

Theories of Control and Ideology^(*)

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Abstract

Ideology and hegemony theories describe the various methods of control employed by those in power to govern and dominate their people. The most prominent thinkers interested in this field attempted to explain the power of ideology and how it shapes people's minds and consciousness. Theorists of the Frankfurt School focused on the power of mass media and culture, demonstrating how they might be utilised to depoliticize individuals. Other influential theorists concentrated on other key control mechanisms, such as Guy Debord's *spectacle*, Michel Foucault's *panopticism*, and Edward Bernay's *propaganda*. Because they play on emotions, these approaches control people mentally and psychologically. More recent scholars expanded the study of the concept of ideology to include areas other than class and economy, such as race, gender, and identity, etc. They also emphasise the idea of people's agency. This paper traces the concept of ideology since its inception and focuses on its relationship to mass media, particularly, film.

Keyword:

Ideology, hegemony, Frankfurt school, media, film, propaganda, spectacle

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الملخص:

تقدم النظريات الخاصة بدراسة الأيديولوجيا والهيمنة وصفًا للوسائل المختلفة التي يستخدمها أصحاب السلطة للتحكم والسيطرة في الشعوب. وقد حاول أهم منظري المجال إيضاح قوة الأيديولوجيا وكيف تُشكّل وعي الجماهير وعقولهم. وركز منظرو مدرسة فرانكفورت على قوة وسائل الاتصال والثقافة وأوضحوا كيف يتم استخدامها لتحديد الجماهير. وقد ركز منظرون آخرون على تكتيكات السيطرة الأساسية مثل نظرية المشهد التي قدمها جي دبور والبانيتكون التي قدمها ميشل فوكو والبروباجندا التي قدمها إدوارد برني. تؤدي هذه الوسائل إلى التحكم على المستوى النفسى والعقلى؛ لأنها تعمل على التلاعب بالمشاعر. قام مفكرون أكثر حداثة بتوسيع مفهوم الأيديولوجيا ليشمل مجالات أخرى غير الطبقة والاقتصاد مثل العرق والجندر والهوية إلخ. كما أنهم يركزون أيضًا على دور الجمهور. يتتبع هذا البحث مفهوم الأيديولوجيا منذ ظهوره وتركز على علاقته بوسائل الاتصال الجماهيرى والسينما.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الأيديولوجيا، الهيمنة، مدرسة فرانكفورت، الإعلام، الفيلم، البروباجندا، نظرية المشهد.

Ideology and hegemony theories deal with how stability and dominance are maintained not by brute force but by the consent of the people. They also describe how culture can promote unequal power relationships and help "support an elite and to justify the exercise of power" (Apter, 1964, p.18).

The term ideology was first used by a French Enlightenment philosopher, Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836) in his memoirs (1796-1798) and book *The Elements of Ideology* (1800-1815). He used two Greek terms: *eidos*, which means ideas, and *logos* which mean the "science or study of ideas". For Tracy, to understand humanity, one should initially comprehend the ideas that create or build human beings. This is why Tracy argues that ideology is "la theorie des theories; the queen of sciences that precedes all other modes of thought and inquiry" (Vincent, 2010, p.1).

Since Karl Marx's *The German Ideology* (1846-1932), the term "ideology" became omnipresent and was widely employed especially in the fields of culture, media, and politics. Graeme Turner (1947), a leading figure in cultural studies, describes it as "the most important conceptual category in cultural studies" (Turner 2003, p.167).

Karl Marx and "False Consciousness"

The term "Ideology" was used in the 1840s by Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820 – 1895) to demonstrate how a ruling class represents its "interest as the common interest of all the members of society . . . to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones" (Marx, 1998, p.68). This was possible because of the base/superstructure model of society. The bourgeoisie controlled the economy since they owned the different means of production, like the factories. Culture, politics, art, and other life forms were "an epiphenomenal superstructure built upon a determinant economic base" (Smith, 2001, p.7). They served to reproduce the economic base and secured the dominance of ruling groups. In other words, "the mode of production of material life conditions [or determines] the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx, 1973. p.5). For Marx and Engels, cultural ideas reflect the views and serve the interests of the ruling class. These cultural ideas provide ideologies that legitimate the authority and class domination of the bourgeoisie:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production. (Marx, 1998, p.67).

The ruling class promotes and propagates the ideas that justify their position. They disseminate the views that naturalise and legitimise the existence of social classes. Those ideas become the dominant ideas. Alternative ideas, on the other hand, are denied or marginalized. When an idea is considered dangerous, it is immediately censored or suppressed. In *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), Marx and Engels emphasized: "Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property" (Marx, 2008, p.58). Thus, according to Marx, the ruling class controls consciousness because

they produce ideas that benefit them. This control of ideas results in a way of thinking that precludes the proletariat from grasping the true nature of their economic or social situation. They (the proletariat) fail to recognise inequality, oppression, and exploitation in their society. Therefore, "ideology" is the "false consciousness" (Lukacs, 1968, p.50) that keeps the proletariat from comprehending how or to what extent they are exploited by the bourgeoisie. The subordinate classes accept exploitative relations as solid and unchangeable. The term "false consciousness" is synonymous with Marx, yet he never used it. The phrase was used for the first time by György Lukács (1885–1971) in his book *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) and since then it has been used to describe the ideas of Marxism.

Marx explains that "the truth of reality and reality as it is conceived through ideology are opposed" (Marx's *The German Ideology*, 2012). He compares the reality produced by ideology to the inverted image provided by the "Camera Obscura" (Marx, 1998, p.48). Furthermore, the concept of ideology as false beliefs that obstruct the uncovering of a solid "truth" parallels Plato's Myth of the Cave, in which the people locked in the cave mistook the shadows reflected on the wall in front of them for reality. In other words, ideology in the classical Marxist tradition is how people see or imagine their conditions as opposed to what these conditions are in reality.

Moreover, Marx argued that religion is closely related to power and served the state in multiple ways. The church was funded by the bourgeoisie and, therefore, it (the church) supported and disseminated their ideology. The church was the primary source of education in Marx's time; it taught people that social inequality was God's will, and thus obfuscated the real cause of inequality and misery, which was the exploitation by the bourgeoisie. Marx describes religion as "the opium of the people" (Marx, 1970, p.131) because it provided spiritual comfort for the poor and promised them salvation and heaven. It turned poverty into a virtue, and promised a better life after death if people followed the rules now. This prevented change because it kept people passive, and kept the elite in power.

However, Marx believed that in the long run, workers or the

majority will see through this false consciousness and would ultimately overthrow the bourgeoisie. Resistance to ideology, Marx contends, has to take a material form. He writes, "All forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism . . . but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which gave rise to the idealistic humbug" (Marx, 1998, p.61). This is why Marx believed that a revolution was inevitable because "the unity of the bourgeoisie can be shaken only by the unity of the proletariat" (Stalin, 1906, p.1).

Ironically, the revolution Marx predicted never happened. It was not until the twentieth century that Marxist theorists like the Italian Antonio Gramsci (1891 – 1937) and the French Louis Althusser (1918 – 1990) developed Marx's theories and explained how culture might hold back a revolutionary change. Gramsci introduced the concept of "hegemony" to describe how capitalist ideas are disseminated and accepted as common sense. As regards to Althusser, he emphasized the role of some state-run institutions, known as "ideological state apparatuses", in spreading bourgeois ideology and keeping the people in a state of false consciousness.

Gramsci's "Hegemony"

During his imprisonment for his resistance to Mussolini's fascist regime, Gramsci endeavored to explain the absence of revolutions (which Marx believed were inevitable) in Italy and other Western societies. Despite oppression and exploitation, capitalism was entrenched and Fascism became the ruling force in Italy. In seeking to explain this paradox and find reasons for the acquiescence of the proletariat, Gramsci concluded that the state maintained control and attained social dominance over the "subaltern" (Gramsci, 1971, p.xiv) in two ways: through force, "domination" or "coercive power" and by the consent of the masses, which is attained through "intellectual and moral leadership" (Gramsci, 1971, p.45). This is what Gramsci called *hegemony*.

The concept of "hegemony" expands and adds complexity to Marx's definition of ideology and explains how ruling classes can exercise "total social authority" (Hebdige, 1979, p.16) over other subordinate groups, not by coercion or enforcement of dominant ruling ideas, but by "winning and shaping consent so that the power of the

dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural" (Hall, 1977, p.333). The dominant class represents its way of seeing the world as "common sense" and "natural". This way the "subordinate groups are, if not controlled; then at least contained within an ideological space which does not seem at all 'ideological': which appears instead to be permanent and 'natural'" (Hebdige, 1979, p.16).

This construction of "common sense" is one of the key hegemonic strategies. It is a view of the world that is "inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed" and leads to "moral and political passivity" (Gramsci, 1971, p.333). Thus, hegemonic beliefs "short-circuit attempts at critical thinking" (Smith, 2001, p.39). They enable dominant groups to rule better as less force is needed preserve social order.

Hegemony is not simply power imposed from above, but power maintained by "negotiating" with or making concessions to, subordinate groups. This is because "common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself" (Gramsci, 1971, p.326). Gramsci emphasises that "no culture is completely hegemonic. Even under the most complete systems of control, there are 'counter-hegemonic' cultures... ways of thinking and doing that have revolutionary potential because they run counter to the dominant power" (Duncombe, 2012, p.223). As John Fiske puts it: "Consent must be constantly won and rewon" because hegemony is not a fixed or static power relationship (Fiske, 1992, p.219). Hegemony is necessary because the subordinate groups constantly resist what is imposed by the dominant ideology; in terms of class, gender, race, age, or any other factor. These resistances can never be eliminated. Hence, any hegemonic victory, any consent that it wins, is necessarily unstable and can never be taken for granted.

It is the task of the "organic intellectuals" (Gramsci, 1971, p.xci) – people like priests, journalists, or the talking heads people watch on television – to propagate hegemonic beliefs and explain complex political issues in simpler everyday language. In Gramsci's time, the press was the main tool for the ideological legitimization of the existing institutions and social order. However, it was "not the only one" because "everything which influences or is able to influence public opinion, directly or

indirectly, belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds. . . even architecture and the layout and names of streets" (Gramsci, 2006, p.16).

Thus, hegemony creates a society where there is a high degree of consensus and stability, despite oppression and exploitation, because the subordinate groups are incorporated into the prevailing structures of power. However, in times of crisis, when moral and intellectual leadership is not enough to secure the consent of the governed, the processes of hegemony are replaced, temporarily, by coercive power: the army, the police, the prison system, etc.

What distinguishes Gramsci from Marx and Althusser (discussed below) is his emphasis on the ideas of "resistance" and "instability". His focus on resistances that ideology has to overcome provides a vision that involves the other side of society, the subaltern side.

Althusser's "Ideological State Apparatuses"

According to Althusser, the ruling classes sustain their power over the masses through the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) which "functions by violence" to crush dissent and to break strikes and by non-coercive means through the various Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) which "function by ideology" (Althusser, 2014, p.244). The ruling class has at its disposal both State Apparatuses.

According to Althusser, the most important mission of any political or economic system is "to reproduce its own conditions of production" (Hawkes, 1996, p.118). To perpetuate itself, any political system must either eliminate or contain its opponents. The RSA – comprising both the army and the police – must be resorted to only in extreme cases where ISAs – comprising education, religious institutions, media, culture...etc – fail. These extreme cases, for instance, a protest that threatens the power of the ruling class, require immediate action, therefore, the RSA interferes using violence to maintain control.

The function of the ISAs, on the other hand, is to produce citizens who could recreate the system. "All ideology has the function of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects" (Donald, 1986, p.27). Althusser is an "opponent of... any notion of a free human subject"

(Blunden, 2007, p.1). To him, subjects are not free or responsible agents because their ideas are nothing but the product of the ISAs which offer people identities and roles that are necessary for the reproduction of the capitalist system. Therefore, "no consciousness is possible other than an illusory, functionally prescribed, bourgeois consciousness. The individual subject's belief that they act of their own free will is an illusion" (Blunden, 2007, p.1). People internalize cultural ideas and the moment they recognize themselves as subjects and react or respond to ideologies is called "interpellation". British sociologist and media theorist, David Gauntlett (1971) explains that interpellation happens when a viewer engages with a media text, such as a movie or television show. "This uncritical consumption means that the text has interpellated us into a certain set of assumptions, and caused us to tacitly accept a particular approach to the world" (Gauntlett, 2002, p.27). However, this is not a conscious process; ideology is "profoundly unconscious" (Althusser, 2005, p.233) in its mode of operation. People are addressed by the film as subjects to authority and their consciousness is tacitly shaped by the authoritarian presuppositions of the cultural product. People are "hailed", addressed, by the cultural product as subjects to social authority. When they accept it, they adopt the social roles prescribed to them by it.

Althusser's main contribution was to introduce the idea that ideology operates through everyday activities, practices, and rituals. Ideology is not only ideas or beliefs, but lived, material practices of the Ideological State Apparatuses. Rituals and customs bind people to the social order because the "ideas" of a human subject exist in his actions. Althusser quotes seventeenth-century philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623-1662): "Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe" (Pascal, 2018, p.250). Hence, he inverts the order of things and affirms that "there is no practice except by and in an ideology" (Althusser, 2014, p.261).

In this respect, Althusser's work (like Gramsci's) is important in adding specificity to Marx's ideas. Unlike Gramsci, however, Althusser underlines the pervasiveness of ideology and interpellation. He "removed any possibility of avoiding or of escaping into some outside (*hors-lieu*) (outside of class or outside of ideology)" (Pêcheux, 2014, p.17). He sees no hope of individuals resisting the process of interpellation.

Thus, while Marx's theory makes change appear inevitable and Althusser's renders it improbable, Gramsci explains why change is possible. Regardless of their differences, "all ideological theories agree that ideology works to maintain class domination; their differences lie in the ways in which this domination is exercised, the degree of its effectiveness, and the extent of the resistances it meets" (Rayner, 2004 p.83).

Mass Media as the Main Ideological Apparatus in Contemporary Times

The Frankfurt School

Adorno and Horkheimer: "The Culture Industry"

In their essay "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1947), Theodore Adorno (1903–1969) and Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) explain how media and culture became tools of ideology, control and domination. The term "culture industry" focuses on the industrialization and homogenization of mass-produced culture. Movies, art, clothes, and so on were assembled and mass produced like any other manufactured product.

This production of mass culture generated mass desires, tastes, ways of thinking, and behaviours that lead to a highly organized and homogenized social order. The industry embraces and homogenizes any originality. This prevents independent thinking that might cause political upheaval. This is how the culture industry plays a major role in cementing the status quo by allowing the existence of a single ideology for the people to adopt. The effect of this "uniform ideology is to induce a docile uniformity in the masses" (Czolacz, 2015, p.2) and in turn, advance the interests and dominance of those in power. Thus, the culture industry became a tool for mass control and conditioning. It turned culture itself into an ideological medium of domination.

Adorno and Horkheimer focused on film and other media. They demonstrated how culture products such as films or magazines comprise a system that is uniform in every way. They stress that "all mass culture under monopoly is identical" (Adorno, 1999, p.32), and easily predictable. The outcome is an endless repetition of the same. This

sameness creates a sense of conformity where social authority was upheld and the masses were discouraged from thinking outside of current confines. "The relentless unity of the culture industry bears witness to the emergent unity of politics" (Horkheimer, 2006, p.43). Those in power always work to maintain their hold and secure their control on the media since doing so reduces competition and increases corporate control of the information and entertainment industries.

In *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1951), Adorno claimed that the "difference between ideology and reality has disappeared" because ideology now "resigns itself to confirmation of reality by its mere duplication" (Adorno, 2005, p.211). This attempt to duplicate reality right down to the most insignificant details leads to the confirmation of the status quo and coerces people into obedience by inducing their consent. This constituted a mass society and what the Frankfurt school described as "the end of the individual" because, Adorno argued, that the culture industry's influence is so powerful that "conformity has replaced consciousness" (Adorno, 2001, p.104).

Thus, mass culture depoliticizes and extinguishes the revolutionary impulse of the working classes, who were supposed to be vehicles of revolution in the classical Marxian scenario. The products of the culture industry provide the working class with a stimulant, an escape, a relief from and a way to cope with the stresses, exhaustion and boredom of life under capitalism. In other words, work leads to mass culture, which promises an "escape from everyday drudgery", and mass culture leads back to work (Adorno, 1999, p.39).

The culture industry organizes leisure time in the same way as industrialization has organized work time since it occupies their day from the time they leave work in the evening until they return to work the following day. Entertainment and pleasure prevent resistance and dissolve critical consciousness. "The spectator must need no thoughts of his own" (Horkheimer, 2006, p.54). Through the promotion of "physical as against intellectual art" (Wedekind, 1921, p.426), the culture industry controls its consumers and reinforces ideologies that legitimate forms of oppression.

Leo Lowenthal (1900-1993) contends that the culture industry has

limited the horizon of the working class to political and economic goals. He maintains that "whenever revolutionary tendencies show a timid head, they are mitigated and cut short by a false fulfillment of wish-dreams, like wealth, adventure, passionate love, power and sensationalism in general" (Lowenthal, 1961, p.11). Hence, by supplying the means to the satisfaction of certain needs, capitalism is able to prevent the formation of more fundamental desires. This is how the culture industry "stunts the political imagination" (Storey, 2009, p.63), maintains the iron grip of social authority and fosters "the absolute power of capitalism" (Adorno, 1999, p.32).

Since democracy exists in the form of elections, people will not be controlled physically. People will be controlled in advance; mentally. The culture industry will shape people to conform to society. Ironically, people did not seek change because they were happy about their situation. Moreover, the culture industry's products reinforce the status quo by depicting it as entirely natural and unquestionable, they prevent critical analysis of the existing social and economic order. This leads to the belief that all events are predetermined and, therefore, inevitable. In effect, this sense of fatalism plays a principal role in ideological reproduction. "Through its inherent tendency to adopt the tone of the factual report, the culture industry makes itself the irrefutable prophet of the existing order" (Horkheimer, 2006, p.59).

Adorno and Horkheimer elaborate on how the culture industry controls and stultifies the people because it works on and shapes their minds. The culture industry "can do as it chooses with the needs of consumers – producing, controlling, disciplining them" (Horkheimer, 2006, p.64) to the extent that people speak, react, move, look and even think in the same way. "The most intimate reactions of human beings have become so entirely reified" (Horkheimer, 2006, p.71). People have become the major product of the industry whose "agents...are on the alert to ensure that the simple reproduction of mind does not lead on to the expansion of mind" (Horkheimer, 2006, p.46). Those who did not conform felt like outsiders.

This shows that mass culture is a difficult system to challenge. Adorno saw the public as passive recipients of the hegemony of

capitalism. There is little opportunity for the agency or resistance of the audience because the culture industry is "a means for fettering consciousness. It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves" (Adorno, 2001, p.135). For this reason, Adorno and Horkheimer argue in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) that the project of the Enlightenment has reached a dead end. It was supposed to bring human freedom and encourage critical thinking. Yet, this reason and knowledge only lead to more control of social life. Consumer capitalism creates de-individualized citizens whose imagination is hijacked by a culture industry. They lack the ability to form a genuine collectivity or imagining social reform. The ideology produced by the culture industry restricts human freedom and creates a passive, uniform consumer mass society. There has been "a regression of enlightenment to ideology which finds its typical expression in cinema and radio" (Horkheimer, 2002, p.xviii). Also, Marshall McLuhan (1911- 1980) asserts in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), that the media is leading the "entire globe" toward a "single consciousness" (Mc Luhan, 1964, p.61).

Jurgen Habermas (1929), a member of the Frankfurt School, argues that during the eighteenth century there was an active public sphere where people debated and exchanged ideas on fundamental issues such as philosophy, economics, and politics. This practice had the potential and power to affect and influence formal politics. People would meet in coffeehouses, for example, and discuss topical issues together. With the rise of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, though, the situation changed. Due to the impact of mass media, the public sphere has been infiltrated and hijacked by a specific class interest. People became listeners instead of being talkers who could actively create and change the society in which they lived. The culture creates bland and content consumers with no critical abilities. This way, it strengthens and reproduces capitalism.

Adorno's exaggeration of the media's power to manipulate is a result of what he witnessed in Germany in the 1930s and the Nazis' use of media propaganda in mobilizing the masses. To them "mass culture was the seedbed of political totalitarianism" (Andrae, 1979, p.2). During their exile in the United States, they also noticed how the culture industry was

dominated by prevailing capitalist economic interests that marketed American capitalism's ideals.

In reality, the culture industry has never been so massified. Scholars such as John Fiske (1939) and Fredric Jameson (1934) criticized it for denying the idea or potential of resistance. Nonetheless, since its inception in the 1940s, the concept of the culture industry has played a major role in critical theory, contributing to a better understanding of the role and impact of mass media in connection to ideology and, hence, society.

Herbert Marcuse's "One Dimensional Man"

Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979) was another member of the Frankfurt School who, unlike his colleagues, remained in the United States after World War Two. Like the other members, Marcuse wanted to understand how the ruling classes maintained their control. He also sought to comprehend the mind and the psyche of the working class and to understand why they resisted a revolution that would benefit them. In his article, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," (1941) Marcuse explained how technology creates a "mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behavior patterns, an instrument for control and domination" (Marcuse, 1978, p.139). This is how mass-produced culture became an instrument of control that manipulated people to follow the dominant patterns of thinking and behaviour.

One-Dimensional Man (1964) starts with: "A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization, a token of technical progress" (Marcuse, 2002, p.3). This "democratic unfreedom" refers to the acquiescence of the people and their acceptance of exploitation, oppression, and repression. Marcuse emphasises the fact that dominance no longer necessitates the use of physical force. One-dimensional thought leads to a one-dimensional society because it whittles down critical, "two-dimensional" consciousness. It smoothes out differences and contradictions so that people feel unified just because they watch the same TV programs, or support the same sports teams, etc.

[T]he irresistible output of the entertainment and

information industry [the culture industry] carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions.... The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood... it becomes a way of life. It is a good way of life – much better than before – and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change. (Marcuse, 2002, p.14).

The "irresistible output" of the culture industry is an instrument for the ruling class to manipulate needs, integrate potential opposition, serve their own interests and, thus, maintain the status quo. These products homogenize society because they spread certain "attitudes and habits" to the whole society. This way, the indoctrination becomes "a way of life". Marcuse, also, explains how "true" needs (nourishment, clothing, and lodging, etc.) are replaced by "false" needs which are created and propagated by advertisements in mass media (Marcuse, 2002, p. 7). These false needs generate capital for the wealthy and distract individuals from recognizing their own interest in social transformation. The media controls and manipulates its audience. False needs which are not essential to life are advertised in such a way that people believe they cannot live or survive without them. People need the latest smartphone or shoes, for example. Now, people are chasing the same dreams, dreams that will only benefit their oppressors. This uniformity generates one-dimensional thought and behavior. This is how the products of the culture industry depoliticise society and extinguish any revolutionary impulse.

One-dimensional thinking does not recognize the degree of manipulation and, therefore, does not demand change. Critical thinking, on the other hand, is two-dimensional because it recognizes forces of domination and can lead to social change. Unlike Adorno and Horkheimer, Marcuse was interested in the revolutionary power of culture. From the above, it is clear that the culture industry has been the main way of disseminating dominant ideologies in contemporary societies. It is used to control as well as distract and, thus, secure the ruling classes in place.

Spectacle, Distraction and Social Control

Spectacle has always been utilized for social control purposes. In *The Prince* (1532), Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) advised his prince to "entertain the people with festivals and spectacles at convenient seasons of the year" (Machiavelli 43) and use public spectacles, whether in the form of entertaining festivities, or dramatic executions, as part of his practices of leadership, social control, and power. He explains that there should be an element of entertainment in praising the successes of people or punishing their misdeeds. It should make people talk and it should be about how amazing the prince is. Also, Greeks and Romans used spectacle as a method of control because it is a major source of distraction. Today, television, entertainment, sports, and even news are fertile grounds for spectacle.

Guy Debord's "Spectacle"

Guy Debord (1931 –1994), a French Marxist theorist, philosopher, and filmmaker, wrote *Society of the Spectacle* (1967) on modern society that he saw increasingly obsessed with or structured around images, commodities, major events such as the Oscars or Football World Cup and appearances over reality, truth, and experience. In the opening lines of his book, Debord states: "In a society dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles" (Debord, 1995, p.12). The spectacle includes the different techniques that governments use to manipulate people's behaviour in society without resorting to force.

The spectacle is mainly a tool of distraction because "megaspectacles" divert people's attention from the important problems in their daily lives. Films, for example, deliver a larger-than-life spectacle complete with special effects, editing, and moving audio. The spectacle is ubiquitous, it dominates the world of politics, leisure and culture. Politicians and advertisers prioritize the projection of images and appearances to communicating actual meaningful information to the extent that "the real world changes into simple images, simple images become real beings and effective motivations of a hypnotic behavior" (Debord, 2006, p.120). As a result, the spectacle dominates consciousness.

The spectacle is a weapon of pacification and depoliticization; it is

a "permanent opium war" (Debord, 1995, p.30) because in submissively consuming spectacles one is alienated and distracted from actively producing one's life.

The spectacle [is a]... means of unification.... [it] is that sector where all attention, all consciousness, converges.... [it] is the locus of illusion and false consciousness; the unity it imposes is merely the official language of generalized separation (Debord, 1995, p.12).

Real life is dull in comparison to the spectacle which is thrilling and fascinating.

Jean Baudrillard (1929 –2007), another French philosopher and cultural theorist, echoes the above when he states that entertainment, media and information technologies provide more intense experiences than those of ordinary, banal "desert of the real" (Kellner, 2020, p.4) everyday life. Subjectivities in this world are scattered and lost. People are hooked to images, spectacles, and simulacra. The "masses" are "bathed in a media massage" without messages or meaning, a "mass age where classes disappear, and politics is dead, as are the grand dreams of disalienation, liberation, and revolution" (Kellner, 2020, p.5). Baudrillard says that the people are now after entertainment and spectacle and not purpose or meaning. They break into a "silent majority," signifying "the end of the social" (Kellner, 2020, p.5).

The spectacle, according to Debord, is more than just visuals created by the technologies of mass media. It is a materialised worldview. In this society of the spectacle, people's entire existence, the fabric of their very identities is cultivated through images manufactured and distributed by the culture industry. People are immersed in the consumption of spectacle, commodities and images. They have their conversations over coffee, shopping, or seeing a movie. Their main topics are celebrity scandals, marriages, divorces, wardrobe malfunctions, scandals and/or murder trials. This ability to hook a nation on such events despite so many important political and social issues shows the immense significance of media and its spectacles. In this society, people are isolated but this isolation is masked by the dialogue that results from the shared cinema experience, for example. These spectacles serve to distract

people, cover up how separate and fractured modern lives really are.

It is important to notice that today, with social media, appearance has become more and more important than substance. People now work on appearing to have a perfect life, rather than actually working on having real, meaningful, fulfilling, satisfying lives. This is what Debord means when he says we have moved from a position of "being into having" to "having into appearing" (Debord, 1995, p.16). Those messages shape people's everyday realities and those messages are directed by capital, powerful ruling class interested in maintaining the status quo.

Edward Bernays's "Propaganda"

Emotions, Psychological Manipulation and Mind Control

Edward Louis Bernays (1891-1995), nephew of Sigmund Freud, and the father of public relations, worked for major American corporations, government agencies, and politicians. He described the masses as irrational and more like "member[s] of a herd" (Bernays, 1928, p.50) and explained how psychoanalysis can be used to enter the consumers' subconscious and control them in desirable ways. He states that "we are dominated by [a] relatively small number of persons ... who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires that control the public mind" (Bernays, 1928, p.9).

Bernays emphasizes that it is possible to control the masses once the motives and desires of the public mind are understood. This was obvious in his 1929 campaign which branded cigarettes as "torches of freedom" to exploit women's desire to be free from the patriarchy and be equal to men. This campaign was a huge success and smoking among women skyrocketed. Media bombarded the social sphere to transmit the propaganda messages, such as advertisements, posters, films, radio shows, television shows, and even cartoons! The strategy he devised tied the commodity to identity instead of use-value. Genuine needs were replaced by pseudo-needs.

Bernays argued that domination is no longer an outcome of armies or policies. On the contrary, "the engineering of consent is the very

essence of the democratic process" (Bernays, 1956, p.9). He stresses that "ideas could be as important weapons as anything" (Voyles, 2020, p.1). The mechanism that allows the control and manipulation of the public mind and the wide dissemination of ideas is propaganda.

The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. ...We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. ... [They] understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind (Bernays, 1928, p.9).

Bernays explains that "group leaders" or skilled practitioners could use psychoanalysis to "mold" and control the minds of masses in desirable ways (Bernays, 1928, p.92). Bernays emphasises that it is possible to manipulate millions of people because he describes the masses as being subject to herd instinct. He states: "Because man is by nature gregarious he feels himself to be member of a herd.... His mind retains the patterns which have been stamped on it by the group influences" (Bernays, 1928, p.49). "Group leaders" know how to manipulate the "public mind" to serve power.

Bernays stresses the importance of emotions in inserting ideas and controlling the public mind. Propaganda manipulates different emotions—fear, hope, hate—to direct the public towards the desired goal. An experienced propagandist knows how to psychologically manipulate and move people by activating the right emotions in order "to create a sense of excitement and arousal that suppresses critical thinking" (Hobbs, 2021, p.129). Antonio Damasio (1944), a notable neurophysiologist, refers to the brain as a "thinking machine for feeling" (Damasio, 1994, p.8). People are guided by their emotions and, therefore, logic and reason are subordinate to emotion. Emotions play a significant part in our political reality and are a powerful tool used to construct and disseminate ideology. "Emotion, through propaganda, plays an integral role in defending existing social structures" (Kassab, 2017, p.6). They also play a key role in the process of manufacturing collective behaviour.

This is because "[e]motions shape ideas. Emotions and ideas work together to create politics" (Kassab, 2017, p.1). This focus on emotions, which were understudied in the social sciences, distinguishes Bernay's work. His ideas were very powerful that, ironically, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda Paul Josef Goebbels used Bernays's book *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923) as a basis for his campaign against the Jews of Germany (Bernays was also a Jew)! Goebbels played on emotions, especially fear and hate, to mobilize and instill feelings of nationalism and patriotism and create identity.

Propaganda and ideology are part of people's daily lives. They are disseminated via artifacts such as maps, children's toys, heroes, villains, and other commonplace objects and activities. They play a major role in the creation of myth and in forming political identities and mobilizing people under one common banner. This idea of a link between everyday objects and ideology was also discussed by the French theorist Roland Barthes.

Barthes's "Mythologies"

For Barthes (1915-1980), a significance that is deliberately and systematically arranged overlays everyday life. In *Mythologies* (1957), he contemplated and analyzed various objects, artifacts, or practices, for example, a wrestling match or a margarine commercial, and concluded that they all share the same ideological core, specific to those in power. He states that "[t]he cultural work done in the past by gods and epic sagas is now done by laundry-detergent commercials and comic-strip character" (Danesi, 2016, p.29). Barthes explained how contemporary pop culture was used by the bourgeoisie to assert and validate their values, beliefs and ideologies and transform it into a "universal nature" (Barthes, 1991, p.8). Entertainment inevitably contains, reflects, and proclaims ideology. It is in this sense of entertainment as ideology that Roland Barthes utilizes the term "myth". Myth fosters the values and interests of society's dominant groups while marginalizing and delegitimizing alternatives or others.

Barthes wanted to expose what he calls the "bourgeois norm" or this "anonymous ideology" penetrating every possible level of social life (Barthes, 1991, p.139). As he states in his preface, "I resented seeing

Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of *what-goes-without-saying*, the ideological abuse which, in my view, is hidden there" (Barthes, 1991, p.10).

"Mythologies", according to Barthes, served to "naturalize" and "eternalize" French bourgeois culture. In his analysis of the picture of a Black African soldier saluting the French flag, for example, Barthes argued that the picture sanitized and removed the horrors of French imperialism because it made it seem natural for an African to salute the French flag and display correct military conduct. "Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (Barthes, 1991, p.143). This idealized version of the image wipes the evils of French colonization. The relationship between the black soldier saluting the flag and French imperialism has been "naturalized" (Barthes, 1991, p.130).

According to Slavoj Žižek (1949), "naturalization (the insistence that a particular social meaning is eternal, universal, or natural, rather than particular, contingent) is the ideological move *par excellence*. A crucial step in ideology critique is thus to unmask [what]... ideology works to conceal..." (Raybone, 2015, p.4). This is precisely what Barthes in his analysis of different practices and artifacts.

Foucault's "Power"

The French theorist Michel Foucault (1926–1984) has been hugely influential in explaining the concept of power. He states that authorities maintained social order through the exercise of sovereign power and disciplinary power. In his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison* (1975), Foucault explains that before the eighteenth century, sovereign power typically manifested itself in the form of public torture, public executions and corporal punishment that functioned as "theatrical representation[s] of pain" (Foucault, 2012, p.14). Because crimes momentarily "place the sovereign in contempt" (Foucault, 2012, p.48), punishments must not only enforce justice, they must also restore the power of the sovereign and warn subjects that one cannot violate the sovereign's will and escape retribution. This is the "political" function of punishment which makes the sovereign's power manifest "at its most

spectacular" so that subjects see and recognize the sovereign's "intrinsic superiority" (Foucault, 2012, p.49). The punishment highlights "the dissymmetry between the subject who has dared to violate the law and the all-powerful sovereign who displays his strength" (Foucault, 2012, p.49). It must, therefore, be "carried out in such a way as to give a spectacle ... of power and ... superiority" (Foucault, 2012, p.34).

After the eighteenth century and in the early nineteenth century, however, governments sought to discipline the soul rather than punish the body. The shift to this new method of power affects "the grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives" (Smith, 2015, p.37). Foucault emphasizes that such reform makes control more effective: "to punish less, perhaps; but certainly to punish better" (Foucault, 2012, p.82). To achieve this, they embraced mechanisms intended to advance self-regulation and compliance with endorsed norms of behavior. In this way, disciplinary power aims to produce "docile bodies" (Foucault, 2012, p.135) that are responsible for practicing control and exercising power over themselves.

Panopticism and Surveillance

A way of "obtaining power of mind over mind" (Foucault, 2012, p.106) was achieved by what Foucault calls the panoptic machine which was inspired by Jeremy Bentham's prison model. The panopticon was a tower placed at the centre of the building and it allowed an inspector to observe all the prisoners. Yet, the prisoners would not know whether or not they are in fact being observed. To them, "the inspector is all-seeing, omniscient and omnipotent" (Galič, 2017, p.12). Therefore, they learn to monitor themselves and behave as if they are always being watched!

[T]he inmates ... [are] caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers.... He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; ... he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault, 2012, p.201).

This is the power of the panopticon. The panopticon is a shift from punishment to discipline or "the disciplinary society" (Foucault, 2012,

p.209). When people know they are watched, discipline becomes internalised. As a result, people will police and control themselves. This, according to Foucault, should lead to the constitution of subjects who abide by social rules and expectations.

An important element of disciplinary power is "the gaze." The pervasive presence of the gaze encourages people to engage in normative behaviors that are socially recognized. "Panopticism is a form of power ... organised around the norm, in terms of what [is] normal or not, correct or not, in terms of what one must do or not do". When people are under surveillance, they hold themselves accountable for conforming to and complying with behavioral expectations that others establish for them. Morals and values will be internalized.

Surveillance has become a dominant way of control. This is clear in the widespread use of surveillance technologies in contemporary society. CCTV cameras provide powerful forms of social control that are more efficient and subtly concealed. After 9/11, surveillance became ubiquitous. The Snowden revelations have shown that nation-states are conducting mass surveillance of foreign and domestic citizens alike. As David Lyon claims: "we cannot evade some interaction with the Panopticon, either historically, or in today's analyses of surveillance" (Lyon, 2006, p.4). Undeniably, the presence of those cameras could "sap political energies and keep people ... far from the madding crowds and sites of mass political action" (Kellner, 1996, p.16).

Power and Discourse

According to Foucault, another way of obtaining power is through discourse. Discourse is not just language that is structured around a specific subject. Discourse has a more critical, more political level. It is a means of power and norms because it is seen as a means of legitimizing social and political activities. It mediates ideological justifications of the status quo which are accepted as "common sense." To illustrate, scientific discourses that seek to explain human nature actually set guidelines and norms that recommend appropriate actions and determine what can be classified as "deviant." Thus, discourse is a means of mediating political beliefs, ideologies, and norms. In discursive theory, the "subject does not predate, conceive of, or invent the discourse....

Rather, and very importantly, the subject is constituted by the discourse" (Pribram, 2000, p.152).

According to Foucault, power creates the "truths" people live by. "Truth is not by nature free" but "thoroughly imbued with relations of power" (Foucault, 1978, p.60). Moreover, "[e]ach society has its own regime of truth... that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true" (Lorenzini, 2015 p.2). Those "regimes of truth" need not be real; they need only be regarded as "true" and behave as if they were "true". This way, regimes of truth are created and legitimized. Discourse has the purpose of constituting subjectivity and organizing "techniques for 'governing' individuals – that is, for 'guiding their conduct'" (Foucault, 1997, p.203). This is because, as previously mentioned, knowledge/power systems are less physically coercive (punishment) than they are internalized or self-regulated (control), through the process of normalization.

One of the twentieth's century leading political theorists, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), saw truth as belonging to sciences. Truth, according to Arendt, is coercive because it discourages debates or dissent and imposes and compels collective consent. This way truth eliminates diversity of views since it must be accepted by every person as a non-negotiable matter of fact or as Kant states "the external power that deprives man of the freedom to communicate his thoughts publicly deprives him at the same time of his freedom to think" (Arendt, 1968, p.230). Of course, this undermines the very foundations of political life.

The distinction between discourse and ideology is highlighted by Foucault who notes that the concept of ideology has multiple flaws. First, ideology is viewed by Marxist theory as something false, which implies the probability of a real consciousness and a form of reality outside the power field. Foucault describes ideology thus:

In traditional Marxist analyses, ideology is a sort of negative element through which the fact is conveyed that the subject's relation to truth, or simply the knowledge relation, is clouded, obscured, violated by conditions of existence, social relations, or the political forms imposed on the subject of knowledge from the outside (Foucault,

1997, p.15).

Alternatively, Foucault explains how power is "the very ground on which the subject, the domains of knowledge, and the relations with truth are formed" (Foucault, 1997, p.15).

Like Adorno and Horkheimer, Foucault takes a hostile stance against modern theories which tend to see knowledge and truth to be neutral, objective, universal, or instruments of change and emancipation. Foucault claims that the task of the Enlightenment was to multiply "reason's political power" (Foucault, 1997, p.298) but, ironically, this modern rationality became an integral part of power and domination because it removes plurality, diversity, and individuality in favour of conformity and homogeneity.

From the above, ideology and discourse are connected because ideology can be understood as an effect of discourse. In other words, when discourse is used to support the system and social power it functions as ideology (ideology is discursive). Power is dispersed across society, touches everybody, and influences and controls their actions, discourses, and daily lives.

The most persistent criticism of Foucault's concept of discursive subjectivity is that it eliminates and negates the possibility of "agency," that is, motivated, intentional action and reaction on the part of the subject and, therefore, eliminating necessary conditions for the possibility of political activity and social change. When the discursive subject is totally produced or constructed by cultural forces and systems of knowledge and beliefs, then any potential for a personal spontaneous response is eliminated. In this case, individual or self-willed thoughts and actions are not possible.

The previous part of the paper outlined the various ways ideology is used to exploit, control, manipulate, and inculcate dominant ideas in people's minds. Except for Gramsci and Marcuse, many dismissed the idea or possibility of audience or people agency or resistance. There are other theorists, however, who saw the possibility of resistance on the part of the majority.

Post-Marxism and Cultural Studies

The Birmingham School of Cultural Studies 1960s

Like traditional Marxism, Post-Marxist cultural studies that emerged in the 1960s with the British cultural studies recognize that the culture industries are a major site of ideological production. However, they dismiss the opinion that the people are passive consumers and victims of "an updated form of the opium of the people" (Storey, 2009, p.87). During this period, there was an especially intense focus on audience research, on how audiences produced meanings, on how films mobilized pleasure and influenced audiences, and how audiences decoded and used the materials of media culture. They introduce the concept of an active audience that can generate meanings. This surpasses the limitations and weaknesses of the Frankfurt-school notion of a passive audience. They also expand their focus to include gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality representations and ideologies because they see such social divisions as critical as class divisions.

The idea that "the capitalist culture industries produce only an apparent variety of products whose variety is illusory for they all promote the same capitalist ideology" is totally dismissed by John Fiske (p.309). He firmly opposes the claim "that 'the people' are 'cultural dupes'. . . a passive, helpless mass incapable of discrimination and thus at the economic, cultural, and political mercy of the barons of the industry" (Fiske, 1987, p.309). On the contrary, he asserts "the power of audiences-as-producers" (Fiske, 1987, p.313) because subordinate meanings contradict dominant meanings; thus, the intellectual and moral leadership of the dominant class is challenged.

Another theorist, Stuart Hall (1932-2014), comments on the relation of mass media to "the power bloc" (Hall, 1981, p.238). In "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular" (1981), he explains how those in power shape and enforce ideological hegemony and demonstrates how they play a role in the constitution and construction of the people. However, Hall also acknowledged the power of the people to resist ideology. He emphasizes the distinction between encoding – producing media texts – and decoding – receiving media texts – to confirm audiences' ability to produce their own meanings and decode texts in oppositional ways.

In other words, Hall emphasizes the power of the audience. He recognizes that there is a "preferred" reading of texts in harmony with the dominant ideology because they have "the institutional, political, ideological order imprinted in them and have themselves become institutionalized." These interpretations, however, are not closed or absolute. A "negotiated interpretation" can likewise be reached by the viewers which is "a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements" (Hall, 2006, p.172). Moreover, the viewer can have an oppositional interpretation by decoding the message in a "globally contrary way. He/she detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message with some alternative framework of reference" (Hall, 2006, p.172). Thus, the spectator is no longer "sutured" to the message of the text.

What distinguishes Hall's approach and his form of cultural studies is that they seeks to reconcile the divide between manipulation theory, which sees mass culture and society as dominating individuals, and the theory of populist resistance which emphasizes the power of individuals to challenge, resist, and oppose the dominant culture. Both theories adopt extreme views which limit the scope of interpretation of a certain cultural text or product. Professor John Storey, who has published twenty-seven books on cultural studies, asserts that it is important to note that:

To deny the passivity of consumption is not to deny that sometimes consumption is passive; to deny that consumers are cultural dupes is not to deny that the culture industries seek to manipulate. But it is to deny that popular culture is little more than a degraded landscape of commercial and ideological manipulation, imposed from above in order to make profit and secure social control (Storey, 2009, p.88).

To conclude, it is clear from the above that a ruling class uses a combination of power and hegemony in its attempt to control people, and in some cases, it faces counter-moves that it contains through negotiations, concessions, compromises, and force. Ideology is located in the mind as a set of beliefs and values but is also a product of emotions. It is closely linked to political thinking and drives and influences political behavior. Understanding the concept of ideology, therefore,

makes us examine the "naturalness" of cultural texts in order to recognise that dominant beliefs are not normal or common sense, but rather constructed and debatable. This idea makes people more critical, and encourages them to question long-held, established beliefs that frequently advance the interests of those in power.

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