

Literature, Culture and Media
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Lecture – 26
Theories of Ideology

Welcome dear participants to the sixth week of our module. In this week we are going to begin our discussion by talking about culture and ideology and then we will move on to the discussions of culture and identity, culture as a mass deception and also we will take up case studies with the help of certain novels to understand our discussions. The point of convergence between culture and ideology is slightly difficult to pinpoint as both these terms are polysemic.

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Between Culture and Ideology

- Both embrace non-material aspects of human existence
- Related to the subjective realm of ideas, values, world-views, and cosmologies, the very substance of human history
- The assumption that 'traditional ideas and attached values' lie at the core of culture, summons up the term 'ideology'
- Cultural systems are conditioned by past action and condition future action

And they have multiple meanings and possibilities of interpretations. Both these terms embrace those aspects of human existence which are nonmaterial and which are also highly subjective, for example, they talk about ideas, values, worldviews, cosmologies, the very substance of the human history. Also the assumption that traditional ideas and attached values lie at the core of culture, summons up the term ideology. And it is from this point that we can say that the commonalities between these two terms exist and also this is the point of convergence. The view that the cultural systems are conditioned by our past action and can also condition the future action is also a point of discussion under the term ideology.

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Ideology

- As opposed to common logic, ideology does not merely refer to political ideas.
- Inclusive of the entirety of our mental and conceptual frameworks, opinions, beliefs, concepts, value-systems, worldviews.
- In other words, ideology is how we understand, express and articulate our relationship to others, to the world, the external reality.
- One of the most intricate and abstract terms in social thought.

As opposed to common logic, ideology does not merely refer to the political systems, rather it is a term which includes entirety of our mental and conceptual frameworks including our opinions, beliefs, value systems, the worldviews and the points of views. We can say that ideology is what we understand, express and articulate in our relationship to others, in our relationship to the world, in our understanding of the external reality and how we pose it ourselves vis-a-vis these externalities. And that is why because of the subjectivity involved in this term and because of the polysemic nature of this term, it is considered to be one of the most abstract and intricate terms in social thought.

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- How ideology operates in society and culture or the relationship between 'culture' and 'ideology'
 - Understand the trajectory of the development of the conception of ideology in socio-political thought as such changes are concomitant with changes in cultural ideas and forms
- Value system – set of ideas, beliefs etc.
- Supported by a society, group, class
- Defines and supports normative behavior, defining what is acceptable
- Thus, controls individuals

To understand how ideology operates in our society and culture, we also have to understand the trajectory of the development of these notions and we also have to understand thus that these two terms are concomitant and therefore cannot be separated from each other absolutely. When we talk about the ideology, we talk about our value systems and these value systems, the set of ideas or beliefs etc., are normally supported by a society or a group of people or class for example. And these value systems define and supportive what this particular society considers to be a normative behaviour and therefore it defines what is acceptable and what is not and. And thereby we find that with this defining action of normative behaviour, ideology controls individuals.

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- Began with Kant's criticism of knowledge and Feuerbach's and Marx's opposition to classic German philosophy and its failure to establish "scientific metaphysics".
- Kant advocates a clear relationship between *reasoning* (and, as a result, philosophizing), and *knowledge*
- Kant concludes that *to think* is clearly linked to an ideology, but it is not compulsory for the latter to overlap with knowledge.
- Major qualitative changes with Karl Marx's works

Our perception of ideology may begin with Immanuel Kant's criticism of knowledge as well as Feuerbach's and Marx's opposition to classic German philosophy and its failure to establish scientific metaphysics. Kant has advocated a very clear relationship between what he has termed as reasoning which later on results into philosophising and knowledge. He has also said that to think is synonymous with an ideology but it is not compulsory for the ideology to overlap with knowledge. However we find that after Kant, it was the work of Karl Marx which resulted into major and qualitative changes in our perception of the term ideology. And in our discussion today, we are going to take up the theoretical variations introduced by certain major philosophers in this area.

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- Theoretical variations:
 - Marx – Controlling function
 - Lukacs – Form of objectivity
 - Gramsci – Hegemony
 - Foucault – Power/Knowledge
 - Althusser's – RSA and ISA

We will begin by talking about how Marx has talked about ideology as a controlling function, how Lukacs has talked about the form of objectivity, how Gramsci has further define this interpretation and has talked about hegemony. We have already talked about Foucault's power, knowledge combination and therefore, we will not talk about him in today's module and then later on we would talk about Althusser's distinction between RSA and ISA.

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Dictionary Meaning/Etymology of Ideology

According to OED:

- A system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.
- The set of beliefs characteristic of a social group or individual.

archaic mass noun

- The science of ideas; the study of their origin and nature
- Visionary speculation, especially of an unrealistic or idealistic nature.

Origin:

From Greek *idea* 'form, pattern' + *-logos*, denoting discourse or compilation.

In the second sense, late 18th century, from French *idéologie*

The dictionary meaning of the word ideology according to Oxford English dictionary, it is 'a system of ideas and ideals especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy'. So, we find that in the OED definition, it is this aspect of economic and political

theory which is basically linked with the interpretation of the term ideology. It is also set of beliefs which are characteristic of a social group or individual.

As an archaic mass noun, it also refers to the science of ideas or the study of their origin and nature. A visionary speculation, for example, especially of an unrealistic nature or of a highly idealistic nature. If we look at the etymological origins of the term, we find that in the first sense which has been taken up by the OED, it has been derived from the Greek combination of idea and logos. Idea means form or a pattern and logos means denoting discourse or compilation. In the second sense, we find that the word originates from the 18th century French word 'ideology'.

The word ideology in France was used for the first time during the French Revolution.

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Origin of the term 'Ideology'

- The word first emerged in France as *idéologie* during the time of the French Revolution
- The relatively recent neologism 'ideology' was born of Antoine Louis Destutt, comte de Tracy's (1754-1836) liberal project of applying the Enlightenment tradition of analysis to the scientific study and demystification of ideas and systems of thought
- Five-volume *Éléments d'idéologie* (1817–1818), translated into English as *A Treatise on Political Economy*, Ed. Thomas Jefferson
- He was influenced by John Locke and Étienne Bonnot de Condillac for whom, all knowledge was the knowledge of ideas

Or precisely we can say that the relatively recent neologism was born of a liberal project of Antoine Louis Destutt, comte de Tracy's work, when he tried to apply the Enlightenment tradition of analysis to the scientific study in order to demystify ideas and systems of thought. His work which was published in five volumes with a title *Éléments d'idéologie* between 1817 and 1818 was later on translated into English. And this translation was edited by Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson had given the title to the English translation as *A Treatise on Political Economy* but at the same time it also hit the philosophical nature of his terms which

was discovered only later on. In his work we find that Antoine Louis Destutt was influenced by John Locke as well as by Bonnot de Condillac for whom all knowledge was knowledge of ideas.

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- The subject of ideology has always been a highly controversial and contentious one.
- Polysemic in nature, like culture
- Huge disagreement over the definition and meaning of ideology.
- Loosely defined, “ideology may mean any kind of action-oriented theory or any attempt to approach politics in the light of a system of ideas.” (Cranston 2014)
- In a more strict sense, the meaning of Ideology remains close to Destutt de Tracy’s original idea and may be recognized by five features:

The subject of ideology has always been a highly controversial and a contentious one and there is a huge disagreement over the definition of this term as well as its meaning. However, we can loosely define it as any kind of action oriented theory or any attempt to approach politics in the light of a system of ideas. This is only a loose understanding, in a more strict sense we find that the interpretation of the term ideology remains very close to the original idea of Destutt de Tracy and it can be recognised by five main features.

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- It contains an explanatory theory of a more or less comprehensive kind about human experience and the external world
- It sets out a program, in generalized and abstract terms, of social and political organization
- It conceives the realization of this program as entailing a struggle
- It seeks not merely to persuade but to recruit loyal adherents, demanding what is sometimes called commitment
- It addresses a wide public but may tend to confer some special role of leadership on intellectuals

(Maurice Cranston 2004)

And these five main features are reproduced here. The first feature is that it must be an explanatory theory of a more or less comprehensive kind about human experience as well as about the external world. Secondly it should be a programme of social and political organisation and it may be a very generalised program or it may be very specific program but the ideology must be able to set out some type of a program. It also conceives that the realisation of this program entails necessarily a struggle without that the ideological interpretation cannot be completed. It also seeks out recruit loyal adherents and also says that there has to be a strong sense of commitment among these recruits, there should be loyal adherents. And at the same time, though it addresses the wide public but it also transfers a special role of leadership on the intellectual. So, these are the five major components which were originally conceived and which were; which are still more or less associated when we try to interpret that ideology in our contemporary criticism.

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Marx

- Marx and Engels, in *The German Ideology* (1846) wrote about ideology from a materialist perspective
 - Contextualize the exploitation of the proletariats in a capitalist society
 - Ideology as a distorted view of the world or 'false consciousness', which masks people's real relationship to the world
 - Hides the real relationship of power and exploitation between those who have control over means of production (capitalists) and the proletariat/s
 - Ideologies that are most widespread in any particular social order reflect, reproduce and protect the interests of the dominant classes
 - Reproduce the conditions necessary for the perpetuation of a particular mode of production

As we have pointed out earlier, the works of Karl Marx have introduced major changes in the way the term ideology can be interpreted. Marx and Engels were writing about ideology from their perspective of materialist philosophy and they wanted to contextualise the exploitation of the proletariats in a capitalist society. So their interpretation of the term ideology has to be understood in the context of their own philosophy about the exploitation of the workers in a capitalist society.

It is essentially a distorted or false consciousness of the world according to Marx and Engels which masked people's real relationship to the world. According to Marx and Engels, the real relationship which we have in our world that is the relationship of power and exploitation between those who have control over means of production and therefore also necessarily have certain control over the proletariat.

So, this is the relationship of power and exploitation and this is exactly what is attempted to be hidden from the people with the help of the ideology.

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- Thus, in a capitalist society, ideology obscures and misrepresents the actual relations to hide the exploitation of the workers
- Thus, works in the favor of the masters, or the capitalist system.

So, therefore according to the Marxist philosophy, ideologies are most wide spread in any particular social order reflect, reproduce and protect the interests of the dominant classes. So, according to Marx we find that the ideologies reproduce the conditions which are necessary for the perpetuation of a particular mode of production and in a capitalist society, the ideology obscures and misrepresents the actual relationships between the haves and the have-nots to hide the exploitation of the workers and thus works in the favour of the masters or the capitalist system. So according to Marx, we find that the ideology is the ideas of the dominant classes which they use to perpetuate the exploitation of the workers or the proletariat.

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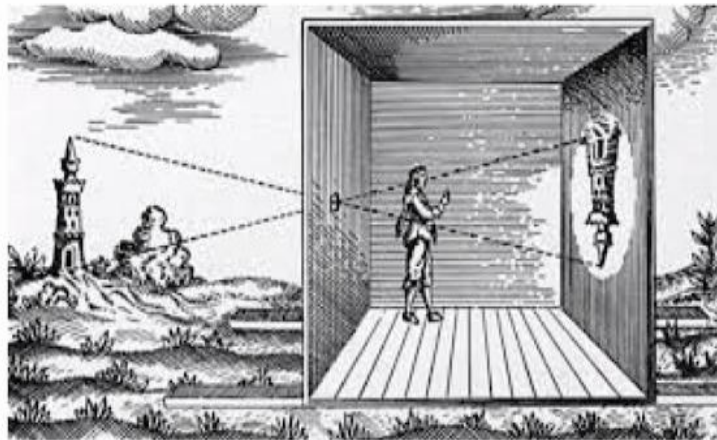
Comparison with Camera Obscura

- Marx and Engels explained the process of misrepresentation and distortion through the metaphor of the *camera obscura*
 - Latin name (dark chamber), was first used by Kepler in the 17th Century, ancestor of the photographic camera
 - The term refers to the natural optical phenomena--creation of an inverted image formed by light rays passing through a pinhole into a darkened room.
 - It led to the portable box device that was a drawing tool.
 - In the 17th and 18th century many artists were aided by the use of the camera obscura.
- Apt analogy – reversal of image!

Marx is compared the process of misrepresentation and distortion through the metaphor of *camera obscura*. *Camera obscura* was a contemporary device, not exactly contemporary but slightly previous ones but it was a still popular. So this is a Latin name which was first used by Kepler in 17th century and this device can be considered as the ancestor of the photographic camera today. So, this term refers to the natural optical phenomena--creation of an inverted image formed by light rays passes through a pinhole into a darkened room. It led to portable box devices and this is something which we will discuss later on in our discussions on media. So, Marx had given this analogy which is a very apt one because he wanted to refer to the reversal of image.

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Camera Obscura Phenomena



This idea of the reversal of image can be understood by looking at this photograph of *camera obscura* phenomena.

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- 'If in ideology men and their realizations appear upside down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on their retina does from the physical life-process' (Marx and Engels 1976, vol. 5: 37).
 - Suggests that humans instinctively and inevitably invert and distort real relations of power
- Asserted that our ideas are formed and shaped by the world around us: 'It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness' (1976, vol. 5: 36).

According to Marx and Engels, this association suggests that human beings instinctively and inevitably invert and distort real relations of power. So according to them it is not consciousness that determines life but it is life that determines our consciousness. In other words, our ideas, our beliefs, our value systems are a product of the social order we live in. And therefore, Marx suggests a social order like capitalism gives rise to a system of beliefs and concepts that reproduce the conditions of its reproduction and perpetual safety.

And therefore, Marx and Engels suggest that human beings inevitably invert and distort the real relationships of power which are the relationships of exploitation of the workers.

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- Focused on the controlling function
 - Capitalism faces threat of revolt from workers
 - Ideology neutralizes this threat – by controlling media, thus controlling dissemination of information
 - Naturalizes and normalizes exploitation within the system
 - Coercion – overt/covert- by which dominant class gains acceptance for its ideology is called as ideological domination
 - Marxist idea that ideology does not indicate **any** set of values held by a group of people, but rather a system of beliefs held by the **dominant** class and inflicted upon the oppressed classes; generated significant implications
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So, we find that Marx has defined the term ideology with a focus on its controlling function. And according to him, capitalism faces threat of revolt from workers and ideology neutralises this threat because ideology is able to control media and thus it is also able to control the dissemination of information among the people. And by controlling media it naturalises and normalises exploitation within the given system.

So this coercion, in the garb of ideology whether it is covert or it is overt by which dominant class gains acceptance for its ideology is given the name of ideological domination. So Marxist idea is that ideology does not indicate any set of values held by a group of people but rather it is a system of beliefs which is held by the dominant class and it is inflicted upon the suppressed classes. So Marxist idea was that ideology is a set of values which are held by the dominant class of the people.

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Lukacs' view on Ideology

- 20th century Hungarian critic;
- one of the founders of Western Marxism;
- He ideologically developed and organized Lenin's pragmatic revolutionary practices into the formal philosophy of vanguard-party revolution
- Major literary critic
- Ideology is a projection of the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie.
 - Functions to prevent the proletariat from attaining consciousness of its revolutionary position
 - Ideology determines the "form of objectivity", therefore defines the very structure of knowledge.

In with certain modifications we find that this idea was carried forward by the 20th century Hungarian critic Lukacs who was one of the founders of Western Marxism. He ideologically developed and organised Lenin's pragmatically revolutionary practices into the formal philosophy of vanguard party revolution. We also know Lukacs as a major literary critic who has given interesting insights into the way a novel can be read and appreciated.

According to him, ideology is a projection of the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie and ideology also functions to prevent the proletariat from attaining consciousness of the revolutionary position. According to Lukacs, ideology determines the form of objectivity and therefore defines the very structure of knowledge.

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Lukacs' view on Ideology

- Real science must attain the "concrete totality" through which only it is possible to think the current form of objectivity as a historical period.
 - So-called eternal laws of economics are dismissed as the ideological illusion projected by the current form of objectivity
 - The bourgeois identity reflects the distorted version of capitalism for the benefit of the capitalists.
 - The Proletariat can assume a more scientific view that can cut through the illusion and reveal its real nature.
 - In this view, ideologies may not always be false, but they are always the product of socio-economic structures or mode of production.
 - Validity and falsity of ideology is a function of the 'class situation' it represents.
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According to Lukacs real science must attain the concrete totality through which only it is possible to think the current form of objectivity as a historical period. And with this idea, the traditional laws of economics are dismissed by him as being an ideological illusion which are projected by the capitalist class; class and they are replaced by the current form of objectivity. According to Lukacs, the bourgeois identity reflects the distorted version of capitalism for its own benefit.

But according to him, the proletariat can assume a more scientific point of view that can cut through the illusion and reveal the true nature of the system. So ideology is according to Lukacs may not always be false but they are always the product of the socio-economic structure or the mode of production. And therefore, validity and falsity of ideology is a function of the class situation it represents. So, even if it is true or even if it is not false, it is going to be a product of the class situation. The ideas presented by Lukacs came into criticism on the basis of their lacuna.

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Problems:

- Lukacs is unable to demonstrate how and why the proletariat possesses superior reasoning and rationality to perceive the distorted vision that ideologies promulgate.
- Assumes a correspondence between particular social classes and ideologies
- Ignores that such relationships cannot be assumed or taken for granted
- Glosses over the heterogeneous component of class.
- Ignores internal fissures and differences between members of the same class based on gender, race and so on.
- Thus, different people belonging to the same social class rarely have the same relationship to the mode of production, or other facets of reality.

Lukacs was not able to demonstrate how and why the proletariat are able to possess superior reasoning and rationality, so that they are able to perceive the distortions in the ideologies promulgated by the capitalists. Lukacs also assumes a correspondence between the particular social class and the ideologies which are held by them, ignoring the fact that these relationships cannot be assumed or taken for granted without any other proof.

He therefore also glosses over the basic heterogeneity which lies in the foundations of every class. The very components of class are heterogeneous there are not only internal fissures but there are differences also based on gender, race, ethnicity etc. So, different people belonging to the same class may possess different type of relationship to the mode of product and therefore this aspect has been glossed over by Lukacs completely.

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- Ideologies cannot be the same.
- There is no identical or uniform ideology of the working class.
- Working class can be divided along race, ethnicity and gender.
- Gramsci's writings show that ideologies often cut across classes and how the same class can hold many different, and sometimes, often contradictory, ideologies.
- Volosinov, a Russian critic comments, 'different classes will use one and the same language. As a result, differently oriented accents intersect in every ideological sign. Sign becomes the arena of class struggle' (1973: 23).
 - Has direct effects on other 'signs' such as art, music, food and politics.
 - Ideologies are arenas of 'intersecting accents' which originate from numerous and diverse directions –'multi-accentual'

And therefore the critics suggest that even in the same class, the ideologies cannot be necessarily the same, there cannot be any identical or uniform ideology as far as the working classes are also concerned. This particular aspect of criticism has been pointed out by a Russian critic, Volosinov, who says that the “different classes will use one and the same language. As a result, differently oriented accents intersect in every ideological sign”. And according to Volosinov, “sign becomes the arena of class struggle”. So ideologies are arenas of intersecting accents which originate from numerous and diverse directions and therefore critics suggest that ideologies are multi accentual, they cannot be uniform or identical as suggested by Lukacs. In fact, the writings by Antonio Gramsci show that ideologies often cut across classes and how the same class can hold many different and sometimes even contradictory ideologies.

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Gramsci: Hegemony

- The frameworks of Ideology given by Marx and Lukacs, failed to analyze the constant power struggles that go on in a society for control of the value system.
- Gramsci's Hegemony is open to negotiation. It is without the Marxist connotation of a fixed system imposed by a dominant group (i.e. government/capitalism).
- Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* [1929–34] (1971):
 - Rethinks the failure of the proletarian revolution of Italy
 - Leader of the Italian Communist Party – After the Italian working-class failed to seize control after WWI, Gramsci was imprisoned by Mussolini's fascist regime.
 - The incarceration gave him the opportunity to re-evaluate many of his doctrines

With this criticism of Lukacs, we come to Gramsci and his notion of hegemony. In the frameworks of ideology which have been provided by Karl Marx and Lukacs, we find that there is no attempt to analyse the constant power struggles that go on in any society for the control of the value systems. In comparison to these frameworks of ideologies given by Marx and Lukacs, we find that Gramsci's notion of hegemony is open to negotiation. In fact, we can say that this concept of hegemony by Gramsci is without the Marxist connotation of a fixed system imposed by a dominant group, this dominant group may be the government or the capitalist itself.

Antonio Gramsci was a leader of the Italian Communist Party and after the Italian working classes failed to seize control and power, after the First World War, Gramsci was sent to prison by the fascist regime. And this stay in the prison, this incarceration gave him the opportunity to re-evaluate many of his doctrines.

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- Like Lukacs, Gramsci had discarded any kind of materialist determinism.
 - Given the failure of the revolution, it was clear that there was nothing inevitable about the success of the proletariat even though 'objective' and material conditions for its success had been present.
- Attempted to understand the reasons for this defeat by formulating that the ideological control of the capitalist state on its citizens goes beyond the material sphere.
- Gramsci believes that revolutions happen on two levels:
 - At the level of economy
 - At the level of ideology
 - Pays special attention to struggles between different systems of ideas

Like Lukacs, Gramsci had discarded any kind of materialistic determinism. And given the failure of the revolution, it was clear to him that there is nothing inevitable about the success of the proletariat revolution even though the material conditions or the objective conditions for the success of this revolution may be present in the contemporary society.

Now, propelled by the failure of his revolution, Gramsci attempted to understand the reasons for this defeat and he formulated that the ideological control of the capitalist system on its citizens goes beyond the material sphere. He believes that the revolutions happen on two levels simultaneously, at the level of economy and also at the level of ideology. And that is why he pays special attention to struggles between different systems of ideas.

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- Gramsci's notion of the relationship between ideology and political power emerges from *Communist Manifesto* [1848].
- In *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels argue that 'the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class' (VI, 503).
- This 'dominant ideology thesis' argues that those who own and control the economy also impose their particular worldview or value-systems on the society.
- Thus, ideology is the battlefield where class struggles and conflicts happen.
- Studies this battlefield using the concept of 'hegemony'.

Gramsci's notion of the relationship between ideology and political power emerges from the *Communist Manifesto*. In *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels have argued that the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of the ruling classes. However this dominant ideology thesis argues that those who own and control the economy also imposed the particular worldview or the value systems on the society. And this ideology according to Gramsci is the battlefield where class struggles and conflicts happen. Gramsci studies this battlefield using the concept of hegemony.

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Hegemony

- Simply put, it's the combination of material and ideological forces through which a dominant class establishes and maintains its control and power over society.
- It is a form of praxis that is used to maintain status quo.
- He reserves the term 'ideology' for pure consciousness.
- He suggests that we should 'distinguish between—
 - Historically organic ideologies, which are necessary to a given structure, and
 - Ideologies that are arbitrary, rationalistic, or "willed"

Simply put hegemony can be understood is the combination of material and ideological forces through which a dominant class attempts and successful in establishing and maintaining its

control and power over society. It is a form of praxis that is used to maintain a status quo by the dominant people and Gramsci has reserved the term ideology for pure consciousness and suggest that we should distinguish between historically organic ideologies which are necessary for a given structure and ideologies that are arbitrarily rationalistic or willed.

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- Historically organic ideologies are unique to a particular class/group, and are an expression/reflection of that class' material interests.
- Latter kind of ideology is identified with the mechanistic mode of thought - exemplified by Destutt de Tracy's 'science' of 'Ideologie' - because it traces the formation of ideas to material sensations (Hawkes 2003).
- In Gramsci's view, this approach is quite erroneous.
- Gramsci argues that while ideology is generally used to maintain social unity and expresses the interests of the dominant class, there are certain ideologies that may articulate forms of resistance.

Historically organic ideologies are unique to a particular class or a group and they can be understood as an expression or reflection of the material increased of a particular class, the second type of an ideology is identified with the mechanistic mode of thought because it traces the formation of ideas to material sensations. And in Gramsci's view this approach is quite erroneous, it is mistaken. He argues that while ideology is generally used to maintain social unity and it also expresses the interests of the dominant classes. There are certain ideologies that may also articulate forms of resistance.

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- The proletariat or oppressed subject possesses a dual consciousness—
 - That which is beholden to the rulers, and complicit with their will;
 - That which is capable of developing into resistance
 - “If social realities, including social conflicts, are grasped by human beings via their ideologies, then ideologies are also the site of social struggle.”
(Loomba 29)
 - Gramsci questioned the importance of the economic (‘base’ in classical Marxist thought) over the ideological (‘superstructure’).
 - Upsets this basic superstructure conception of societal relations in classical Marxist thought
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The proletariat or oppressed subject, according to Gramsci, possesses a dual consciousness. One consciousness which is beholden to the rulers and is complicit with their will and at the same time they also have a consciousness which is capable of developing into a resistance. And if social realities are grasped by human beings via their ideologies, then the ideologies also become the site of social struggle.

Gramsci has questioned the supremacy or the importance of the economic over the ideological and therefore he has upset the basic superstructure conception of social relationships as presented in the classical Marxist thought. In the classical Marxist thought we find that it is the economic aspect which has the significance and the ideology is not given the same significance.

However, Gramsci has questioned the importance of the economic that is a base and classical Marxist thought over the ideological superstructure.

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- Doesn't ignore the importance of economic changes; but asserts that mere economic changes are not enough to bring about historical changes.
- Economic changes bring about the necessary conditions for the rise of certain ideologies.
- To conclude, Hegemony is attained not only by coercion or direct manipulation or indoctrination, but by playing upon the common sense of people, upon what Raymond Williams calls their 'lived system of meanings and values' (1977: 110).
- According to Gramsci, ideology is important in the process of creating consent since it's how certain ideas are disseminated and held to be true/correct.

He does not ignore the importance of economic changes; he accepts that the economic changes are necessary for creating the required conditions for the rise of certain ideologies. But he asserts that mere economic changes are not sufficient ever to bring about historical change or to make a successful or to create a successful revolution. Hegemony according to him is attained not only by coercion or direct manipulation or indoctrination but by playing upon the common sense of people up on what Raymond Williams has called their "lived systems of meanings". So according to Gramsci, ideology is important in the process of creating consent since it is how certain ideas are disseminated and held to be true or correct in the given society.

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- Gramsci thus sees ideologies as more than just pale reflections of material reality.
- Rather, ideologies are notions of life that are evident in all phases of individual and collective existence.
- Gramsci is not just interested in *rethinking* the meaning and scope of ideology, he wishes to understand how ideologies drive social relations, 'organize human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.' (Gramsci 1971: 324, 377).

He says that ideologies are more than pale reflections of material reality and rather according to him, they are the notions of life that are evident in all phases of our existence and activities. He is not just interested in rethinking the meaning and scope of ideology, he also wishes to understand how ideologies drive social relations, organised human masses and create the terrain on which people move and I quote, “acquire consciousness of their positions, struggles etc.”.

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Louis Althusser

- In his seminal essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation” (1970), Althusser further explored and complicated the subject of ideology.
- Draws on Gramsci’s notion of hegemony and extends it further.

Deals with new avenues of inquiry:

- The processes through which ideologies are internalized
- How human subjects accept dominant ideas and beliefs as ‘their own’
- How humans ‘spontaneously’ articulate and express socially determined views and worldviews

The next philosopher whom I would like to discuss is Louis Althusser who has explored and complicated the subject of ideology in his seminal essay entitled *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation* published in 1970. He has drawn on Gramsci’s notion of hegemony and extended it further. And he has dealt with new avenues of inquiry, for example, he discusses the processes through which ideologies are internalised by human beings and also he discusses how human subjects accepts dominant ideas and beliefs as being ‘their own’ ideas. So how is it that human beings are able to achieve this oneness with the ideologies and accept this ideology as being their own one and how human beings almost spontaneously articulate and express socially determined views and worldviews as their own.

So, let us say that Althusser has gone to enquire how the notions of hegemony can be internalised and how these notions of ideologies can be internalised by human beings.

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- How individuals and their sense of selfhood is 'interpellated' (borrowed from Freud's), positioned (Lacan's term), and shaped by ideologies.
- Though Ideologies express the interests of dominant social classes, they work through and upon individual people.
 - Subjectivity, or identity, is itself formed in and through ideology

So, he also looks at how individuals and their sense of selfhood is 'interpellated', it's a term which is borrowed from Freud and 'positioned', it's a term which is borrowed from the Lacan and shaped by ideologies. This according to Althusser, ideologies express the interest of dominant social classes work through individual human beings, work upon individual human beings and subjectivity and identity is itself formed in an through ideology.

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RSA and ISA

- Althusser argues that the conditions of society depend upon the reproduction of means and modes of production.
- The state is defined as a repressive machinery that maintains the status quo and reproduces the relations of production through two arms/apparatuses.
- These are known as RSA (Repressive State Apparatuses) and ISA (Ideological State Apparatuses)

RSA:

- Use of force/coercion; thus, functions by violence
- Direct control through fear and threat of punishment (eg. Army, Police)

Althusser is particularly known about the differences he has presented between RSA and ISA, RSA is Repressive State Apparatuses and ISA are the Ideological State Apparatuses. He argues that conditions of society depend on the reproduction of means and means of production. The

state is defined as a repressive machinery that maintains the status quo and reproduces the relations of productions through two different arms or apparatuses that is RSA and ISA.

The repressive state apparatuses or RSA as the name itself suggests is based on the use of force and coercion and therefore functions by violence, for example the direct control through fear and threat of punishment, the use of police and army etc.

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ISA:

- Subtle control and management of populations
- No use of direct force
- Works through consent
- Functions through ideology
- Similar to the concept of Hegemony
- Eg. School, church, universities, family, etc

On the other hand, ISA is based on the subtle control and management of populations, it does not use any direct force but it tries to work through consent and functions through ideology. This idea of ISA is similar to the concept of hegemony and according to Althusser, it works through socially discursive institutions like the institution of education, schools, universities, the institution of family, the religious institutions like church etc.

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- Every State Apparatus (repressive or ideological) uses both violence and ideology (Althusser 145).
- RSA works first by domination and then by ideology
- ISA functions first by ideology and then by subjugation.
- A plethora of ISA precede the existence of RSA.
- The ruling class who control RSAs can easily build their own ISAs.
- In order to maintain domination over a long period of time, the dominant class must establish its hegemony through the cultivation of ISAs.
- RSA is protected by its unified governance under the management of those in power, whereas ISA is cultivated in often, complex and contradictory ways through ideology—the ideology of the ruling class.

According to Althusser, every state apparatus whether it is repressive or ideological, uses both violence and ideology. RSA works first by domination and then by ideology and ISA functions first to by ideology and then by subjugation. So in both these apparatuses we find that the violence and ideology simultaneously coexist. However a plethora of ISA precedes the existence of RSA and the ruling class who controls RSA's can easily build their own ISAs.

So, in order to maintain domination over a long period of time, the dominant class must establish its hegemony through the cultivation of ISAs, otherwise it can be challenged easily. RSA is protected by its unified governance under the management of those in power whereas ISA is cultivated in often complex and contradictory ways through ideology and the ideology remains to be the ideology of the ruling classes.

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Althusser's notion of Ideology

- "A system of the ideas and representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts, according to the case) which dominate the mind of a man or a social group"(158).
- Ideology is eternal since it omnipresent in its immutable form (161).
- Althusser presents a totalizing view of ideological operations by arguing that ISAs use ideology to constitute human individuals as 'good subject' who accept and consent to the relations of production and the status quo.
- Many critics take up this point when they argue that Althusser's view of ideology precludes the possibility of change as it cannot account for ideological struggle.

According to Althusser, ideology is eternal since it is omnipresent in its immutable form. He presents a totalising view of ideological operations by arguing that ISAs use ideology to constitute human individuals as good subjects. People who accept and consent to the relations of production and a status quo without challenging them. Critics often take up this point when they argue that Althusser's view of ideology precludes the possibility of change as it cannot account for ideological struggle.

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- Althusser is indebted to Lacanian psychoanalysis in his conception of ideology and its role in constituting humans as subjects.
- To Althusser, Psychoanalysis suggested that human beings do not have a core or essential 'centre'.
- He borrowed from Psychoanalytic theories and its account of formation of subjectivity through language (symbolic order) in scrutinizing how ideology functions.

In his work, Althusser is indebted to Lacanian psychoanalysis particularly in his conception of ideology and its role in constituting human beings as subjects. So psychoanalysis suggested that human beings do not have a core or an essential centre, so he borrowed from psychoanalytical

theories and its account of formation of subjectivity through language in scrutinising how ideology functions.

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Conclusion

- There is a palpable need to think of culture, economy and ideology as interdependent concepts ('culture' is shaped by both ideology and economics, and in turn, economic questions are not free of ideologies or questions of cultural forms), but, there is also the need to preserve some distinction so that the particularity of each concept isn't blurred.
- Althusser's work on ideology and economy has been successful in sparking new debates on the issues of ideologies, language and subjectivity.
- These debates have been instrumental in introducing inventive ways of analyzing institutions, structures and the field of ideas and discourse.

So, there is a palpable need to think of culture, economy and ideology as interdependent concepts because culture is shaped by both ideology and economics and in turn economic questions can never be totally free of ideologies or questions of cultural form but there is also an essential need to preserve some distinction, so that the particularity of each concept is kept intact.

Althusser's work on ideology and economy has been successful in sparking new debates on the issues of ideologies, language and subjectivity. And these debates have been instrumental in introducing inventive ways of analysing institutions, structures and the fields of ideas and discourses.

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- An excerpt from Slavoj Žižek's, "The Pervert's Guide to Ideology"
- Žižek analyses some scenes from the movie, *They Live*, to show how ideology functions through us. He is firmly within the Lacanian psychoanalytic tradition when he claims that ideology is how we perceive the world; it's constitutes the reality for subjects.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVwkjGbz60k>

In the next module, we will take up the formation of ideology, here I am giving a link which is an excerpt from Žižek's, *the Pervert's Guide to Ideology* in which he has analysed some scenes from the movie, *They Live*, those who are interested may watch it and they would find it to be an enriching, understanding of the issue of ideology, thank you.