CONCLUSION

We will now recapitulate the main points. We have argued that the concept of ideology is intrinsically a "reification of the life-world", which is itself linked to the process of legitimisation of the relations of power. The process of legitimisation involves the manipulation of norms and meanings. In The German Ideology and in Capital, Marx links the concept of ideology with the expression of the interest of the exploitative classes. For him, those ideas were ideological in nature, which are idealized and which then conceal the social contradictions and consequently represent the sectional interests of the ruling classes as universal interests. This view of ideology is associated with the strategies and processes of legitimisation of domination. This approach opens a way for refocusing the concept of ideology in terms of the intersection of the processes of signification, domination and legitimisation. The concept of Ideology conceived, as legitimisation of power relations can avoid not only scientistic and structuralist pitfalls, but also the poststructuralist trap of relativism.

The conceptualisation of ideology as legitimisation of power avoids the scientist fallacy that science pertains to the domain of non-ideology. Here the characterisation of ideology is based on the negative consequences of the forms of social consciousness. If a symbol-system legitimises relations of power, only then it can be characterised as ideological. It has been argued that this functional explanation of the concept of ideology was present in Marx.

However, the concept of ideology is not based on only functional criteria. This concept also involves epistemological criteria. The epistemological criteria
should not be confused with the ideology/science opposition, which is in fact only one of the various epistemology criterions. The epistemological criterion cannot be disconnected from the critical conception of ideology. The process of legitimisation of power relations necessarily involves the manipulation of norms and meanings in favour of domination. However, epistemological features of ideology are not tantamount to the idea of false consciousness. There are similarities and differences between the concepts of ideology and false consciousness.

Firstly, ideology is not an invention of the subjective mind or an effect of deception. On the contrary, deception is understood as a constitutive part of the social system itself. Deception is thus an immanent deception. Just as "mystification" and the "fetishism of mind" is predicated on the commodity principle. Secondly, the expression "false consciousness" can misleadingly convey the sense of empirical or logical falsity, either of which does not make the only or necessary condition for attributing a discourse as ideological. The concept of ideology involves falsehood of both consciousness and reality, only if "false" is used in this very broad and dialectical sense. However, at the same time other expressions such as "inversion" (Umkehrung), "distortion" and "illusion" can be used to denote the concealment of social contradictions in the favour of power relations.

Thirdly, ideology should not simply be equated with the notion of false consciousness because this gives an impression that ideology is merely a cognitive or epistemological problem, which can be remedied by the use of critique or science. However, it is another matter that critique and science can be employed in the process of demystification of ideology. If ideology happens to be only a cognitive or epistemological error than recourse to criticism or science could have corrected that. This was the fallacy of Enlightenment thinkers that the ills of society can be chased away by replacing false knowledge with correct knowledge.
Fourthly, the expression false consciousness is insufficient to convey the notion of ideology, because it does not refer to the legitimization of domination. Only those mistakes, errors, illusions, and distortion can be characterised as ideological, which can be identified as forms of social consciousness and those sustain and legitimise the relations of power.

Fifthly, the process of rationalisation is merely one among many ideological strategies. There can also be other ideological strategies for the legitimisation of domination, such as “naturalisation”, “dissimulation”, “dehistoricisation”, etc.

It must be asserted that the question of truth and falsehood is not the central question for the theory of ideology. The central question is how relations of domination gets acceptance in society. False consciousness or distortion is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition for the phenomena of ideology. The basic condition for the characterisation of any discourse as ideological is domination. Here it should be stressed again what we have discussed with reference to Anthony Giddens and John B. Thompson that only functional explanation of ideology is not adequate.

The critique of ideology cannot be groundless, nor can ideology be studied in isolation from its grounds. What Marx calls the “ground structure” (Grundstruktur) in The German Ideology and later in the 1859 “preface” to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, “real basis” (reale Basis) is the historical materialist point of departure for the phenomenology of ideological consciousness. For exposing the power interest and mystification in the service of power, one needs a theory capable of critiquing ideology. As Roy Bhaskar comments:

It would perhaps be stressed that one is only justified in characterising a system of beliefs as ‘ideological’ if one in possession of a theory that can explain them.

A combination of epistemic, functional and genetic criteria is required for the theory of ideology. The concept of ideology cannot be restricted to any
particular religion, tradition or system of thought. The Enlightenment view of ideology was restricted to the epistemic characteristic of ideology as irrational and metaphysical. However, Karl Marx links the phenomena of ideology with the problematic of legitimisation of domination. Marx's approach consists of three criterions: epistemic, functional, and genetic. Every falsity of untruth does not establish or sustain relations of power, but on the contrary, legitimisation of power relation necessarily involves epistemic falsity or distortion. Regarding the three different ideology-properties, Raymond Geuss says:

Although one or another of these three modes of criticism may be basic, interesting theories of ideology will be ones, which assert some connections between two or more of the three modes.4

If one accepts the functional dimension of ideology-critique as basic to the theory of ideology, then it also means that concept of ideology should be seen as contextual and process-bound. Apropos Giddens, the concept of ideology should be freed from the idea of a distinct symbol system. Any symbol-system can be ideological, if it sustains domination. It implies that there cannot be an ideology as such, but there can be only ideological aspects of symbol systems.5 From this perspective religion, science, utopia, psychoanalysis, etc. can be ideological as well as non-ideological. We have discussed that in what circumstances science can be employed ideologically. If a religious discourse were employed to unmask the power relation, then it would not be ideological.

It also means that some symbol-system can be more vulnerable to be used ideologically. If literature and the arts are less vulnerable to this risk, legal discourses and texts are most vulnerable. Law is directly related to state power and politics. Law is doubly ideological. Firstly, law is the expression of materiality of power relationship including property relations. In this sense, law is produced within the parameter of ruling power-relations. Secondly, law directly pertains to the realm of legal-rational legitimisation. This general legitimacy enjoyed by law is being used for the legitimisation of power relationship. Law also provides the site where contestations over these power relations are debated and struggled over.6
The concept of ideology involves some paradoxes. It can be said that the paradox of ideology operates at three levels. The first is the level of the search for an ideology-free space. The second is the thesis of the all-pervasiveness of ideology, i.e. every idea is seen to be tainted with ideology. The third is the declaration of the "end of ideology".

We have discussed that the neutral conception of ideology suppresses the criticism of domination in one or other pretext. If a conception of ideology is critical to only a particular ideology while endorsing some other ideological discourse then this also alters into a neutral conception. The chief usefulness of the concept of ideology lies in unmasking the hidden transcript of domination. Jürgen Habermas said that 'ideologies are coeval with the critique of ideology.' This means that one becomes aware of ideology only when s/he criticizes it. It has to be a critical description; otherwise, it can be termed simply as a belief-system, or a world-view. The act of demystification of power relations involves inherently the act of describing or critiquing ideology.

However, this critical conception is not easy to hold, because it has an intrinsic tendency of slipping into the neutral or positive conception. If a critical conception does not apply the same criteria to itself mercilessly then there is every possibility of its being used for a legitimating of another set of power relationship. What is more, the criteria of criticality should itself be open for criticism.

The tradition of ideology-critique has an advantage over the neutral conception, but it also faces a precarious situation. The pursuance of critical conception is so unsafe and risky that the very attempt of emerging out of one ideology can be turned into an act of being trapped in another ideology. So how can one emerge out of ideology? If two opposing sides are making allegations of being ideological against each other, then obviously one needs an objective criterion for deciding. If one assumes that any objective criterion is impossible then there comes a risk of treating every viewpoint as a manifestation of prejudice or domination (like postmodernists). At the same time, any foundation
for justice would be undermined. The stand of depicting every conception of ideology as ideological or treating every viewpoint as ideological plays against two risks.\textsuperscript{8} Firstly, ‘it is so all-embracing as to be almost meaningless.’ Secondly, ‘it contains the same logical absurdity as the declaration of Epimenides the Cretan who declared that all Cretan were liars.’

The view of an ideology-free society or ideology-independent space of social enquiry and the view of the ubiquity of ideology in the realm of thoughts—both become two sides of the same coin. On the one side is the arrogance of absolute certainty and on the other side is the marsh of relativism. Then the question arises that should one not abandon the concept of ideology altogether because of its inherently elusive and ambiguous character? Even now, the basic paradox of ideology is not prepared to leave the analyst. It can be said that one can try its best to run off from the realm of ideology, but the spectre of ideology is not willing to go away easily. The “end of ideology” thesis of the 1960 and the 1990 vintages now become the classical examples of ideological thinking.

There is an irony in the view of the end of ideology that when the new-liberal imperialism of the Northern America is on its mission; when jingoist nationalism, communalism, and terrorism are on the rise, then some intellectuals decides that ideology is over. This goes with the social climate, where depoliticisation and cynicism becomes the most important political strategies of corporate capitalism, where new consumer consciousness is instilling in the youth orthodoxy and conformism simultaneously. Baudrillard and other postmodernist’s enthusiastic partaking in the carnival of virtual images, simulacra, and simulation is nothing but a symptom of a situation, in which intellectuals are ‘mistaking the media and the shopping mall for the rest of social reality.’\textsuperscript{9}

Postmodernism and neo-liberalism enter in a very uncanny alliance. Unrestrained market forces bring chaotic changes, which postmodernism celebrates. The alliance works on juxtaposing philosophical tendencies. Neo-
liberalism on the one hand avows and upholds the idea of progress based on reason, and the idea of imperialist globalisation, however, on the other hand supports the cynicism and irrationalism of the media, and the world of advertisements. The attack on the principles of universalism and the celebration of localism is one more irony of the cynicism of post-modernity.10

Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard and other poststructuralists and postmodernists attacked the conception of ideology fiercely and employed the concepts of power/knowledge and discourse in place of ideology. However, they and other post-modernists end with reintroducing the concept of ideology in different guise from the back door, when they describe and criticize various terms such as "meta-narratives", "language-games", "simulacra", and "discourse".11 Larrain comments on this paradox:

While they [postmodernists] doubt the validity of total discourses and of their ideological critique, they must assume the validity of their own critique of total discourses.12

The postmodernists do not like to acknowledge the fact of employment of critical concepts in a universal manner. Lyotard's critical concept of meta-narrative operates like the concept of ideology. When Lyotard criticised meta-narratives his own "language-game" becomes dominant viz. other's "language-game". Lyotard's entrapment in a meta-narrative leads him to 'the unmasking of unmasking, the critique of critique.'13 In a similar vein, Baudrillard in many places in his writing uses ideology-critique without naming it.14 On Baudrillard's contention that simulation and images has taken place of reality, Alex Callinicos asks that 'how can Baudrillard— or any one else trapped within simulation, as presumably we all are— describe its nature, and outline the transition from the real to the hyper-real?'15

The concept of ideology can be explicated on the basis of a dialectical and non-reducing relations of social reality, consciousness, and communication. The realm of signification neither exhausts the mind of a person nor social
relations. However, signification is a significant part of the world. The realm of meaning presupposes an embodied mind and material social reality.

Where is the way, which does not lead us either to the shamming of the neutral conception of ideology or to an abusive character of ideology, which is being thrown upon the face of an opponent? It can be said that any sustainable theory of ideology should be able to cope with this paradox of ideology. The paradox involved in the concept of ideology is forceful and compelling because ideology is ‘as unavoidable as it is problematic.’ Can one take a stand that some ideas could be less ideological than other ideas? McLellan comments that ‘we are indeed all implicated in ideology which is both real and powerful, but an understanding of this fact can at least prevent us from becoming its unconscious victims.’

There lies the problem of ideology-free space in the epistemological critique. Nevertheless, if one abandons the cognitive criteria, s/he happens to be trapped in relativism. Michele Barrett says: ‘the obvious dangers of abandoning the critical edge that ideology has traditionally carried are those of relativism, pluralism, subjectivism, and a general move into philosophical pragmatism.’

Ideology does have an epistemological characteristic, but this epistemic criterion does not necessarily depend on an ideology/science binary. Neither should the critical conception be based on any privileged position of some group like the working class or intellectuals with reference to the access to truth. The most important thing is that the critical conception does not need recourse to an extra-ideological reality. Ideology-critique neither requires a privileged position of certain social groups nor an Archimedean standpoint outside the ideology.

For Marx the resolution of ideology is possible only through praxis by transforming the conditions that are responsible for social contradictions. Ideology tries to solve and mask these very social contradictions, which are
based on the representation of an imaginary unity between conflicting sections of society. Nevertheless, critique can certainly help revolutionary praxis by consciously providing the comprehension of social contradictions. Marx says: 'once the interconnection is grasped, all theoretical belief in the permanent necessity of existing conditions collapses before their collapse in practice.'

We have discussed apropos Balibar that the German idealist tradition's significance lies in its systematic combination of two impulses: representation and subjectivity. Whether it is consciousness, spirit, or reason, it always combines both the aspects in the expression of the universal. Old materialism ignored the dimension of subjectivity and thus a disguised idealism operates in old materialism, when it deals with the realm of representation or contemplation.

Using Holloway's ideas on subjectivity, it can be said that critique of ideology neither bases itself on a notion of "free" subject, because free or consistent subjectivity is the presupposition of the capitalist ideology of free exchange and competition. Nor does it base itself on the notion of fragmented or decentred subjectivity, because fragmentation of subjectivity is another ideological ploy of late "post-modern" capitalism, which celebrates the simulacrum, incoherence, and cynicism generated by the power of commodity fetishism. Ideology-critique needs a notion of dialectical subjectivity— a subjectivity that is essentially human (das menschliche Wesen)

Fetishism is not an already accomplished thing, but a process. As a process, it never exhausts itself. This is the reason that a heroic subjectivity or free subjectivity (of the Lukácsian or Sartrean types) and in contrast, a damaged, unrepairable subjectivity; are both the extremes. Subjectivity should be conceptualised neither as a 'pure' or 'autonomous' subjectivity nor as a passive or completely objectified subjectivity. The site of 'non-ideology' is not the precondition of the ideology-critique. A critique is possible from the site of anti-ideology. Yet, the concept of non-ideology is essential because a tension between ideology and non-ideology strengthens the position of anti-ideology. The subject neither stands outside of the social process nor need an imaginary
vantage point for a critical-revolutionary activity in the midst of a fetishised world. The standpoint of critique and praxical activity can be the process of anti-festishisation.20 This is where the future research lies not only in the theory of ideology, but also in all areas of social theory.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

3 Ibid, p. 95.
12 Ibid.
14 For the description of Jean Braudrillard’s contradictory use of ideology-critique from the back door, see Jorge Larrain, ‘Stuart Hall and the Marxist


19 Karl Marx,' Letter to Kugelmann, 11 July 1868', in Marx-Engels,' Selected Correspondence' Progress Publishers, Moscow 1975, 1975, p.197.