CHAPTER - 1

IDEOLOGY: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter deals with the intellectual prehistory and origin of the concept of ideology. The chapter has three sections. The first section historically situates the conception of ideology within the terrain of political and intellectual upheavals of the European Enlightenment. It discusses the thought of the precursors of the conception of ideology like Niccolò Machiavelli and Francis Bacon. It also takes up the question of the influence of Greek thought on the formation of the theory of ideology. In direct continuation to the arguments of the second section, the third section examines the conception of ideology linking it to the concept of idolatry and to the discourses of early Christianity. The last section would consider the conceptualisations of immediate progenitors of the concept, i.e., the French ideologues.

The key behind an assortment of forms, which the term ideology has undertaken, lies in its ambitious history that has been full of twists and turns. This concept shares the ambiguities and predicament of the time in which it opens its eyes. Certain difficulties, associated with it, are noticeable in its birthmark. The term originated in 1797 after the French revolution of 1789. This was the time, when the Reformation and Renaissance, started in the fifteenth century, had transformed into the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and the processes of industrialization, urbanization and secularisation, all three as constitutive of modernity, had gained momentum.

Europe at that time was witnessing an active conflict and confrontation of newly emerging bourgeois society with the feudal mode of production and its
aristocratic, monarchical, and traditional values. In this overall context of industrial capitalism, ideology took birth with its other siblings such as progress, liberty, reason, parliamentary democracy, etc. Jürgen Habermas writes in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*:

The dynamic concepts that either emerged together with the expression "modern age" or "new age" in the eighteenth century or acquired then a new meaning that remains valid down to our day are adopted to this—words such as revolution, progress, emancipation, development, crisis and Zeitgeist... Modernity can and will no longer borrow the criteria by which it takes its orientation from the models supplied by another epoch; it *has to create its normativity out of itself*.

The European Enlightenment provided the cultural and intellectual background, in which the concept of ideology emerged. This concept is rooted in the Enlightenments' epistemological traditions namely empiricism and rationalism. The year of the origin of the term ideology was 1796. The notion for the first time emerged as idea-logy or the science of ideas in the writings of the French Enlightenment thinker Destutt de Tracy, who aimed for creating "an intellectual mechanics" on the line of "social physics" to get rid of the traditional and metaphysical ideas and other prejudices impeding progress. Soon afterwards, the French emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte ridiculed Tracy’s project by characterising it as metaphysical, speculative, and erroneous as those very traditional ideas, which were being criticized. Napolean gave the members of Tracy’s institute the name of "ideologue" and inaugurated the pejorative usage of the term. Nevertheless, the intellectual prehistory of the term goes further back into history.

Jorge Larrain suggests that ‘from Machiavelli and Bacon, via Holbach, Helvetius, de Tracy, and Napolean, to Comte and Feurbach’, the ideas and beliefs discussed under the labels such as, ‘idol, prejudice, religion or ideology’ had followed a similar line of thought. However, these terms were not being used to express social and historical contradictions and were confined to the description of psychological distortions and prejudices.
Various rationalist and empiricist streams of thinking, prevalent in eighteenth century Europe, especially in France and England, broadly constitute the Enlightenment, a historical stage of the modern bourgeois thought. There were many differences and points of contestation among the philosophers of this age, but there was a broad consensus on some values, viz. ‘critical individualism, freedom, the equality of all men, the universality of law, toleration and right to private property’.

Many diverse and sometime hostile interpretations and lines of thought emerged on the premise of this set of values. Till now religion was the main unifying, thus legitimising force. Right from the Reformation to the Enlightenment the position of religion decayed in the social realms of both theoretical reflections and practice. This ‘leads to a split’, to borrow Habermas’s phrase, ‘between faith and knowledge which the Enlightenment cannot overcome by its power’.

This was the age of major transformations and uncertainties. Age-old harmonies and unities, usually in the realms of metaphysics and theology, were endangered. This happened in the sphere of knowledge too. The age of the differentiation of philosophy into a range of disciplines and knowledge-systems had begun. In the same fashion, the Enlightenment thinking posited yet another split, which played an important role not only in the development of positivistic social sciences, but also in the emergence of the notion of ideology. The ‘age of the triumph of science’ simultaneously was the age of growing ‘epistemological anxiety’. Modern thought was in search of certainty. At the same time, claims to reliability of knowledge became more vulnerable now due to the weakening of traditional legitimisation, which was based on the force of religion and belongingness to community.

In an attempt to emerge out of this contradiction, one of the paths chosen by the modern mind was what Bernard Susser calls separation between “is” and “ought” and what Lucien Goldmann identifies as ‘separation between two forms of individual consciousness, knowledge of facts and judgment of values’.

This division between “is” and “ought” or between descriptive and normative led on the
one hand towards the freeing of “moral judgment” from the “nature of things” and on the other hand towards the morally-neutral search for objectivity in the form of social sciences and natural sciences. As Susser observes:

Only in the absence of a pre-ordained and accessible moral order could a thousand ideological flowers bloom and thinkers speak of moral ideas as "essentially contestable". “Ought” was set adrift, free of any moorings in the world of “is” and its gain in freedom was equalled only by its loss in justifiability and authority.9

1.1 FORERUNNERS OF THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY

The above-mentioned tendency reached its peak in David Hume's radical separation of facts and values and reappeared in twentieth century social science and philosophy, inspired by positivism. In fact, this line of thought is quite old and its roots can be traced in the writing of the Renaissance period. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) comments:

It appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation10

It is interesting to note that, in the twentieth century, the modern state has taken the recourse to the process of legitimisation, which projects the technical and the scientific as divorced from the political or ideological decision-making. John Holloway tried to look at the distinction between “is” and “ought to” from the side of those dominated and oppressed.11 The scream of the oppressed implies a tension between two dimension of what is and what ought to be, a distinction between indicative and subjunctive. For the downtrodden and the subalterns two parts of the sentence are inseparable, though existing in tension with each other, as they want to come out of an unjust society. For them subjunctive wish is no less real than the indicative given because the adjective “unjust” makes sense only in relation to a possibility of a just society. Holloway remarks:
From the time of Machiavelli, social theory has been concerned to break the unbreakable sentence in half. Machiavelli lays the basis for a new realism when he says that he is concerned only with what is, not with things that we might wish them to be.\textsuperscript{12}

It can be said here that the differentiation of “is” and “ought to” and subsequent flowering of the natural and social sciences on the one hand and of a new ethics and new ideologies on the other hand initially played a progressive role in breaking the spell of feudal and traditional legitimisation. Only later on, this differentiation itself became a new legitimisation for modern capitalism.

Machiavelli suggests that the use of deceit is a necessary device of modern statecraft. “The prince” manipulates the distinction of appearance and reality in his favour. Machiavelli ruminates on the gap between what men believe and what actually exists. He proposes that generally human beings impressed more by appearance than reality. Machiavelli believes that only force is not sufficient to rule, it is to be facilitated with “fraud” for the sustenance of the power. He also suggests that instead of \textit{truly} having the noble qualities like mercifulness, faithfulness, humaneness, uprightness, etc., the “prince” should \textit{appear} to have them. While showing these virtues to the public, if need arises, he should know to act contrary, because ‘men judge generally more by the eye than by the hand, because it belongs to everybody to see you, to few to come in touch with you. Every one sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are, and those few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of the many...’\textsuperscript{13} This idea of deceit, based on the distinction between appearance and reality was later discussed also by Marx and has been a persistent theme for his theory of ideology. The distinction of appearance and inner reality also plays an important part in the uncovering of the ideology of commodity fetishism.

Machiavelli’s name became the synonym of cunning and manipulation, nevertheless, the fact remained that at times the state power in which he resided spurned him. This is unlike the other modern thinkers of power such as Thomas Hobbes.\textsuperscript{14} Usually Machiavelli is depicted as amoralist but he was the supporter
of republican values and ideals. Jean-Jacques Rousseau acknowledges this and refers to *The Prince* as a 'handbook for republicans'.

Machiavelli did not use the term ideology in his writing. However, he gave an indication of how the legitimising discourses can conceal the ugly face of power by putting a mask of high moral stands. He says:

> Those princes who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to circumvent the intellect of men by craft, and in the end have overcome those who have relied on their word. You must know there are two ways of contesting, the one by the law, the other by the force; the first method is proper to men, the second is to beasts; but because the first is frequently not sufficient, it is necessary to have recourse to the second. Therefore it is necessary for a prince to understand how to avail himself of the beast and the man.

Machiavelli also suggested another mechanism of legitimising power, which can be compared to what John B. Thompson describes as a latent conception of ideology in Marx. Machiavelli states that people have a tendency of doing things in the same manner as their predecessors. People not only glorify the past but also tend to adulate that. Machiavelli observes:

> He who desires or wants to reform the State [Government] of a City, and wishes that it may be accepted and capable of maintaining itself to everyone’s satisfaction, it is necessary for him at least to retain the shadow of ancient forms, so that it does not appear to the people that the institutions have been changed, even though in fact the new institutions should be entirely different from the past ones: for the general mass of men are satisfied with appearances, as if it exists, and many times are moved by the things which appear to be rather than by the things that are… For as new things disturb the minds of men, you ought to endeavour that these changes retain as much as possible of the ancient [forms].

This quote can be compared with the celebrated opening passage of Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

> The tradition of all the dead generation 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 periods of revolutionary
crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirit 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.19

There is some difference between both the accounts of the employment of symbolic force of the past for concealing the motives of present power. The first account stresses upon the role of strategic conduct of the rulers in generating illusion, whereas the second one focuses upon the historical and circumstantial aspects. Machiavelli suggests that people tend to be dominated by their past actions, which continue to exert social powers in the present as well. Rulers exploit this tendency by consciously manipulating the appearances of things. On the other hand, Marx proposes that social change can be frustrated by the prevalence of symbolic formations and norms of the past era. Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* does not use the term ideology and uses “illusion” and “fixed ideas”, of “sprits” and “ghosts”20 However, prior to *The Eighteenth Brumaire* in *The German Ideology* expressions like “illusions”, “spectres”, “whimsies” were used as explanatory mechanism for understanding ideology. This latent conception of ideology, which invokes the spirits of the past, calls one’s attention to the ‘process of social conservation’ always present in a society, which undergoes rapid social changes.21

Machiavelli appeared at the intellectual scene of history at the time when the disintegration of medieval society and the opposition to feudalism and its theological legitimisations were already set in motion. Scholastic claims of philosophy were in the process of being replaced by science as knowledge of the physical world. The development of cities and money exchange was posing new kinds of problems. In this backdrop, the legitimisation crisis of the Christian state erupted, as war among many minor states had already diluted the authority of the state, exposed by its inability to maintain peace and order within its jurisdiction.22 In this situation Machiavelli constructed the ideal prince, who maintains hegemonic power with all manipulations and ‘without regards for constrains and intricacies of Christian morality’.23
Deceit, fraud, and manipulation have been a part of statecraft since ages. The contribution of Machiavelli to the concept of ideology as legitimisation of power relations is that he advocates it openly with a cynical frankness and links all these with the discourse of legality. The absolutist states and territories, which came into being in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, in a way, actually realized Machiavelli's ideas. At the start these states remained thoughtfully non-aligned with the warring religious camps and small powers, but after gaining steadiness started to conceal their core of violence in a grandiose rhetoric of legality and God's grace. Peter Sloterdijk observes:

Machiavelli revealed the trade secrets for all modern central powers. The cynical amorality of hegemonic powers can no longer be dismissed. Since then, states have lived in a cynical twilights of semi-legitimisation and semi-presumption. A relative excess of violence, oppression, and usurpation accompanies even those states most concerned about legitimacy and the rule of law... Even in the best legal systems, raw facts like class privileges, misuse of power, caprices, and inequalities pierce through time and again.

In the discussion of intellectual predecessors of the concept of ideology, we gave slightly larger space to Machiavelli, because he influenced not only modernist thought but also the thinkers who are counted as the progenitors of poststructuralist and postmodernist thinking on power, legitimacy and ideology such as Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault and Antonio Negri. Machiavelli's notion of power could be contrasted to other influential theorist of power, Thomas Hobbes, who sought to legitimise a myth of order, based on sovereignty and causality. Stewart Clegg distinguished between Hobbes and Machiavelli. Hobbes sees power as 'harmoniously ordered and proportioned' and explains it around a conception of sovereignty of community. In this sense, Hobbes is closer to 'metaphorically mechanical, modernist spirits', whereas Machiavelli's notion of power was strategic, manoeuvring, and contingent. In this sense, he is closer to the post-modernists. Clegg termed him as "post-modern even before modernity' and as 'an important corrective to the "push-and-shove" mechanical conception of power."
Machiavelli’s *The Prince* was written in 1512 and soon after, a humanist Etienne de la Boetie wrote *De la Servitude Volontaire*, and perhaps raised the question for the first time, which is central to the modern theory of ideology: why do humans accept their domination voluntarily? He argues that if three or four person are dominated by a single person then they can be termed as cowards; but if hundreds or thousands are dominated by a person then ‘should we not rather say that they lack not courage but the desire to rise against him, and that such an attitude indicates indifference rather than cowardice’.30

De la Boetie mentions three factors, which contribute to the submission of people to the rule of oppressors. The first is the force of customs and habituation that makes enslaved people ‘degraded, submissive, and incapable of any great deed’.32 The second is credulity of subjects. Boetie says that ‘all these poor fools neatly tricked into servitude... they themselves can be caught quickly at the slightest tricking of their fancy. Play, farces, spectacles, gladiators, strange beasts, medals, pictures, and other such opiates...’33 Thirdly, oppressors form and maintain the chains of hierarchical dependency in society. The limitation of Boetie’s powerful account of how domination works is that unlike modern theories of ideology he could not relate the phenomena of domination to historical-structural specificities. Machiavelli and Boetie, both presented the account of power either from the viewpoint of the strategic conduct of the ruler or from the viewpoint of the weakness, inertia, or gullibility of the ruled. Nevertheless, they contributed in the creation of the theory of ideology by suggesting that ‘the political domain is something to be dealt with in its own right, not as an expression or application of theology or moral philosophy.’34

The philosophy of empiricism has played an important role in the formation of the concept of ideology. Francis Bacon, who is considered the father of modern science and English materialism, strongly influenced not only French empiricist thought, but also the French Enlightenment. Both the intellectual tradition created the environment for the emergence of the conception of ideology. Empiricism relates the possibility of reliable knowledge about the world with the process of experience and claims that the evidence of the human senses
is the only criteria for the establishment of the truth of factual statements. Bacon, a progenitor of empirical inductive science, expressed a sense of indebtedness to Machiavelli for the inauguration of the study of the politics based on observed facts. Bacon says that ‘so that we are much beholden to Machiavelli and others that write what men do, and not what they ought to do.’

Bacon was of the firm belief that only this method can cleanse the human understanding from the distortions generated from the ‘idols’. Here idols refer to erroneous and irrational conceptions. There are four classes of idols: the idol of the tribe, the idol of the cave, the idol of the market place, and the idol of the theatre. The Idol of the tribe refers to the presuppositions and prejudices arising from human nature and the very tribe or race of man. It includes the natural tendency to accept the propositions, laid down and established by tradition, and interference of the passions in acquisition of the rational knowledge. Tendencies of oversimplification, of ignoring counter-evidences, of generalisation as applied to all cases based on one particular case are some examples of idol of a tribe. The idol of the cave emerges from the peculiarities of the psychological dispositions of the individual being. Bacon observes:

> For every one has a cave or den of his own, which refracts and discolours the light of nature; owing either to his own proper and peculiar nature, or to his education and conversation with others; or to the reading of books, and the authority of whom he esteems and admires; or theory of differences of impressions...

This includes obsession with something and over-hasty generalisations because of it. According to this idol, one may focus on details, another on difference, some other on similarities. Some like novelty and some praise tradition.

The idol of the market place emerges from the ‘intercourses and association of men with each other... on account of the commerce and consorts of men there.’ This idol generates by the avenues of language, through which men convey and communicate. In the process, ‘works are imposed according to the apprehension of the vulgar. And therefore the ill and unfit choice of words
wonderfully obstructs the understanding.\textsuperscript{38} It can be said that credit goes to Bacon for realizing that language is not any innocent medium between ideas or concepts and reality. Bacon says that \textquote{words plainly force and overrule the understanding, and throw all into confusion and lead men away into numberless empty controversies and ideal fancies}\textsuperscript{39}.

Lastly, the fourth kind of impediment to rational knowledge, the idol of theatre arises from dogmatic or shady philosophical theories and their rules of demonstration. These false ideas, which create \textquote{a fictitious and theatrical worlds}, are not only the characteristics of \textquote{the system now in vogue, or only of the ancient sects and philosophies... for many more plays of the same kind may yet be composed}.\textsuperscript{40} This type of idol is not inherent in human nature, hence can be remedied by the methodological reasoning.

There is difference of opinion over the classification of idols. According to Jorge Larrain, Bacon puts first two idols in the category of innate idols, which have the foundation in the human nature itself and puts the later two in the category of external idols, which can be eliminated.\textsuperscript{41} But David Hawkes maintains that the first three are native and inherent in human nature, and thus unavoidable. Only, the fourth is external to the human mind and can be expelled.\textsuperscript{42}

We find ourselves in favour of Larrain's classification, because the idol of the market place also indicates the problem of social determination of thought. Perhaps this controversy arisen for the reason that Bacon did not put the third kind of idols in any explicit category. Bacon observes that idols of the tribe and cave are inherent in the nature itself. Regarding the fourth kind of idol, he says:

\textbf{The Idols of the Theater} are not innate, nor do they steal into the understanding secretly, but are plainly impressed and received into the mind from the playbooks of philosophical systems and the perverted rules of demonstration.\textsuperscript{43}

The problem arises with the third kind of idols, which are not inherent in human nature; and unlike the fourth kind of idols, these idols \textquote{have crept into the
understanding through the alliances of words and names. Bacon says that the idols of market place are of two kinds. The first kinds of idols are either the names of non-existent things or ill-defined and confusingly and hurriedly derived words. The first kinds of idols of the market place are 'more easily expelled, because to get rid of them it is only necessary that all theories should be steadily rejected and dismissed as obsolete.'

It can be said that Bacon's idols of the market place was among one of the first acknowledgements of the systematic distortion of communication. Bacon did not confine himself to attributing the distortion to mediating sign between ideas and reality, but extended it to the process of communication, i.e., 'the intercourse and association of men with each other'. Hans Bath sees a contradiction in Bacon's assertion that innate idols can be eliminated. Based on the account given by Hans Barth, Jorge Larrain raised a question that if the mind is like a mirror, which refracts the rays of the object and idols are inherent in human nature, how can it be disposed of? We can reformulate the abovementioned question like this: is this the set of innate idols (the very nature of human understanding), which can be held responsible for the generation of external idols that constitute the distortion of linguistic representations and erroneous philosophical systems?

Bacon was confident of the inductive or scientific method for uncovering the truth despite the presence of idols. Bacon's classification of the idols into two sets of innate and extraneous idols, and the paradox emerging out of it, can be compared to a debate of nineteenth and twentieth centuries around the modern conception of ideology. Bacon's division between false ideas emerging spontaneously out of irrational and psychological ingredients inherent in human nature and the distortions emerging out of men's social intercourse faintly resemble to the modern debate around the concept of ideology. The first preference reminds us of the modern counter-posing of science with ideology, where it is aspired that distortions inherent in emotive and irrational human nature can be balanced with a construction of impersonal, objective, and rational science. The second preference points towards the social and circumstantial
components of ideology, closely associated with the historical forms of domination and authority. It points towards the tradition of ideology-critique, whose main task was supposed to be the unmasking of the forms of legitimisation.

It can also be said that Bacon himself ignored the socio-political dimension of the ‘distortions and irrationalities.’ Bacon’s theory of idols is generally considered a first systematic account of the problematic, which was later identified as false consciousness. However, Michael Rosen raises an objection against the practice of locating the idea of ideology to Bacon’s theory of idols. He argues that Bacon is not unique in discussing the process of deception or illusion. In fact, the Platonic and the Augustinian conceptions of the relationship between reason and desire have been influential in understanding of human nature for more than thousand years. The modern idea that ‘reason must be provided with a sustaining foundation to “affect” in order to be effective’ has its roots in Augustinian pessimism. The idea of dominance of passion, which also reflects in desolate handling of the place of reason in Hobbes and Spinoza, argues Rosen ‘has little connection with the modern theory of ideology.’ According to Rosen, Bacon saw the colouring of understanding with the will and passion as an everlasting and unchanging defect in human being’s formation of beliefs and did not attach it specifically to any particular kind of political order.

Although Rosen did not name anyone and only said that ‘high proportion of the literature on ideology traces the idea to Bacon’s doctrine of idola’, one can find this line of thought in Karl Mannheim’s *Ideology and Utopia*, wherein he comments:

There is certainly some connection between the modern term “ideology” and the term as used by Bacon, signifying a source of errors. Furthermore, the realization that society and tradition may become sources of error is a direct anticipation of the sociological point of view.

Mannheim saw the term *idola* as a forerunner of the modern term ideology. Here it can be argued that linking Bacon’s term *idola* to term ideology, coined by
de Tracy can be misleading. The connection was certainly there but not at the level of terminology. Tracy’s usage of the term as a new science of ideas (ideology) is just reverse of Bacon’s usage of term idola. In fact, term ideology began its course with a positive meaning in the writings of French ideologues and only later assumed a negative meaning in Bonaparte’s usage of the term. However, Machiavelli, Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Holbach, Helvetius and other thinkers contributed importantly to the philosophical pre-history of the concept of ideology. Thus, it can also be said that Rosen went too far in questioning the attempts, which ‘traces the idea to Bacon’s doctrine of idola.’ Even if the term ‘ideology’ cannot be tracked down to term ‘idol’, it cannot be denied that Bacon’s doctrine of idols provides some of the most important background beliefs for the emergence of the theory of ideology. In reducing Bacon’s doctrine to tincturing of reason with passion, Rosen perhaps forgets Bacon’s distinction between innate and external idols. Bacon certainly posed an appropriate distinction, however he was unable to resolve the paradox emerging out of it.

It must be recalled that the doctrine of idols is only one part of Bacon’s scheme of inductive science. Induction for him was a procedure of moving from observable appearances to deeper underlying causes through the elimination of various factors. His aim was to minimize the natural inclination of the mind before the procedure of inquiry begins. The freshness of Bacon’s approach lies in the fact that ‘what might traditionally have been treated under a theory of passions now is directed specifically at natural-philosophical practice.’

The origin of the concept of ideology is located in the Western philosophical tradition; hence, its root can justifiably be looked for in Greek thought. However, it should be borne in mind that Greek philosophy was not influential directly, but only indirectly on the beliefs that led towards making of the concept of ideology. Long before Machiavelli, Plato discussed the role of lies and conceit in the sustenance of the sovereignty:

Our Rulers will have to employ a great deal of fiction and deceit for the benefit of their subjects; and you will remember that we agreed that they might be used as a kind of medicine.
Plato used the metaphor of medicine for legitimising the lies and deceit of rulers. Here rulers become doctors; the ruled become the patients; and lies and deceit become the medicine. The ruled or laymen are not experts of medicine like the doctor, so he was advised to carry on the practice of truthfulness. As was with the case of philosopher-king here also Plato employed the power of reason and expertise in justifying the sovereign power. He says:

We must value truthfulness highly. For if we were right when we aid just now that falsehood is no use to the gods and only useful to men as a kind of medicine, it's clearly a kind of medicine that should be entrusted to doctor and not to laymen... It will be for the ruler of our city, then, if anyone, to use falsehood in dealing with citizen or enemy for the good of the State; no one else must do so. And if any citizen lie to our rulers, we shall regard it as still graver offence than it is for a patient to lie to his doctor, or for an athlete to lie to his trainer about his physical condition, or for a sailor to misrepresent to his captain any matter concerning the ship or crew, or the state of himself or his fellow-sailors.54

In Republic, Plato gives an account of the 'ideal state', which was, however, authoritarian in nature. Plato designates the philosopher as the king of this state. Here the metaphorical concept of the cave also becomes a justification for the philosopher's place as ruler. All the cave dwellers mistook shadows for reality. In Plato, the ideal form is real and the material world is a shadow of the ideal form. It may be recalled that Hellenic thought also accepted the Platonic primacy of the ideal over the material. Only the philosopher by the virtue of his knowledge of the Form of the Good could be able to distinguish between the idea and the shadow and thus be freed from the cave.

It can be observed that perhaps Plato was the first Western thinker who visualized and endorsed the merger of intellectual power with political power. This can also be termed as the first systematic account of phenomena of 'ideas in the service of power'. This thought echo in the Marx's famous formulation that in class societies, the ideas of the ruling class become the ruling ideas of the age. The Republic also provides a justification of the concept of division of labour. It proposes for citizens the strict adherence to the allotted job and obedience to
rulers. In Book III of the *Republic*, Socrates speaks on the justifications of the hierarchical structure of the society:

> You are, all of you in this community, brothers. But when god fashioned you, he added gold in the composition of those of you who are qualified to be ruler (which is why this prestige is greatest); he put silver in the Auxiliaries, and iron and bronze in the farmers and other workers.\(^55\)

God, for Plato, inserted different values and ranks in souls and this had to be maintained by every individual. Plato's distinction of 'real falsehood' and 'spoken falsehood' can be shown to fulfil the legitimisational needs of the political rule of antiquity. 'True falsehood' is described by Plato as 'original unadulterated falsehood', when a man is mislead in his own mind and becomes ignorant of truth, whereas a 'false statement' is a consequential expression or a representation of the state of mind. God and men both despise the first kind of falsehood, but falsehood in statements can be useful according to the occasion. It can be utilised as "preventive medicine" and invented "fictions"\(^56\).

It emerges from the above discussion that ideas contained in *Republic* facilitate and justify the manipulation of meanings in the service of the rulers of the ideal city. Another Greek thinker Aristotle justifies the domination of the slaves, barbarians and women based on the metaphor of rule of the soul over body. He says:

> The soul rules the body with a despotical rule, whereas the intellect rules the appetites with a constitutional and royal rule. And it is clear that the rule of the soul over the body, and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate, is natural and expedient; whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful. The same holds good of animals in relation to men; for tame animals have a better nature than wild, and all tame animals are better off when they are ruled by man; for then they are preserved. Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind.\(^57\)

Aristotle also says that "It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right..."\(^58\)
Michael Rosen also suggests that earliest account of false-consciousness can be found in the theories of Platonic rationalism and Augustinian pessimism, which deals with the conflict between reason and desire. For Plato, domination of the soul by inappropriate desires and the failure of rationality lead to the injustices of the state. Human nature contains a sleep side of sensuality and immoral desire, which should remain under control of the rational side of the self. St. Augustine, although belongs to the Judeo-Christian tradition that shares much with Platonism, ‘challenges the idea that human beings can emerge out of evil by the light of reason’. For Augustinian Christianity, redemption of fallen men (from sin) is not the matter of one’s effort, but ‘above all a matter of grace’. The contention of Augustine was that it is neither reason nor the will, but lust, which steer bodies in the fallen state. Rosen interprets it as an early example of anti-rationalism in the form of pessimism, which accepts the value of rationalism but terms that as unrealisable due to the fact of human nature.

In view of the above discussion, it can be argued that the role of pre-modern thought should not be over-emphasized in the creation of a theory of ideology. Rosen himself concedes that there is no reference of a political aspect of false consciousness in the works of Augustine; at best, his pessimism can be read as an aversion to any transformative action. In this reference, we can also recall the warning put forward by Karl Mannheim that at every stage of history mutual distrust, doubts and deliberate deception are evidenced; but one cannot properly speak of ideological motives in the utterances and moves of others, without fulfilling the condition of methodically tracing their untruthfulness in a social factor. Mannheim maintains that ideology cannot be merely “calculated lies” of someone, but should be linked to unreliability of one’s total behaviour, ‘which we regard as a function of the social situation in which he finds himself.'
1.2 IDEOLOGY, IDOLATRY, AND CHRISTIANITY

The same parameter should also be applied to the tendency of linking the concepts of false consciousness and ideology to the notion of idolatry. The Judeo-Christian tradition of deprecation of idolatry should not be linked directly to the modern conception of ideology. This can at best be considered as one among many historically situated beliefs in the evolution of Western thinking. As we have seen, Mannheim has cautioned against treating every attempt of demonstrating the errors of rivals or others as ideology. Historically the Judeo-Christian criticism of paganism had played a role in the construction of Orientalism, the 'Western' theory and practice of representing the orient. But at the same time, Renaissance and Enlightenment thought endeavoured to overcome and criticize the hold of Christianity in the realms of theory and practice.

With the advent of the Renaissance, John Milton turned the criticism of idolatry against the organisation of the Church itself. For him, blind following of customs and attaching special sanctity to any person, human practice and human institution amounts to idolatry. Milton says that 'the service of Prelaty is perfect slavery, and by consequence perfect falsehood' and 'the greatest burden in the world is superstition; not only of ceremonies in the Church, but of imaginary and scarecrow sins at home'. He further extends the criticism to the 'civil kinde of idolatry in idolizing the kings'.

After Milton, Hobbes and Locke both used the expression "idolatry" in their criticism of religious superstitions and speculative idealism. David Hawkes characterizes this tendency as 'a secularised version of the religious critique of idolatry'. Here, it can be said that these writers were engaged in a fierce criticism of church and state, but they employ for it, what Marx calls "borrowed language", i.e. the expressions borrowed from Christian theology.

One can recall Karl Marx's comment from *The Holy Family* on 'theistic prejudices of Baconian materialism' that his 'aphoristically formulated doctrine pullulates with inconsistencies imported from theology'. In the same book, Marx
remarks on Locke, that he 'made theology preach materialism' and 'Hobbes had shattered the theistic prejudices of Baconian materialism.' \[71\] Marx's criticism of not only idealism and empiricism, but also of vulgar materialism of Feuerbach and others, contributed in the removing of theological taints from the philosophical theories.

One can discern the above-mentioned Judeo-Christian bias in few contemporary discussions, however that does not constitute the main body of discussion on the concept of ideology. Bob Goudzwaard in his *Idols of our time* comments that 'an ideology arises when idolatry takes root in the pursuit of a legitimate end.' \[72\] A more recent publication *A Christian Critique of Ideologies* says that 'ideology is a type of false consciousness', which is 'rooted in the biblical category of idolatry.' The assumption that an idol 'has the capacity to save us from some real or perceived evil' is compared with the utopian elements of ideologies. \[73\] In the same spirit a Jewish website pronounces, '... whether in the form of idolatry or ideology the error is one ascribing absolute value to what has limited value or no value at all.' \[74\]

Opposite to the above-mentioned view of linking ideology to idolatry, another view sees the source of ideology in the monotheism including Christianity. The historian of religion Bruce Lawrence comments that 'the impetus of fundamentalism is shared by three major monotheistic traditions of western civilization: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. From a purely doctrinal reading every fundamentalist is a monotheist.' \[75\] He said that idea of God is the most powerful abstraction, and in monotheism all the abstractions, attributes and potentialities are imputed to one. Monotheism relates the most abstract to most concrete. God is One Other who is omnipotent, omniscient, invisible, self-creating, 'all that human beings are not but would like to be'. At the same time, the other is associated to 'most immediate, particular and valuable for them.' \[76\] The Other is seen as infinite projection of one's finitude and at the same time most particular and immediate. Lawrence comments:
Making the abstract concrete and beneficial is also, of course, the pattern intrinsic to every ideology, and in that sense monotheism becomes not only the basis for all ideologies but also itself the model ideology.\textsuperscript{77}

Lewis Feuer in\textit{ Ideology and the Ideologists} writes about the notion of ideology:

Ideologists in modern times have often been depicted as the successors of the Hebrew prophets, and as filled with the same moral passion and vision. Ideology itself is seen as prophecy in a modern guise. Enveloped in the prophetic mantle, ideologists are candidates, as neo-prophetic personalities, for the reverence and awe traditionally associated with the names of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Hosea.\textsuperscript{78}

Feuer's approach towards ideology suffers from certain biases, when he writes that 'two modes of thought contested for hegemony among the Hebrews, wisdom and prophecy...the Jews survived as a people because they cultivated wisdom rather than prophecy.' He announces that 'in a sense, Judaism put an end to ideology, an end to prophecy.'\textsuperscript{79} He also displays a strong distaste for socialists. He denounces not only the socialist and Paris communard of 1871, but also political activism and intellectuals in general. He tries to fit the Marxists in the description of 'ideologues as prophets'. He defines intellectuals as 'those persons who have a compulsive commitment to the criticism of the social order.' He writes:

"Intellectuals" of the Ghetto, these young workingman who gathered in the café in the evening—anarchists, socialists, writers, arguing ideology endlessly, mixing Ibsen, Plekhanov, and Bakunin with their tea.\textsuperscript{80}

Feuer's bias speaks for itself. This is not an incident that like the "end of ideology" theorists of America for him, the liberal capitalist-pragmatic world was not deluded by ideology.

The above-mentioned views, one linking ideology to idolatry and other linking ideology to monotheism are one-sided and based on certain biases. If one view links the concrete to ideology, then another links the abstract to ideology. As
we have discussed earlier, usage of the terms idol or idolatry in the works of Bacon and other scholars of modern era was not the same as found in the theological literature. The scope of the meaning of this term is so wide for these thinkers that it includes not only the critique of Christianity but also the critique of abstracted and unexamined ideas in general. The view of linking the historical critique of idolatry to modern phenomena of ideology ignores the fact that for above-mentioned enlightenment thinkers an abstract or pure idea can be as erroneous and illusory as an objectified idea.

The phenomena of ideology cannot be limited to either one type of culture, civilization or to a certain mode of production. The relationship of domination and its legitimisation is to be found in every culture and especially in every class-society. Every sort of religion and theology can be employed as a legitimising discourse for sustaining the rule of kingdoms or for maintaining the subjugation of women, castes, races, etc. The notion of ideology cannot be confined to any particular religion or religion per se. Any symbol-system including the natural and social sciences could be mobilised in the service of domination. This one-sidedness of the attempt to "fix" ideology with a particular belief system is also exemplified in Alvin Gouldner, who takes the position that the concept of ideology is only applicable to the modern age and 'although grounded ultimately in the Judeo-Christian tradition, ideology always secularises transcendence'.

It can be said that both Hawkes and Gouldner represent a Nietzchean-Heideggerian tradition of erasing the difference and rupture between Christian theology and Enlightenment thought. This tendency has manifested in more extreme form in the postmodernists Arthur Kroker and David Cook, who maintain that 'since Augustine nothing has changed in the deep, structural code of Western experience'. They make another claim that not only the modern project but also 'the post-modern scene ...began in the fourth century.' Hans Blumenberg criticises this postmodernist tendency on the ground that 'secularisation of Christianity that produced modernity' turns out to be 'comparatively unimportant differentiation' for these scholars in comparison to 'turning away from the pagan cosmos of antiquity.' The most interesting aspect
is that those very postmodernists who are the self-declared champions of difference commit the act of wiping out of differences. This style of thinking selectively obliterates all differences, remarks Blumenberg, ‘so that even a post-Christian atheism is actually an intra-Christian mode of expression of negative theology, and materialism is the continuation of the Incarnation by other means.’

In this context, we must bring up the question raised by Anthony Giddens that ‘should ideology be regarded as a type of idea or belief system- divergent from science in some sense, or should we only speak of ideological aspects of symbol system.’ It can be said that whenever the concept of ideology would move from representationalist and structuralist frame-works to contextual and processual sense of the term, then only such tendencies of equating ideology to a particular set of ideas or symbol-system would be avoided. We would return to this argument in chapter three and chapter four.

1.3 THE IDEOLOGUES AND THE BIRTH OF THE CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY

In 1796, Destutt de Tracy of France introduced the term “ideology” as the “science of ideas”, which is also its literal meaning, i.e. idea-logy. Tracy and his fellow ideologues were deeply influenced by the French thinkers Condillac, Condorcet, Helvetius, Holbach and Voltaire, named as Philosophes in French, who were themselves persuaded by English empiricism of Hobbes and Locke. They actively participated in the revolution of 1789 and were the most vocal upholders of the movement of enlightenment as the ‘spokesmen for the revolutionary bourgeoisie of eighteenth-century Europe.’ In this sense, the concept of ideology can be seen as an offspring of two realms: philosophy and politics. Bernard Susser remarks in this context that ‘ideology perpetuates the traits of both—the universal cognitive ambitions of philosophy and the worldly passions of politics’. 
The philosophical position of most of the empiricist philosophers can be located as more inclined towards consciousness as based on experience. However, in spite of rejecting the theory of innate ideas, they accepted explicitly or implicitly the role of reason in gathering the knowledge through perception.89 The "sensationalist" reading of Locke by Philosophes was also aimed against the authority of the church. This reading enabled them to trace the source of all ideas in material experience. This leads also to the conclusion that the soul has no material basis and 'all subjective human consciousness is nothing but “transformed sensation”'.90

Under the influence of Bacon, Locke and the French Philosophes most notably Condillac, Tracy came to the conclusion that we know the things only through the ideas which are based on physical sensations and it was rationally and objectively possible to discern the origins of ideas in the human mind. This would pave the way towards a new rational order of society and the rectification of erroneous thinking process, which impedes progress. For reaching this goal, ideologues created a system of national education to impart rational and scientific education in the spirit of the Enlightenment. For a shorter period (1795-99), this turned out to be the official doctrine of the French Republic.91

Education was the concern of many Enlightenment thinkers. Holbach and Helvetius presented education as the remedy of social problems. Hans Barth pinpoints the political implication of such an emphasis on education by saying that 'since education is everywhere closely related to the prevailing form of government, its principles cannot be reformed without also changing the constitution of the state.'92 Later Marx criticises the Enlightenment thinker's idealist tendency of ignoring real problems and real solutions and of presenting the educated section of society as redeemer of the rest of the society. Marx writes that 'the materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society.'93
These philosophers deliberately chose the term “ideology” for reconstructing post-revolutionary society on the rational psychological and progressive principles. Other words were considered and rejected. One of them was “metaphysics”, which was ignored because this expression was not compatible with the ambition of a new science modelled on Physics. Yet another word “psychology” was considered, but rejected because of its etymological origin, as “psyche” in Greek means soul. De Tracy’s fellow ideologue Pierre Cabanis submits that before this term ideology, ‘there was no precise notion of the way we deal with the external world, nor of the material nature of our ideas, nor of the series of operations by which the sense-organ and the brain receives impressions of the external objects and transforms them into sensations and perceptions.’ Tracy writes:

I would much prefer that the name ‘ideology’, or science of ideas, should be adopted. It is an appropriate name because it does not hint of anything doubtful or unknown; it does not bring to mind any idea of cause.

Tracy also asserts that ideology is a part of zoology. However, he does not point out the sense in which the term zoology is made use of. Nevertheless, putting ideology under zoology itself suggests that he was eager to explain the origin of ideas in the light of the natural sciences. We should keep in mind the fact that ideologue’s invoking of science was burdened with the style of investigation, which can at best be described as speculative and intuitive. There was confusion among them regarding the emerging disciplines of physiology, psychology and epistemology.

Napoleon Bonaparte becomes the supreme authority of France after a coup d'état in 1799. He initially backed Institut Nationale and the ideologues. Soon after, in the early nineteenth century Bonaparte provided it with a pejorative meaning and used it against ‘ideologue’ associated with the institute ridiculing the pretension and hollow claims made by them. Bonaparte’s expanded empire was supported by established religions, thus invited criticism from liberal and republican ideologues. As Bonaparte’s military expeditions faced difficulties
abroad and an opposition mounted against him, he sharpened his attack on the ideologues and criticized ideology ‘as an abstract, metaphysical doctrine which was divorced from the realities of political power.’98 Tracy’s positive conception of ideology as the science of ideas contains a pejorative reference to religious and metaphysical ideas, which he wanted to get rid of. Bonaparte demonstrated that the program of ideology is as metaphysical and erroneous as those traditional ideas, which are being criticized by it.

The double role of the single concept of ideology began against this background. Tracy’s usage was expressing a positive conception, a manifestation of Enlightenment ambition of providing the scientific foundation of ideas for achieving a society and polity based on reason. However, in a tragic and farcical reversal of fate, the concept turns up to convey a meaning of distorted, biased and manipulated thought. The dialectics of Enlightenment leads to the situation where ‘the dream of a science of ideas has become the nightmare of blinkered obscurantism.’99 After Tracy and Bonaparte until date, this single term is being used to express both the meaning of admiration and vilification.

Afterwards the negative notion proved to be more influential, especially after Karl Marx’s intervention in the discourse of ideology. Marx entered the scene of the history of the concept of ideology almost fifty years after its birth. He changed the meaning and associations of the concept in such a way that even today his writings not only make an essential reference point to the ongoing debates on the concept but also form the essential basis for understanding contemporary debates on ideology. The major portion of the works on ideology has emerged from the Marxist tradition, for example, from the writings of Lukács, Althusser, and the Frankfurt school. The non-Marxist stream of thought on ideology also has necessarily been engaged with a dialogue with the opus of Marx, as was the case with Mannheim’s Ideology and Utopia.
NOTES & REFERENCES

23 See Ibid, p. 239.
31 See Ibid, pp. 62-64.
33 Cited in Ibid, p. 63.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
43 Francis Bacon, *The New Organon: or True Directions Concerning the Interpretation of Nature*.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
47 See ibid, p. 21-22 and David Hawkes, *Ideology*, p. 31-32.
49 See ibid, p. 62.
50 See ibid.
58 Ibid.
60 See ibid, p. 59.
63 This tendency was extended to not only Hindus and Buddhist but also to Muslims. See Ziaudin Sardar, *Orientalism*, Viva, New Delhi, 2002, p. 32.
64 See David Hawkes, *Ideology*, p. 31-38.
66 See ibid, p. 36.
67 See ibid, p. 37.
71 See Ibid, pp. 150 and 152.
74 See http://www.law.du.edu/winokur/Agora/AAPages/prose-5-Jewish.htm
76 Ibid.
77 Emphasis added. See for all these comments Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God: the Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age*, pp. 106-108.
79 Ibid, pp. 197-201.
83 Cited in ibid, p. 26.
84 Cited in ibid, p. 27.
85 Cited in ibid, p. 28.


