CHAPTER II

TOWARDS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY OF IDEOLOGY

The concept of ideology, from its very inception in the late eighteenth century, has been an important domain of polemic in social inquiry. The meaning ascribed to the term has undergone many transformations in the last two centuries and has acquired multiple shades of signification. The theory of ideology, at present, define a terrain of analysis which remains central to the contemporary social sciences. It can be treated as an integral part of a broader concern of this study related to the forms of power and hegemony, the behaviour of social classes, social reproduction, dissent and legitimation.

In a society like China, with its complex and distinct social, political and cultural organisation, the study of the functional role of various ideologies seem immensely relevant. As we shall see in the following pages of this chapter any discursive activity, historical narration or the discourse of everyday life partake consciously or unwittingly an ideological position. It can be deciphered through appropriate techniques of demystification. Keeping this in mind, the present chapter is an attempt to arrive at an apposite methodology with which the problem of dissent, hegemony and legitimation in Chinese society can be explained.

At the outset it should be acknowledged the limitation of this chapter, in the sense that an exhaustive treatment of the notion of ideology as an ubiquitous social phenomenon seems beyond the spatial and temporal considerations of the present study. Moreover, even if the discussions are confined to its conceptual level the attempt will still go well beyond the limits of this monograph. Therefore, in order to bring the subject under manageable proportions, this chapter would mainly examine the theoretical works of those creative thinkers who have identified closely with, and contributed to, at varying
degree, the greatest emancipatory project of our epoch. Their names include apart from its founder Karl Marx, V.I.Lenin, Georg Lukac, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser and Raymond Williams.

This chapter has been divided into four major areas of concern which primarily suggests an ordering of various aspects of the concept. Firstly, we shall briefly take a glance at the complicated history of the term, ideology. Following which we shall consider Marx's rejection of ideology and see as to why it forms a critical category in his writings. The emergence of a positive/epistemologically neutral conception of ideology has been explored in section three. The discussions in the fourth part focuses mainly the role of ideology in social reproduction.

A SHORT NOTE ON THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE TERM: IDEOLOGY

The appearance and employment of the term 'ideology' began only since 1796, when it was coined by the rationalist thinker of post-revolutionary France, Destutt de Tracy. It was intended to be a philosophical term for the 'science of ideas'. Its use depended on a particular understanding of the nature of 'ideas' which belongs to the broad empiricist tradition. This meaning attached to the term claimed a sense of scientificity and had been in use in epistemology and linguistic theory until nineteenth century.

The critical or restricted connotation persuasively charged into the meaning of the term by Napoleon Bonaparte. He attacked the principles of enlightenment as 'ideology' and the proponents of democracy as 'ideologists' from a conservative position. In this pejorative sense ideology became a term of abuse and popularised as an abstract,

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impractical and misleading theory. The negative sense of ideology, in its most convincing form, was retained by Marx and Engels, but from an entirely different point of view. This aspect we shall discuss elsewhere in this chapter.

The historical accounts of ideology are innumerable. In literature, common usage and dictionaries, the term has been loaded with different definitions and characteristics. This is mainly due to the ambiguity attached with the constituents of term 'idea' and 'Logos' when it was coined in eighteenth century. The passage of time since then, marked a steady proliferation of meanings which it has accumulated. Its usages covers a broad spectrum of meanings, running from the pejorative or restricted ones to those which are neutral, descriptive or positive.

ON THE NATURE OF IDEOLOGY: INTERPRETATIONS OF MARX

Any discussion on the Marxian concept of ideology cannot overlook the historical emergence of the concept especially its relation to the social conflicts which cleared the way for the formation of capitalist social organization. It would explain, to some extent, as to why the concept of ideology became a critical category in Marx's writings. At the same time it is equally relevant to add that this concept cannot apply to all historical periods in the same fashion.

The French materialism and the German philosophy of consciousness: the two main intellectual tradition in the eighteenth century, can be taken as the immediate antecedents to the concept of ideology. They both shared a common critical attitude - the former opposed religion and metaphysics, the latter was against traditional epistemology. These two traditions echoed the interests of the emergent social class i.e.,

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the bourgeoisie, in its struggle against the decaying European feudalism.³ This was the broad historical backdrop against which occurred the birth of the concept of ideology.

It is to be acknowledged that Marx's writings does not offer a clear definition of the concept of ideology. In contrast to the analytical precision and systematic treatment of concepts like surplus value, capital or labour his perceptions on ideology are fragmented and sketchy. Therefore, an attempt to elaborate Marx's views on ideology has to be embark upon the inescapable task of reconstructing his scattered usages of the term. Here, it should be borne in mind that some of the relevant texts which are crucial in understanding the theory of ideology scarcely used the term as such. For instance, the term ideology itself is absent from Marx's early philosophical critique of Hegel and religion. The present discussion on ideology in Marx has given serious attention to not to yield, even remotely, to any brand of deterministic/mechanical reading of Marx which have already afflicted irreparable damages to that philosophical system.

The development of the theory of Ideology in Marx falls into two main periods.⁴ The Theses on Feuerbach and The German Ideology represents the inauguration of the first period, which lasts until 1858, where discussions are primarily centered around the resolution of the polarity between subject and object. The second period begins with Grundrisse which is characterised by the concrete study of capitalist social relations.

In this chapter we shall in the main attempt to identify those distinctive theoretical contexts in which the concept of ideology operates in Marx's writings. In doing so we can elicit multiple views on ideology which generally converge on some points.

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In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels employ the term 'ideology' in a polemical way. They criticize the views of the 'Young Hegelians' such as Feuerbach, Baur and Stirner by characterising the views of those thinkers as the 'German ideology'. The young Hegelians, argued the founders of historical materialism, laboured under the illusion that real battle to be fought was a battle of ideas, that, the reality itself could be transformed by taking up a critical attitude towards received ideas.\(^5\) This view is ideological in the sense that, they overestimate the role of ideas in history and in social life. The German ideologists oppose ideas with ideas, they fight phrases with phrases, and as a result they leave the real world unchanged. The use of the term ideology in this polemical sense can be describe as a theoretical account and practice which erraneously regards ideas as autonomous and efficacious and which conceals or distorts the real social contradictions.\(^6\) A reference to a memorable passage, from the text under discussion for its cryptic analogy with a *camera obscura* would cast more light on this point:

> If in all ideology men and their relations 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 the retina does from their physical life process.\(^7\)

The deployment of the concept of ideology against the young Hegelians, subsequently required a more general role in their characterization of social structure and historical change. As we shall discuss elsewhere, in *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels begin to link the production and diffusion of ideas to the relation between classes. The development of a new conception of ideology emerges more clearly in Marx's 1856

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\(^6\) ibid.

\(^7\) K. Marx and F. Engels, "The German Ideology", in *Collected Works*, vol.5 (Moscow, 1976), p.36.
Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. According to this conception, ideology is a system of ideas which expresses the interests of the dominant class but which represents class relations in an illusory form and is depended on, and derived from, the economic conditions and class relations of production.\textsuperscript{8} It was in connection with this perspective, Marx's theory of ideology has been conveniently understood as 'false consciousness'. This dominant formulation, so widespread in secondary literature, calls for a note of clarification, that, as Michele Barrett pointed out 'false consciousness' is a post-Marx concept originated in Engles's letter to Franz Mehring in 1893.\textsuperscript{9} In fact, it appears that Marx has never used the expression 'false consciousness' at all.

Marx constructed the concept of ideology as part of a wider exposition about the formation of ideas. Ideology is a specific mode of being certain ideas, yet it cannot be considered as a mere equivalent of ideas as such. The point in this argument is the important distinction he made between ideas and ideological.

Marx's understanding of the origin and function of ideas can be located in the following three propositions. (1) Historical materialism explains the formation of ideas from material practices. (2) The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas. (3) The contradictions of material life determine the consciousness of men.

The first proposition clarifies, in other words, that, all forms of consciousness emerge from and are closely connected to social practice. Marx's statement in The German Ideology, that, 'consciousness can never be anything else than conscious being,
and the being of men is their actual life process′\textsuperscript{10} succinctly makes his view clear. The vital importance attached to practice expresses the basic assumption that reality itself is a practically constituted one, a product of men's practice.

With respect to the second proposition, there could find some prevalent misconceptions in secondary literature which necessitates a point of clarification. The original text i.e., \textit{The German Ideology} does not say that ruling ideology is the ideology of the ruling class.\textsuperscript{11} Here Marx and Engels speak of ideas in general and not of ideology. The real sense of the proposition is that 'the class which is the ruling \textit{material} force of society, is at the same time its ruling \textit{intellectual} force'.\textsuperscript{12} The means of thought production are controlled by the same social class which has the means of material production. The ideas produced by exploited social classes does not necessarily serve the real interests of those classes. Because they lack means of mental production and are entangled in a relations of material production of which they have no control. So then, they would incline to produce ideas which are susceptible to the interests of the ruling class, in other words, they reproduce ideas which express the dominant material relationship.

The contradictory character of social reality constitutes the basis upon which Marx approaches the concept of ideology. Marx had always maintained that social contradictions can be solved only through revolutionary practice. Ideology emerges as a result of men's inability to solve these contradictions as he is immersed in reproductive practices. As contradictions reach consciousness before men can solve them in practice,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Marx and Engels, n.7, p.36.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Larrain, n.3, p.24.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Marx and Engels, n.7, p.59.
\end{itemize}
they are given a distorted solutions in the mind, a projection in ideological forms.\textsuperscript{13} By attempt to resolve social contradictions in consciousness, ideology necessarily negates and conceal them. Nicos Poulantzas has concisely explicated this point:

\begin{quote}
ideology has the precise function of hiding the real contradictions and of reconstituting on an imaginary level a relatively coherent discourse which serves as horizon of agents experience.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

Apart from the above discussed general sense in which Marx conceived ideology, elements of a different conception implicitly underlies in his writings. This, what could be called, the latent conception illuminates ideology in relation to the spirits of historical past. It represents a vision which tries to explain the complexities involved in the process of the formation of social consciousness and is also a theoretical breakthrough which transcend beyond his general depiction of social antagonism as a grand opposition between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. According to John B. Thomson this latent conception conceives ideology as a system of representations which serves to maintain existing relations of class domination by orienting individuals towards the historical past rather than the future, or towards images and ideas which conceal class relations and obstruct the collective pursuit of social change.\textsuperscript{15} Instead of using the term 'ideology' in the contexts where this latent conception emerges, Marx speaks of 'illusions' and 'fixed ideas' of 'spirits' and 'ghosts' that hide among the people and solicit their superstition and their prejudice.\textsuperscript{16} However, we could justifiably extend the term 'ideology' to refer to a range of social phenomena of which he offers concrete analysis.

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13 Larrain, n.4, p.46. \\
14 Quoted in ibid, p.46. \\
15 Thomson, n.5, p.41. \\
16 ibid, p.41.
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These are not mere epiphenomena of relations of production: rather, they are symbolic constructions which have some degree of autonomy and efficacy. They constitute symbols, slogans, customs, traditions, values and so on. The persistence of these traditions, symbols and values of which Marx called that 'train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions' in a modern bourgeois society, arrests large scale social change.\(^{17}\) Marx's account of the events leading up to the coup d'e-tat of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in December 1851 contains substantial exposition about the role of images and symbols from the past which played in France at that time. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* opens with the celebrated passage:

> The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such a periods of revolutionary crises they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them, names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.\(^{18}\)

To conclude it could be stated that Marx conceived ideology as a distorted consciousness. he employs the concept in a critical sense. The twin specific and connected features of ideology are, firstly, that it conceals or misrepresents social contradictions and secondly, it does it in the interest of the dominant class.

**TOWARDS A POSITIVE MEANING**

The concept of ideology began to acquire new meanings following the death of Karl Marx. Though the original critical connotations attached to it had not reversed completely, a definite tendency arose which initiated to see ideology as the totality of

17 ibid, p.41.

forms of social consciousness - a meaning best expressed by the concept of 'ideological superstructure' - and the idea of different class ideologies in conflict.

It was through a highly complex process the evolution towards a positive meaning took shape. To begin with, in a particular historical epoch where the economic organization of capitalism underwent drastic changes with the emergence of monopolies and imperialist expansion a new political climate formed which favoured the growth of powerful working class movements and parties. So the central concern of the first generation of Marxists thinkers was the economic analyses of the imperialist stage of capitalism and to formulate a Marxist political theory. Hence a systematic reworking of the concept of ideology had not seemed to have occurred during that period. It was with the resurgence of western Marxism in the 1920s the preoccupation with ideology and culture emerged.

The fact that the first two generations of Marxist thinkers, after Marx's death, did not have access to 'The German Ideology' the single most important text not only for its overall significance for the concept of ideology but also for its argument in favour of a negative connotation to the concept, is to be considered as an important factor which contributed to evolve a positive concept.19 Labriola, Mehring, Kautsky, Plekhanov and most significantly, Lenin, Gramsci and early Lukacs were not acquainted with Marx and Engels most forceful theses of a critical view of ideology.

Lenin's theoretical development took shape at a historical situation where popular uprisings against the ancien regimes of Eastern Europe 'created the conditions for a new type of theory, based directly on mass struggles of the proletariat and integrated naturally

19 Larrain, n.3, p.54.
into party organizations'. 20 A positive or neutral concept of ideology began to get wide intellectual currency with the publication of Lenin's 1874 pamphlet, 'What is to be done?' whose central concern was the organization of a working class party. In the context of the political practice of social democracy at the end of 19th century, Lenin believed that the theoretical accountability of the political ideas of the classes in conflict can be achieved by extending the meaning of ideology. Since the political ideas of the ruling classes are identified with an ideology, its critique can also be carried out from a different class position - an ideological point of view. 21 Lenin uses the concept of ideology in the sense of a set of cognitions and theories which expresses the interests of a social class. This being the case the falsity of bourgeois ideology, according to him, is not because of its ideological character, but rather to its bourgeois origin. 22

Lenin unambiguously identified ideology with the totality of forms of social consciousness. He distinguished, at a general level, 'material social relations' from 'ideological social relations'. He maintains that the former take shape 'without passing through men's consciousness and generate recurrence and regularity in the social phenomena'. The latter are those relations that 'before taking shape, pass through man's consciousness' and they 'merely constitute a superstructure on the former'. 23

'What is to be done'? firmly established the linkage between different class interests and various ideologies. Lenin seems to have increasingly focussed on the distinction between the spontaneous consciousness of the working class and the real.

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21 Jorge Larrain, n.4, p.76.
22 ibid, p.77.
23 V.I.Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats" in Collected Works vol.1 (Moscow, 1960), p.147.
'social democratic' class consciousness. He considered the former as an 'embryonic form' of consciousness as expressed in trade unionism. Whereas, the latter is a political and theoretical form of consciousness developed by intellectuals outside the workers movement. He affirmed that, class political consciousness can be brought to the working class only from without. This point invited many critical comments from other Marxist theorists in his own time.

There prominent features can easily be drawn in Lenin's writings on the ideology of the working class. First of all his endeavour seems to have aimed at attributing the status of scientificity to the protectarian ideology. Secondly, he asserted that the theory of socialism grew out of the philosophical and economic theories elaborated by the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia, it arose quite independently from the spontaneous growth of working class movement. Thirdly, scientific socialism as a proletarian ideology should therefore be imported into the class by the party.

A positive conception of ideology which has already been worked out by Lenin found further exposition in the work of one of the prominent figures in the Western Marxism - Georg Lukacs. A collection of his insightful essays, on the early 20th century social organization of capitalism, History and class consciousness, has addressed the question of ideology. Lukacs was, in the main, unleashing an attack on the positivist/empiricist underpinnings attached with the rationality of science and technology which emerged in the post-industrial revolution Europe.

In order to understand Lukacs's schema fully it seems indispensable to touch upon certain themes which constitute what can be called the crux of Lukacs's argument. The

24 Larrain, n.3, p.65.
essential feature of capitalism, according to him, is commodity fetishism, whose essential produce is 'reification'. Reification has been identified as the process through which relations between men take on the appearance of relations between things. With the advancement of capitalism reification becomes more extensive and intensive. The increasing process of fragmentation of the object of production progressively encroaches upon the consciousness of man, the subject of production. Here man is no longer the authentic master of the productive process, he has been dragged into a mechanical part incorporated into a mechanical system.

As far as the concept of ideology is concerned Lukacs basically endorsed Lenin's view. Lenin's distinction between a trade-union ideology which is spontaneous consciousness of the working class and a proletarian scientific ideology which is developed by an autonomous intelligentsia is substituted by Lukacs into his distinction between the 'psychological class consciousness' and the 'ascribed class consciousness' of the proletariat. Lukacs uses the terms 'ideology' or 'ideological' to refer both to the bourgeoisie and to the proletariat, without assigning any negative connotation. The power of the ruling class is presented as spiritual in character i.e., emanations of reification from commodities and that therefore the emergence of true proletarian class consciousness is itself is tantamount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Here it should be noted that in Lukacs essay the whole institutional superstructure of class hegemony; parties, newspapers, schools, trade unions, churches etc., are strikingly

26 ibid, p.28.
27 Larrain, n.3, p.69.
28 Jones, n.25, p.69.
History and class consciousness has also simplified the nature of ideologies which naturally permeates in a society. The dominant ideology according to the text in any given social formation will be the authentic expression of the dominant class which will be a pure reflection of the life conditions and world-view of that class.²⁹

IDEOLOGY AND HEGEMONY/SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebooks, his writings in extraordinarily coercive circumstances of an Italian fascist prison, represent the most creative development of the positive concept of ideology. Before we examine Gramsci's propositions on ideology, it seems crucial to make an introductory note on his concept of hegemony, as in Prison Notebooks ideology operates in that problematic. Gramsci formulated the notion of hegemony, observed Anderson, to designate 'the decisively greater strength and complexity of bourgeois class rule in Western Europe, which had prevented any repetition of October revolution in the advanced capitalist zones of the continent.'³¹ The hegemony of the dominant social class functions mainly through two 'levels' of superstructure; the one that can be called 'civil society' which is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private', and that of 'political society' or the 'state'.³² The exercise of hegemony involve that of the direct domination or command exercised through the state and juridical government and the consent obtained from the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant

²⁹ ibid, p.49.
³⁰ ibid, p.49.
³¹ Perry Anderson, n.20, p.79.
social class which consequently reduce the scale of coercion needs to repress the people. The mechanisms of this hegemonic system which reproduces the consent lay in a multiple and complicated network of cultural institutions - schools, churches, parties, newspapers etc. where the intellectuals are the main mediators.

Gramsci identified the negative concept of ideology or the weak understanding of it in Marxist thought with a form of fatalist conception of Marxism. These reductionist argument conceived ideology as a mere epiphenomenon which reflects but cannot change the economic base. From this view it inferred that ideology is a mere appearance, useless etc.33 Gramsci opposed all epiphenomenalist conceptions of ideology and his contentions are entirely different from those who viewed ideology as false consciousness.

Having dispensed with the critical notion of ideology Gramsci propounded that world-views are never individual facts but are the expression of the ‘communal life of a social bloc’. It is through these ‘organic ideologies’, as Gramsci calls them, men acquire all their form of consciousness. That is organic ideologies are world-views of determinate social blocs.34 Ideology is a ‘specific system of ideas’ or ‘a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestation of individual and collective life’.35 Ideology is precisely the terrain in which social classes become aware of their position and historical role.

Gramsci’s contribution to the Marxist theory made it clear that ideologies are objective and operative realities, as real as the economy and they play a crucial role in

33 Larrain, n.3, p.79.
35 Gramsci, n.32, p.328.
all social formation. Ideology for him has an integrating effect in as much as they serve to cement and unify the entire social bloc. Restating Marx's affirmation about the 'solidity of the popular beliefs' which has 'the same energy as a material force' he explains the importance of ideology for class domination in terms of his notion of historical bloc. This notion seeks to convey the idea that 'material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely dialectic value, since the material forces would be inconceivable historically without form and the ideologies would be individual fancies without material forces'. It suggests that ideology cannot be adequately separated from its material contents. However, it should be borne in mind that there is no mechanical correspondence between ideologies and the social structure.

As we have mentioned in the foregone discussion, Gramsci viewed ideology as the terrain on which the ruling class achieve hegemony. Similarly it is also in ideology that the working class can attain consciousness of its historical role and attempt to extent its hegemony over other dominated social classes. This has to be seen as the essential political task of the working class in order to be able to control the state effectively. In this respect Gramsci explains further the political and cultural strategy for the project of socialist hegemony in which the notions of 'war of position' and 'war of manoeuvre' occupies the central motif. His grand design involves social classes moving, on the analogy of a trench warfare, to better vantage points and 'positions'. The 'war of position' is the battle for winning political hegemony, the securing of consent from the people. The 'war of manoeuvre' comes at the culminating point of capturing of state

36 Mouffe, n.34, p.188.
37 Gramsci, n.32, p.377.
power. However, latter's plausibility can ensure only in a situation where hegemony has already been secured.\(^{38}\)

The innovative feature of Gramsci's approach to the subject of ideology is that he considers ideology at different levels. He distinguishes four degrees of ideology, i.e., philosophy, religion, common sense and folklore. Among these he identified philosophy as the most systematic and rigorous form, the best expression of the world view of a social class. As he puts it, 'philosophy is intellectual order, which neither religion nor common sense can be'.\(^{39}\) For any philosophy if it aspires to be genuinely "original" it has to be 'socialised', has to permeate the culture of the people. He maintained that, religion, especially catholicism was successful in reducing the gap between a philosophical system and the beliefs of the 'common' people.

Common sense is a more unsystematic and inarticulate conception than religion. It is an incoherent set of generally held assumptions and beliefs common to any given society. This 'folklore of philosophy', as Gramsci calls it, are the most wide spread conception of life and man.\(^{40}\) To quote:

*Every philosophical current leaves behind a sedimentation of 'commonsense': this is the document of its historical effectiveness. Commonsense is not some thing rigid and immobile, but it is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life.\(^{41}\)*

Finally, Folklore forms the lowest level of ideology. It is an incoherent collection of disparate elements of different conceptions of the world.

\(^{38}\) Barrett, n.9, p.55.

\(^{39}\) Gramsci, n.32, p.325.

\(^{40}\) Ibid, p.326.

\(^{41}\) Ibid, p.326.
Gramsci distinctively underlines the importance of intellectuals as the agents in the formation of class consciousness. According to him, every fundamental social class 'creates with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political field.' Only by the mediation of these 'organic intellectuals' it could be added to the earlier proposition, classes can become conscious of their role and extend their hegemony on the terrain of ideology.

Gramsci pays serious attention to the material institutions through which ideologies are produced and dissimilated. These institutions such as educational system, religious organizations, publishers and communication media in general, which may be called 'ideological apparatuses' provides the material support to ideology.

The most influential exposition on ideology in the last three decades has been presented by Louis Althusser. His overall project involves, prominently, the identification of specificity and scientificity of Marx's theoretical contribution. In his attempt to restore Marx's scientific credentials, Althusser rejected any account of society that sought its origin in individual and collective intentionality. Althusser opposed the 'historicist' interventions of Georg Lukacs, Karl Koarsch and others, in Marxist theory, and for him 'humanism' is an ideology in contrast to science (socialism) and thus a pre-Marxist problematic. Notwithsanding the significant contribution by Althusser to social theory, we should state that his structural Marxism, with its opposition to the role of human agency in historical change, finally produce a hard structural determinism whose theoretical propositions are to be viewed very critically.

42 ibid, p.5.
He makes the contrast between science and ideology as a matter of the different relationships the two kinds of discourses or problematic have to social practice. According to him ideological discourses do not possess an internal principle of intelligibility. Any attempt to understand an ideological discourse entails necessarily, to locate it to its broader 'ideological field'. Furthermore, it is also indispensable to comprehend "the peculiar pattern of presences and absences questions posed, excluded - in terms of a relationship between the ideology and the real social problems and structures which sustain it."  

This account of ideology consider ideology mainly in its theoretical form. The second aspect of the binary opposition between ideology and science is that in the former the practico-social function is more important than theoretical function. What is explained here is that, it is through and in ideology the subjectivity of men are constituted, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence. This is to be a historical necessity in all forms of society. His argument seems as Ted Benton puts it:

In any society in which there is a division of social labour, there must be some means by which agents are allocated to positions in that division of labour equipped with forms of consciousness (belief, values, commitments, dispositions, skills and so on) which fit them to carry out the function assigned to that position.  

Ideology is an omni-historical reality, an objectively existing 'structure of representation', a necessary element in which agents live their relationship to their real position in society, but in an imaginary level. Ideology, he maintains, is a 'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individual to their real conditions of

46 ibid, p.48.
existence. This formulation suggests that the 'world outlooks' are largely imagined, that is to say, they do not correspond to reality, nevertheless they do make allusion to reality. A passage, from his canonical essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparattuses* would explain this aspect.

All ideology represents in its necessary imaginary distortion not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derived from them), but above all (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individual, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live.

The study of the nature and functions of Ideological State Apparattuses, hereafter ISAs, in the social reproduction constitute Althusser's most influential contribution to social theory in general and to the theory of ideology in particular. He calls ISA's a certain number realities exists in a social formation in the form of distinct and specialized institutions which ensures the reproduction of relations of production. His proposed empirical list of them consists, the religious, the educational, family, legal and political, the trade-unions, the communications such as press, radio and TV and the cultural i.e., literature, the Arts, Sports, ISAs. ISA's are distinct from the repressive state Apparattuses, hereafter RSAs, which contains; the Government administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Press etc. but are clearly on the side of the latter. The difference between the two lies in the fact that, firstly, unlike the unified structure of RSAs, there is a plurality of ISAs. Secondly, the former belongs entirely to public domain whereas much larger part of the latter are of the private domain. Thirdly, the

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48 ibid, p.155.
49 ibid, p.136.
RSAs function massively and predominantly by ‘violence’ but ISAs operates mainly through ideology. The social reproduction takes place as a result of the combined interplay of the two.

The apparently disparate body of the ISAs, according to Althusser, are unified beneath the ruling ideology, which is the ideology of ‘the ruling class’. As he puts it: "no class can hold state power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the state ideological apparattuses".\(^50\)

The second most important thesis proposed by Althusser on ideology is that ‘ideas’ or ‘representation’ which appears to constitute ideology have a material existence.\(^51\) It explains that an ideology always exists in an apparatus and its practices. Those ways in which an individual choses to behave, practical attitude he opts to adopt, regular practices which he participates in are those of the ideological apparatus on which depends the ideas which he has in all consciously freely chosen as a subject. In this respect Althusser has cited some instances, that, if one believes in God, he goes to church to attend mass, kneels, prays, confess etc. if he has faith in justice, he will submit unconditionally to the rule of law, and even protest when they are violated, sign petitions etc. Furthermore, these practices are governed by those rituals which are themselves defined by an ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject.

As our foregone discussion suggests Althusser’s writings on ideology have introduced fresh insight into the problem. What lies at the heart of his argument, as noted by Paul Q.Hirst, is that ‘the rejection of the conception of ideologies as reflections

\(^{50}\) ibid, p.139.

\(^{51}\) ibid, p.156.
of social reality and the substitution of a new formulation of ideology as a structure of social realities as real as the economic and political and articulated with them. 52

The concept of ideology and hegemony received fresh and insightful treatment in the writings of Raymond Williams. The corpus of Williams works do not offer any comprehensive theory of ideology as such. His preoccupation was with much wider issues of culture and literature. Nevertheless, his approach to the problematic of ideology in Marxist theory and more specifically his reading of Marx's writings on the subject represents distinctive originality. In this context of textual inadequacy on ideology in Williams, this chapter mainly touches upon certain meanings he ascribed to the concept which are implied in his writings. Following that our discussion shall focus on Williams interpretation and use of the notion of hegemony.

The implied inference on ideology in Williams suggests an insufficiency to the concept in a general sense. His short note on ideology in Keywords undifferentiately locate a theoretical congruence between Marx's critique of ideology and Engel's notion of 'false consciousness'. 53 As we have already noted, it is inappropriate to argue that the approaches of Marx and Engels are strictly identical on this theme.

The underlying tendencies of empiricism in Marx's approach to the notion of ideology is aptly deciphered. Williams justified Marx and Engels refusal in The German Ideology to consider 'What men say, imagine, conceive, nor men as narrated, thought of, imagined,' as the necessary starting point. But he quickly adds that it is implausible to comprehend the whole real life-process independently of language (what men say) and


53 Williams, n.2, p.155.
its records (men as narrated). Williams observes that the centrality in Marx's argument that material social process as the real basis of the production of ideas, misses its crucial point due to this abstract empiricism. Besides he find it simplistic, the vocabulary Marx used i.e., 'reflexes', 'echoes', 'phantoms' and 'sublimates' to refer to the formation of consciousness which is inseparable from material reality.

According to Williams, Marxist writings on ideology shares three general versions of the concept. Firstly, a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group, secondly, a system of illusory beliefs or the (famous) false consciousness theory. Thirdly, as the general process of production of meanings and ideas. These variant approaches appears to have suggested to him a weak sense of concept.

The idea of hegemony put into powerful use in Williams works. It held to have gone beyond the insufficient formulations of ideology in its depth, comprehensiveness and subtlety. In any society, he says, there is a central system of practices, meanings and values which can be called dominant and effective. Hegemony should be understood as these organised and lived experiences. It contains a whole body of practices in a society. It is very much alive in an individual's natural comprehension about man and the social world. For most people in the society, hegemony constitutes a sense of absolute reality. Because it is difficult for most members of the society to move beyond the immediate experienced reality.

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57 Ibid, p.3.
A sustaining dominant culture depends on an actual social process, i.e., the process of incorporation which takes place at various levels. He perceives educational institutions as the main agencies which transmits hegemonic culture in society. The hegemony is at operation in the history of various practice, mainly in the sphere of theoretical activity, through the process of the selective tradition. It refers to certain intellectual practice, with its meticulous techniques of exclusion and inclusion, establishes a dominant culture as the tradition, or the significant past. This selective process neglect or exclude certain meanings and practices from the chosen, tradition. The process of incorporation, more crucially, reinterpret or attenuate some of these meanings and practices and make them supportive of the hegemonic cultural system or the established significant tradition. All these process, i.e., the wider social training within educational institutions and family, the selective tradition at an intellectual and theoretical level, are involved in a continual making and remaking of an effective dominant culture. Hence, the concept of hegemony in Williams supposes as deeply saturating consciousness of a society to an extent which even constitutes the limits of commonsense for most people under its influence.

For the notion of hegemony Williams writings offers creative and fruitful insights. It represents a considerably richer, more complex and intuitive account of the way in which ruling class differs its meanings and values in a society. However, one has to record that hegemony cannot be understood adequately as a concept of dissemination of ruling meanings and ideas in a society. Beyond that, it denotes to all those means by

58 ibid, p.9.
which ruling order secures consent to its domination from the population at large, where ideology plays an essential role.\(^{59}\)

The foregone discussion on the theory of ideology from Marx to Williams, in a broader sense, would contribute largely some valuable methodological tools for the central concern of this study, i.e., dissent, hegemony and legitimation in post-Mao China. However, it has, in a relative sense, certain limitations as social theories emerged primarily to address the problems of bourgeois political power in continental Europe. Whereas in China we are dealing with a post-Revolutionary society whose social organisation, political state and popular consciousness are distinct and highly complex. Moreover, after the passage of half a century, all these have undergone (and still in the process of) manifold transformations. Therefore, the analytical devises with which this study approach the whole spectrum of historical narratives in China cannot borrow exclusively from the above discussed sources. Nevertheless, this problem can be adequately clarified in the fourth chapter of this study where we shall again undertake a detour to theory.