty' but can come to mean immigrants, foreigners, refugees, the unemployed, etc. In Peters and Protevi's (2017) argument, collectivities are produced through affective ideologies and, in line with Ahmed's (2004) affective economies, a circulation of emotions. Ahmed (2004) argues that love and hate have a crucial role in delineating the body of the nation and the bodies of individual subjects. In this case, the subject is depicted as being threatened by imagined others who do not just threaten with taking something from the subject, like wealth, jobs, security, but threaten to take its place. The presence of others here is seen as a threat to the object of love. The negative attachment of hate

towards others is reformulated as a positive attachment of love for the subjects brought together through the repetitions of a shared signifier. Ahmed's argument is that: "Hate is economic; it circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement. In such affective economies, emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments. […] emotions work by sticking figures together" (119). That is why the subject in *Why Do We Build the Wall* is a "we", the workers of Hadestown; their negative attachment towards the "enemy", these imagined others who have come to steal, is turned into a positive attachment for the subjects rallied around Hades and Hadestown. As Zembylas ("The Affective Modes") explains, Peters and Protevi's (2017) notion of affective ideology brings together "the affective investments that hold a group together with the affective attachment social agents experience toward a certain ideological vision of the ideal society" (159) which in the musical is Hades' wall. Hades and the workers are attuned through affective investments and attachments as the workers "desire what he promises to deliver" (159): freedom in Hadestown. *Why We Build the Wall* is also the instance which reflects Althusser's notion of interpellation in which individuals are constituted as subjects (although they are always-already subjects) and in recognizing themselves to be subjects freely choose to submit to the Subject who offers a guarantee that everything will be alright if they act accordingly. Hades (the Subject) calls on his children, the workers of Hadestown who answer him and are thus constituted as subjects. In calling them children and the workers recognizing that they are the children Hades is referring to, recognize themselves as subjects. Furthermore, Althusser proposed his two premises about ideology: first, "ideology represents the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser,

1971, 30) and second, that "ideology has a material existence" (33). The first one is reflected in the that in Hadestown the real conditions are: "*Everybody hungry/Everybody tired/ Everybody slaves by the sweat of his brow/The wage is nothing and the work is hard/ It's a graveyard in Hadestown*" (Mitchell, *Way Down Hadestown*, 2019), but as the workers say: "*We have a wall to work upon/ We have work and they have none*" (Mitchell, *Why We Build the Wall*, 2019). The second thesis is quite literal, the workers of Hadestown are in fact building a wall: "*The River Styx is a river of stones/ And Hades lays them high and thick/ With a million hands that are not his own/ With a million hands, he builds a wall*" (Mitchell, *Epic II*, 2019). Finally, the way the song is structured reflects the act of building: Hades' questions and the workers' answers here function as bricks, and which each new question and each new answer, the song effectively builds a wall.

The question is why are Hades and his wall, therefore Trump and his, such an appealing idea? What is it about the ideas Hades propagates that manage to invite such affective investments? As McGowan ("The Particularity") explains, capitalism immerses subjects into their own particular interests so that they unconsciously invest in the capitalist universal which is "the demand for the incessant accumulation of capital" (475). But subjects thrust into an isolated particularity without a clear reference to universality are subjects without a somewhat consistent sense of identity, just empty particulars intent on accumulating. That is why subjects "seek an identity to give their subjectivity some content, and they often find it in religious, ethnic, or nationalist projects […] projects of identity politics arise in order to provide what capitalist subjectivity lacks" (474;490). Through identity projects, particular identities obtain a specific content and because the focus is on the particular identity, the capitalist universal is not threatened. Identity projects thus benefit capitalism by

supplying the empty subjects with a missing identity. McGowan ("The Particularity") emphasizes that if capitalism did not provide some sort of an identity project, capitalist subjects would not tolerate the inequalities produced by the capitalist system: "Identity enables them to embrace the capitalist system in spite of their position within it" (490). Capitalist subjects, who do not have unconstrained accumulation as an option, are attached to their nation, their ethnic identity and their religion and with enthusiasm accept the prejudices that secure those identities: "The turn to identity gives capitalist subjects something when they otherwise have nothing but an empty form" (491). Hades, likewise Trump, by supplementing the missing content of the denuded particularity of the capitalist subject, make subjectivity bearable. Otherwise, the bland particularity of capitalist subjectivity would have difficulties maintaining the "enthusiasm of adherents among the working class" (491). As McGowan ("The Particularity") simply puts it: "The appeal to identity is capitalist subjectivity's secret sauce".

5. **Conclusion**

This paper aimed to analyze *Hadestown* the musical and in terms of Althusserian notions of ideology and interpellation as well as expand them to include the affective dimension often overlooked in theories of ideology. The first part of the paper started by examining the role of desire within capitalist ideology and showed that capitalism operates on 'lack' that it then aims to fulfill through accumulation. What followed was an exploration of Louis Althusser's theory of ideology in the context of the show. With a focus on the character of Hades, the paper explored the interplay between the Repressive and Ideological State Apparatus responsible for reproducing the conditions of production. Both are embodied in Hades, although they differ in function: the RSA functions by violence and ISAs function by ideology. In order to delve into Althusser's theses on ideology along with his concept of interpellation, the interactions between Hades and Eurydice were examined. Ideology operates through interpellation, a process in which individuals are established as concrete subjects; in answering Hades' hail Eurydice was interpellated as a subject, recognized herself as a subject and recognized that if she subjects to Hades and behaves accordingly she will receive a guarantee that everything will turn out well. The remainder of the paper was dedicated to the analysis of the song *Why We Build the Wall* according to the notion of 'affective ideology' to demonstrate how affective attachments constitute direct attunement with visions and ideals about society. Drawing a parallel between Donald Trump and Hades, *Why We Build the Wall* was put in the context of right-wing populism and demonstrated how though a circulation of both positive and negative emotions people became emotionally invested and attached to particular ideological visions of society.

6. **Works Cited**

1. Ahmed, Sara. "Affective economies." *Social text* 22.2 (2004): 117-139.

2. Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation) (1971).

3. Althusser, Louis. *On the reproduction of capitalism: Ideology and ideological state apparatuses*. Verso Trade, 2014.

4. Anderson, Ben. "We will win again. We will win a lot": The affective styles of Donald Trump." *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space* (2017) www.societyandspace.org/articles/we-will-win-again-we-will-win-a-lot-the-affective-styles-of-donald-trump.

5. Cash, John D. "Ideology and Affect: The Case of Northern Ireland." *Political Psychology*, vol. 10, no. 4, [International Society of Political Psychology, Wiley], 1989, pp. 703–24, https://doi.org/10.2307/3791334.

6. Castro, Jenna M. Lo. *"Can You Hail Me Now: Brand, Identity, and Althusserian Ideological Interpellation*. Diss. Duquesne University (2017)

7. Catenaccio, Claire. "'Why We Build The Wall': Theatrical Space in Hadestown." Didaskalia 15.13 - Catenaccio On, (2019), www.didaskalia.net/issues/15/13/.

8. Hurst, Andrea. "Capitalism and the Banality of Desire." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 51.4 (2020): 288-304.

9. Hochschild, Arlie Russell. "Strangers in Their Own Land: A Journey to the Heart of Our Political Divide." New York (2016).

10. McGowan, Todd. "Introduction: After Injustice and Repression." *Capitalism and Desire*. Columbia University Press, (2017):1-18.

11. McGowan, Todd. "Conclusion: Enjoy, Don't Accumulate." Capitalism and Desire. Columbia University Press, 2017. 239-244.

12. McGowan, Todd. "The Particularity of the Capitalist Universal." *Continental Thought and Theory*, (2017): 473-494.

13. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Road to Hell." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Andre-de-shields-and-hadestown-original-broadway-company-road-to-hell-lyrics.

14. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Any Way the Wind Blows." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Eva-noblezada-jewelle-blackman-yvette-gonzales-nacer-and-kay-trinidad-any-way-the-wind-blows-lyrics.

15. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Wedding Song." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Reeve-carney-eva-noblezada-afra-hines-timothy-hughes-john-krause-ahmad-simmons-and-kimberly-marable-wedding-song-lyrics.

16. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Epic I." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Reeve-carney-and-andre-de-shields-epic-i-lyrics.

17. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Livin' It Up On Top." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Amber-gray-andre-de-shields-reeve-carney-and-hadestown-original-broadway-company-livin-it-up-on-top-lyrics.

18. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Way Down Hadestown." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Hadestown-original-broadway-company-way-down-hadestown-lyrics.

19. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Epic II." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Reeve-carney-epic-ii-lyrics.

20. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Chant." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Hadestown-original-broadway-company-chant-lyrics.

21. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Hey, Little Songbird." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Patrick-page-and-eva-noblezada-hey-little-songbird-lyrics.

22. Mitchell, Anaïs. "When the Chips Are Down ("Songbird vs. rattlesnake") [Intro]." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Andre-de-shields-when-the-chips-are-down-songbird-vs-rattlesnake-intro-lyrics.

23. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Why We Build the Wall." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Patrick-page-and-hadestown-original-broadway-company-why-we-build-the-wall-lyrics.

24. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Papers (You're not from around here son…) [Intro]." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Patrick-page-amber-gray-andre-de-shields-eva-noblezada-and-reeve-carney-papers-youre-not-from-around-here-son-intro-lyrics.

25. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Chant (Reprise)." Hadestown, Original Broadway Cast Recording, 2019, https://genius.com/Hadestown-original-broadway-company-chant-reprise-lyrics.

26. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Epic I (Non-Album Track)." Hadestown: The Myth. The Musical., Live Original Cast Recording, 2017, https://genius.com/Original-cast-of-hadestown-epic-i-non-album-track-annotated.

27. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Way Down Hadestown" Hadestown: The Myth. The Musical., Live Original Cast Recording, 2017, https://genius.com/Original-cast-of-hadestown-way-down-hadestown-lyrics.

28. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Epic II." Hadestown: The Myth. The Musical., Live Original Cast Recording, 2017, https://genius.com/Original-cast-of-hadestown-epic-ii-lyrics.

29. Mitchell, Anaïs. "Why We Build the Wall." HuffPost, HuffPost, 4 Nov. 2016, www.huffpost.com/entry/why-we-build-the-wall_b_581cbcb7e4b044f827a78c0a.

30. Peters, Christian Helge, and John Protevi. "Affective ideology and Trump's popularity." Unpublished paper. Retrieved from http://www.protevi.com/john/TrumpAffect.pdf (2017).

31. Salmela, Mikko, and Christian Von Scheve. "Emotional roots of right-wing political populism." Social Science Information 56.4 (2017): 567-595.

32. VanDerWerff, Emily. "Culture in the 2010s Was Obsessed with Finding Community - and Building Walls." Vox, Vox, 31 Dec. 2019, www.vox.com/culture/2019/12/31/21003716/best-culture-2010s-look-back-hadestown-midsommar-twin-peaks-community-politics

33. Zembylas, Michalinos. "Affective Ideology and Education Policy: Implications for Critical Policy Research and Practice." *Journal of Education Policy* (2020): 1-16.

34. Zembylas, Michalinos. "The Affective Modes of Right-Wing Populism: Trump Pedagogy and Lessons for Democratic Education." *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 39.2 (2020): 151-166.

7. **The Symphony of Capitalism in Hadestown the Musical: Summary and Key words**

The main aim of this paper was to put Hadestown the musical in the framework of Althusser's theory of ideology and analyze the role of ideology in the reproduction of capitalism. By way of, primarily, the characters of Hades and Eurydice, the paper examined the correlation of desire and capitalism, the function of the Repressive and Ideological State Apparatus within ideology including the two theses on ideology proposed by Althusser, as well as the process of subject interpellation into ideology. Through a correlation between Hades and Donald Trump, right-wing populism was used as an example for outlining how ideology works affectively through a circulation of emotions creating affective attachments and investments to specific ideals and visions of society.

Key words: Hadestown, capitalism, ideology, Althusser, interpellation, Donald Trump, right-wing populism, affective ideology

8. Simfonija Kapitalizma u Mjuziklu Hadestown: Sažetak i ključne riječi

Glavni cilj ovog rada bio je staviti mjuzikl Hadestown u okvir Althusserove teorije ideologije i analizirati ulogu ideologije u reprodukciji kapitalizma. Pomoću, prvenstveno, likova Hada i Euridike, rad je ispitivao povezanost želje i kapitalizma, funkciju represivnog i ideološkog državnog aparata unutar ideologije, uključujući dvije teze o ideologiji koje je predložio Althusser, kao i proces interpelacija subjekta u ideologiju. Kroz korelaciju između Hada i Donalda Trumpa, desni populizam korišten je kao primjer kojim je prikazan način na koji ideologija djeluje afektivno kroz cirkulaciju emocija koje stvaraju afektivne veze i ulaganja u određene ideale i vizije društva.

Ključne riječi: Hadestown, kapitalizam, ideologija, Althusser, interpelacija, Donald Trump, desni populizam, afektivna ideologija