CHAPTER - 5

IDEOLOGY AND POWER:

A CRITIQUE OF THE POSTSTRUCTURALIST APPROACH

Language is the immediate actuality of thought. Just as philosophers have given thought an independent existence, so they were bound to make language into an independent realm. This is the secret of philosophical language, in which thoughts in the form of words have their own content. The problem of descending from the world of thoughts to the actual world is turned into the problem of descending from language to life.¹

The poststructuralists and postmodernists have a tendency of discarding the concept of ideology. They declare that ideology as a concept is dead and replace it by terms like “discourse”, “power-knowledge”, “simulacra”, etc. The “post-modern” stage is said to be a “post-industrial” and a “post ideological” stage. They complain that the concept of ideology is based on untenable distinctions such as “true and false”, “subjective and objective”. They also blame the concept of ideology for its alleged essentialism, scientism, and determinism.

Michael Foucault’s disapproval of the concept of ideology inspired other poststructuralists and postmodernists like Lyotard, Baudrillard, Rorty, Deleuze and Guattari. The postmodernist “end of ideology” theme emerges greatly from this Foucauldian nihilism. Postmodernism has different arguments, yet overall, it carries forward the spirit of the classical “end of ideology” thesis of the 1960’s. However, even the thesis of 1960’s had some precursor of this thought.
Sara Mills in her book *Discourse* has espoused the cause of the concept of discourse against the concept of ideology. On the relationship between both the concepts, she says:

Much of Foucault's work on discourse has been an open discussion and dialogue with the term ideology, and in some sense, the term discourse has been defined in dialogue with and in reaction to the definition of ideology.\(^2\)

David Howarth of the department of Government in the University of Essex, which emerged as the centre of discourse theory, while discussing Foucault's conception of discourse writes:

The new conception of discourse also marks a *deliberate exclusion* of the concept of ideology, which historically has represented one possible means of connecting discourses and material practices.\(^3\)

Howarth further writes on the replacement of the concept of ideology by the concept of discourse:

Drawing upon and radicalising poststructuralist concepts developed by Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan, they [Laclau and Mouffe] replace the Marxist theory of ideology with a new conception of discourse. They argue that all practices are discursive and that no system of practice is completely immune from the effects of others.\(^4\)

Ironically enough, Howarth recently complains that no one is taking Foucault seriously as a theorist of ideology. He says:

*Renewed* interest in theories of ideology has engendered a variety of new approaches and empirical applications, ranging from psychoanalytic to post-Marxist through to analytical and post-analytical idioms... One absent, though in my view potentially important thinker in this regard is Michel Foucault, even though his different accounts of discourse are viewed with scepticism as to whether they can advance a coherent theory of ideology and ideology critique. Indeed, many are openly hostile.\(^5\)

Even Ernesto Laclau, a leading post-structuralist, who abandoned the use of the concept of ideology in his later writing, wrote recently an article titled that
"The death and Resurrection of the concept of Ideology." In this article, Laclau talks about the necessity of reformulating the concept of ideology, instead of abandoning it.

This chapter deals mainly with the poststructuralist criticism of the concept of ideology. Poststructuralism has inherited many things from the tradition of structuralism, particularly its undermining of the concept of subject into a mere bearer of linguistic and social structures. This chapter proposes to examine the poststructuralist response to the concept of ideology, and inquires into the close affinity between postmodernism with poststructuralism. These are two separate streams of thought with a close family resemblance; therefore, both share a common predilection towards many issues including the concepts of ideology, power, and discourse. Both the streams share an emphasis on the ubiquity of the will to power, dissolution of subjectivity, and the relativist disbelief of truth. There is much overlap and agreement between the postmodernists and the poststructuralists, but there are differences too.

Poststructuralists including Michel Foucault, Paul Hirst, Ernesto Laclau do not dissolve social reality simply into the cacophony of signs, images and effects, as is the case with postmodernists like Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. For the postmodernists, no change is possible in social relations; and the chaotic, hyper-real character of the "social" consumes reality itself. No resistance is offered by the postmodernists—just the proclamation of the end of ideology; however, the poststructuralists try to replace ideology-critique by concepts like discourse or power-knowledge. This chapter consequently discusses Foucault's approach to the question of ideology particularly, while taking into account the general tendencies of poststructuralism and postmodernism towards this question.

The first section of this chapter deals with the tradition of the "end of ideology" and argues that this tradition is closely associated with the bourgeois-liberal tradition of thought. The second section discusses poststructuralist and postmodernist rejection of the concept of ideology and their alternative
conceptions. In the third section, the main arguments of the critique of the concept of ideology would be taken up. It will be seen whether the ideology-critique presupposes an ideology-free space.

5.1 THE IDEOLOGY OF THE "END OF IDEOLOGY"

"The end of ideology" thesis as such is of 1960's vintage, but its spectres still haunt post-modern discourse. The interesting thing about the "end of ideology" thesis of the 60's and the 90's is that this pronounces the death of ideology on the one hand and espouses the 'neutral' stance based on behaviouralism of the American political science and the so-called 'value-free' social science on the other. Capitalist-liberal thought in general felt itself uneasy with the conception of ideology that every now and then it pronounces its end. It is applicable right from a classical theorist of ideology Karl Mannheim to the champions of post-modernism like Jean Baudrillard and Jean-Francois Lyotard.

The liberal tradition does criticise the deficiencies of a capitalistic economy and a parliamentary democracy, but crucially its espousal of the capitalist cause limits its scope of criticism. Liberalism's endorsement of the capitalistic system makes it apologetic. It is left with no choice but to legitimise the fundamentals of the existing system and this is at the root of its distaste and hostility to the tradition of ideology-critique.

Karl Mannheim can be considered as the predecessor of the "end of ideology" thesis, however, with a caveat that he distinguishes between ideology and utopia and was more concerned with the thesis of the end of utopia. However, what was utopia for Mannheim was included in the features of ideology by later campaigners of the "end of ideology". For Mannheim, both ideology and utopia constitute a discrepancy and incongruity with reality. Ideologies are those mental structures, which 'have not yet grown up to the present' and utopia are those mental structures, which 'are always beyond the
In this account, ideology is considered as an 'antiquated belief, a set of obsolescent myths, norms and ideas unhinged from the real', whilst utopia is considered 'premature and unreal.' Here Mannheim puts capitalist modernity against the ideology of the 'clerically and feudally organised medieval order' on the one hand and the utopia of communism and socialism on the other.

Let us take a view of the passages, where Mannheim suggests the end of ideology and utopia. In *Ideology and Utopia*, he writes:

In Europe, however, the complete disappearance of all reality-transcending doctrines—utopian as well as ideological—took place not merely through the fact that all these notions were shown to be relative to the socio-economic situations, but also by other means ... The reality-transcending elements, ideologies, utopias, etc.—were now no longer relative to social group-situations ...

In this context, Mannheim further writes:

Must we not regard the disappearance of humanitarianism from art, the emergence of a "matter of factness" in sexual life, art, and architecture, and the expression of the natural impulses in sports—must all these not be interpreted as symptomatic of the increasing regression of the ideological and utopian elements from the mentality of the strata which are coming to dominate the present situation?

In other passages, Mannheim identifies other "discernible" tendencies of the "present" time like 'the gradual reduction of politics to economics', 'the destruction of the deluding ideologies which are incongruent with the reality of our present situation', "genuineness" and "frankness" as the 'projection of the general "matter-of-factness" or "realism".' Here the Machiavellian separation can be recalled between is and ought, which essentially works in every ideological mechanism under one or the other pretext. It can be said that different theorists of the end of ideology rely on the appeal to the "matter-of-factness" or the "realism".

We have seen in chapter three that naturalization, normalisation, de-historicisation, etc. work as prime ideological strategies; where ideology...
presents a social relation as a natural state of affairs. The ideology of “end of ideology” rests on this obviousness of the things, which can be achieved only through suppression of a critical inquiry in favour of the present equilibrium of power relationship. Here this critical spirit can be referred to, what Mannheim negatively described above as the “reality-transcending elements”. It can be said that if reality becomes devoid of reality-transcending elements then it would simply turn into a “reified reality”, or a reality, which is perceived as taken-for-granted. It must be added here that this sort of realism of reified reality is not only employed by the apologists of capitalist modernity, but also by those Marxists, who suppresses critical inquiry in the name of realism. One example of this in the sphere of art was the doctrine of socialist realism, which was used as a crude mechanism for legitimisation of Soviet totalitarianism.

In a way, Mannheim provided a basis to the American “end of ideology” thesis of later years by saying:

The apparent absence of tension in the present-world is being undermined from... those strata whose aspirations are not yet fulfilled, and who are striving towards communism and socialism... If, through peaceful evolution, we are able, at a later stage, to reach a somewhat superior form of industrialism, which will be sufficiently elastic and which will give the lower strata a degree of well-being, then they too will undergo the type of transformation which has already been evidenced by the classes in power.15

This description is similar to the convergence theory, which is liked by the “end of ideology” theorists. The view of convergence of capitalism and communism, which was later characterised by future theorists as the ‘capitalism with a human face’ or welfare capitalism, also found expression in Mannheim. He says:

From this point of view, it makes no difference whether this superior form of social organisation of industrialism, through the arrival at a position of power on the part of the lower strata, will eventuate in a capitalism, which is sufficiently elastic to insure their relative well being, or whether this capitalism will first be transformed into communism.16
Another feature of the idea of the end of ideology put forward by Mannheim was the depiction of intellectuals. However, unlike later theorists Mannheim was gentler to them and did not show any scorn.

Raymond Aron's *Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955), mainly consist of polemics against Marxism, was a step forward in this direction. The concluding chapter of this book was titled as "End of Ideology?". Seymour Martin Lipset’s book *Political Man* also had a chapter with a similar title The "End of Ideology". David McLellan makes an interesting comment that in Lipset’s book even the question mark after the "End of Ideology" was removed. Later Daniel Bell came up with an entire book entitled *The End of Ideology*. Apologists of capitalism define ideology in such a way that capitalism and imperialism of North America and Western Europe appear as ideology-free. Bell defines "total ideology" as ‘a set of beliefs, infused with passion and seeks to transform the whole of a way of life.' Generally, liberals are not in favour of radical changes in the society. This definition makes it easy for liberals to deny that they have an "ideology".

Alasdair MacIntyre says that these theorists first restrict the term ideology for the characterisation of socialist ideas and ideals, and then develops the whole edifice of their arguments. MacIntyre observes that the "end of ideology" thesis, far from making the end of ideology was itself a key expression of the ideology of the time and place where it arose.

In the line of Mannheim and others, Daniel Bell too launched complains against the intellectuals. In the critique of the intellectuals, Bell came up with a distinction between the scholar and the intellectual:

The scholar has a bounded field of knowledge, a tradition, and seeks to find his place in it, adding to the accumulated, tested knowledge of the past an to a mosaic... The intellectual begins with his experience, his individual perceptions of the world, his privileges and deprivations and judges world by these sensibilities... In a business civilisation, the intellectual felt that the wrong values were being honoured, and rejected the society.
Thus there was a "built-in" compulsion for the free-floating intellectual to become political.\textsuperscript{22}

As can be seen in this passage Bell tries to invoke the value of tradition and objectivity, vis-à-vis, imagined individualism and egocentricity of an intellectual. Lurking behind this treatment is the notion of consensus and deviants. We can recall that problematic of social consensus and deviants have been the hallmark of American social science for a long time. The notion of social control in the maintenance of existing social order emerged from this very problematic. Bell pronounced the end of ideology and if there remained any conflict of interest and value, that could be ‘resolved within the framework of the pluralistic consensus and its "rules of the game".’\textsuperscript{23}

Condemnation of intellectuals and invoking of value-free social sciences are tendencies comprising the essential features of the "end of ideology" theses. Another example is Lewis S. Feuer’s \textit{Ideology and the Ideologists} (1975), published under the series ‘Explorations in Interpretative Sociology’. Feuer defines intellectuals as ‘those persons, who have a compulsive commitment to the criticism of the social order’ and whose ‘ideas, are much more the by-product of the laws of intellectual fashion.’\textsuperscript{24} Feuer avers that ‘intellectuals, then as a sociological species, are the bearers of ideology. Scientists and scholars are not as such “intellectuals.”’\textsuperscript{25} At the end of his book, Feuer announces:

One cannot predict ‘an end of ideology’. But one can state the conditions for its efflorescence and decline... So long as a society engenders intellectuals, dissociated from work-realities, generational rebellion will tend to issue in ideology. A society, which is rational and work-occupied is one which has men of intellect, but not intellectuals. Jefferson, Franklin and Lincoln were men of intellect, but always putting ideas to the test of reality, they never became intellectuals.\textsuperscript{26}

The message is clear in both Bell and Feuer’s pronouncements. Only those men of intellect are scholars who do not criticize the present system, who do not seek any radical transformation in the “real” state of affairs and who are not against ‘the advancement of civilization.’\textsuperscript{27} Other men of intellect, who
criticise the present system, are not normal; they are deviants. One can notice in this condemnation of intellectuals two implicit streams of thought. The first is the idea of a normal person who is part of consensus and reality. The second is the idea of a value-free or an alleged objective approach. Therefore, this normal society sees ideologists, intellectuals, radicals, activists as part of the problem. Feuer declares in the preface of Ideology and the Ideologists that ‘ideology has inevitably made for an authoritarian presumption on the part of master-intellectuals and marginal ones and for their antagonism to objective truth and science.’

The “end of ideology” thesis assumes that value-free and empirical social science can take place of ideology and a consensus based on ‘matter-of-factness’ and leaves no scope for value-conflicts and resultant ideologies. David Morrice reminds us that this is similar to the positivist assumption that normative political philosophy is another name for ideology. Goodwin writes that ‘ideology had been, in short, superseded by consensus politically and by the scientific method academically.’ On the issue of juxtaposing Ideology vis-à-vis science, objectivity, and truth, Terry Eagleton comments on the strategy of the “end of ideology” advocates:

An interesting feature of this ‘end-of-ideology’ is that it tends to view ideology in two quite contradictory ways, as at once blindly irrational and excessively rationalistic. On the one hand, ideologies are passionate, rhetorical, impelled by some benighted pseudo-religious faith which the sober technocratic world of modern capitalism has thankfully outgrown; on the other hand they are arid conceptual systems which seek to reconstruct society from the ground up in accordance with some bloodless blueprint.

Bell has declared the end of ideology in these words:

In the Western World, therefore, there is today a rough consensus among intellectuals on political issues: The acceptance of a welfare state, the desirability of decentralized power, a system of missed economy and of political pluralism. In that sense too, the ideological age has ended.
As we have seen, Bell was not alone in this endeavour. A stream of liberal thought, whose interest lies in the status quo, every now and then pronounces the end of ideology. It can be claimed that the classical "end of ideology" thesis of Bell, Lipset, etc., is no longer in the forefront in the social and political scenes. However, it reappeared in another guise in the writings of the postmodernists such as Baudrillard and Lyotard. In 1989, Francis Fukuyama was an official in the US State department, when he wrote articles regarding the "end of history". He declared that 'the unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism' proves that it is 'not just the end of cold war or the passing of a particular period of history, but the end of history as such; that is, the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.'\(^{33}\) Fukuyama says that the natural sciences possess the directionality and cumulativeness. Hence, natural sciences affect the homogenisation of cultures by satisfying ever-increasing set of human desires. After establishing this proposition, Fukuyama links the scientific-technological directionality to the liberal-democratic state as an end-point of human evolution. For Fukuyama, the thoughts, which are in opposition to the march of capitalist-liberal democracy, are ideological. The "end of history" implies that ideologies opposing liberal democracy are exhausted. The era of ideological struggle is over and there remains 'a Universal History of mankind in the direction of liberal democracy.'\(^{34}\)

These theorists functioning within the genre of liberalism and neoconservatism work under the cover of an alleged "value-free" social science, but they are very candid in articulating their opposition to discourses of emancipation. Kenneth Minogue says that 'ideologies can be specified in terms of a shared hostility to modernity: to liberalism in politics, individualism in moral practice, and the market in economics.'\(^{35}\)

Besides talking of the regimes of individualism and the political economy of free economics, Liberalism also talks of the thesis of imperfectability of human being. Here we can recall from a prior chapter of this thesis on the strategy of the ideological use of the idea of human nature. Minogue believes
that ideology generates false expectations regarding attainability of a perfect world. However, he does not accept that his own thoughts are also ideological because, it justifies the inequality and oppression by denying the possibility of an equal access to resources and status.36

For Minogue, attainability of a perfect world is the criterion for characterisation of ideology. However, Minogue remains silent over Bell and Fukuyama’s pronouncement that ‘a perfect world’ is already achieved. See for example the claims of Seymour Martin Lipset that ‘democracy in the Western World’ is a representation of ‘the good society itself in operation.’37 The same is the case with Fukuyama’s presentation of the liberal-democratic state as a rational social order and realisation of a universal history of humankind. Even Minogue’s ideas themselves become a fit case for the characterisation of ideology according to his own criterion, because he sees a sense of accomplishment in the state of status quo.

According to Lewis S. Feuer some nations are less prone to the vice of ideology and some are even ideology-free. He says:

Britain was less prone to ideology because it was relatively lacking in a class of intellectuals... And for similar reasons, America has been a country singularly lacking in ideology... The language of American politics was far more experimental than ideological.38

Feuer proposed a criterion of proneness to ideology that is, the presence of intellectuals. However, he is cautious enough to absolve bourgeois intellectuals from the same criteria:

So-called "bourgeois" revolutions have been remarkably devoid of ideology. If an "ideological scale" were formulated to measure the relative propensity to ideology on the part of the so-called bourgeois thinkers, the economists as compared to that of the communists, whom Marx called "The theoreticians of the proletarian class", the thinkers of the bourgeois revolution would scarcely rank among the ideologists.39
He argues that the so-called bourgeois intellectuals were in fact scholars, who had done a study of objective and scientific propositions, which 'could be verified or falsified by empirical facts.'

The above-mentioned passages of the end of ideology campaigners reveal that this was an exercise to state that the Soviet Union was infected from ideology while realistic USA was awash with objectivity. American block employed the "end of ideology" thesis as a weapon in the cold war. It must be recalled here that the idea of the "end of ideology" was discussed and exercised in detail in the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Milan in 1955, in which Raymond Aron, Edward Shils, John Kenneth Galbraith, Sydney Hook, Semour Martin Lipset, Deniel Bell and other votaries of Americanism participated. According to J.L. Dittberner's *The End of Ideology and American Social Thought: 1930–1960*, the end of ideology movement was closely linked with the CIA-sponsored Congress for Cultural Freedom.

In 1960s, the American sociologist C. Wright Mills characterised these academicians as ‘The NATO intellectuals.’ For the theorists of the end of ideology, ‘bringing down the democratically elected government of Chile is a question of adapting oneself realistically to the facts; to send one's tank into Czechoslovakia is an instance of ideological fanaticism.’ In 1988, a new edition of Bell's *End of Ideology* came. In his after-words, Bell again tried to defend his thesis. However, this time he was conspicuously silent over the aggressive ideology of market fundamentalism, which was also termed at that time as Reaganism and Thatcherism. The ideology of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism openly rejected the so-called 'consensus on the welfare state and mixed economies,' but Bell is still upholding the banner of 'ideology-free' American empire in his hands.

Besides the classical end of ideology thesis, we also have contemporary "recycled" theories of the end of ideology. Bell's "end of ideology" thesis was based on the presumption of the "acceptance of welfare state" by both left and right political formations. Nevertheless, since the 1980s, the neo-liberals and
neo-conservatives have been attacking the idea and structure of the welfare state and planned economy with full force. Liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation are chronically the new ideologies of the Bretton woods institutions (IMF, World Bank etc.) and other capitalist conglomerates, syndicates and associations. The erosion of the welfare state; attacks on trade union rights, growing plights of farmers, agricultural labourers, tribals, dalits, and new “underclasses”; and the unabashed celebrations of the rich and famous by the media industry are the dominant discourses today. The major reason for the end of ideology given by Bell and others is of lesser realistic and value-neutral reasons, and much more for “ideological” reasons. The question then emerges, what are the reasons behind a yet new declaration of the end of ideology.

If for Fukuyama’s “end of history” thesis (1992), the liberal-capitalist regime of America was the end-point of human evolution, for the postmodernists, this is the end of the very idea of history. They dislike history, because for them history is a kind of meta-narrative telling the story of historical progression and possibility of a more just and egalitarian world. Postmodernists believe that this is only one story among many others. What should prevail in the realm of socio-political choices is the moral relativism. Peter Osborne comments that ‘the narrative of the death of meta-narratives is itself grander than most of the narratives it would consign to oblivion.’

Michael Freeden makes a pertinent remark on the politics of the pronouncement of the end of ideology. He says that the “end of ideology” approach ‘suffers from a weakness in the conceptualization of ideologies that makes all ideologies, except for doctrinaire and highly coherent ones, invisibles. That off course helpfully supports the aspirations of most ideologies to attain “natural” status and thus plays into their hands. Committed ideologues should heartily welcome the “end of ideology” myth— it makes their work so much easier by perpetuating an illusion under which they can continue to proselytize.’
Slovaz Žižek observes that in present circumstances, one can even imagine the end of the world itself because of the danger of ecological destruction, but cannot imagine the end of the present dominating mode of production, i.e. capitalism, as if it would even survive the destruction of the planet.\textsuperscript{50}

5.2 IDEOLOGY, POWER/KNOWLEDGE, AND DISCOURSE

In this section we will see how the postmodernists and poststructuralists articulate the "end of ideology" thesis, and how this end of ideology view gets an endorsement from the liberal thinkers like Richard Rorty and John Rawls and postmodernists like Baudrillard. The American pragmatist and postmodernist Richard Rorty thinks:

Contemporary liberal society already contains the institutions for its own improvement— an improvement, which can mitigate the dangers Foucault sees. Indeed, my hunch is that Western social and political thought may have had the last conceptual revolution it needs.\textsuperscript{51}

Rorty even advises leftists to 'start talking about greed and selfishness rather than about bourgeois ideology, about starvation wages and layoffs rather than about the commoditisation of labour, and about differential per pupil expenditure on schools and differential access to health care rather than about the division of society into classes.'\textsuperscript{52}

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari announced that 'there is no ideology and there never has been,'\textsuperscript{53} whereas, Jean Baudrillard links the end of ideology with the end of determinations and furthermore, with the end of reality itself. He believes that the concept of ideology is not useful anymore in an environment, which is marked with 'the disappearance of the subject, the death of meaning, the fragmentation of the social, the end of truth.'\textsuperscript{54} Baudrillard announces that 'there is no longer such thing as ideology; There are only
simulacra.55 For him everything is lost in the dance of images and everything becomes un-decidable. He says:

Today, the entire system is fluctuating indeterminacy, all of reality absorbed by the hyper-reality of the code and simulation. It is now a principle of simulation, and not of reality, that regulates social life. The finalities have disappeared.56

The poststructuralists and the postmodernists in their criticism of the concept of ideology share one thing, that is, their aversion to the concept of truth. If for Foucault truth is the instance of power, for Baudrillard there is no reality altogether, for Jean-Francois Lyotard truth is simply the weapon of paranoia and power. There are only incommensurable language games.57 For Lyotard there remains no difference between a critique and a joke:

It has been said and repeated that critique is a joke, because it is to remain within the field of the criticized thing and within the paranoiac, dogmatic relation of knowledge.58

These postmodernists and poststructuralists take the cue from Michel Foucault's abandonment of the concept of ideology. Foucault observes in a long passage that why the concept of ideology should be abandoned:

The notion of ideology appears to me to be difficult to make use of, for three reasons. The first is that, like it or not, it always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth. Now I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true or false. The second drawback is that the concept if ideology refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject. Thirdly, ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something, which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinants, etc. For these three reasons, I think that this is a notion that cannot be used without circumspection.59

Foucault's rejection of the concept of ideology is based on three reasons. The first is the involvement of the "false" / "true" binary, the second is the reference to a coherent and conscious subject, and the third is the reference to
economic determinism. We have discussed the charge of economic or infrastructural determinism in detail in chapter three. In the next section of this chapter, the first two charges against the concept of ideology would be discussed. Right now we would discuss and criticise Foucault’s notions of power/knowledge and discourse that are presented as something of an alternative to the concept of ideology. Foucault’s rejection of the concept of ideology is closely related to his Nietzschean conception of the will to power.

Michel Foucault is the most influential theorist of power in contemporary culture theory, especially in the poststructuralist tradition. For him power is not associated with repression or direct domination. Power constitutes the subjectivity of individuals and thus controls them. Power operates and exerts its influence through the networking of discourses. Organised discourses not only create subjectivities, but also social identities. Philip Barker summarises Foucault’s view on power in the following way: ‘power is co-extensive with the social domain. There is no realm outside power nor are there any paces in its network where some “primal liberty” or “freedom” exists.’

For Foucault there is no role of human agency in the operation of power, which is dispersed in the whole society. He believes that ‘power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere.’ For Foucault further remarks:

When one speaks of “power”, people think immediately of a political structure, a government, a dominant social class, the master facing the slave, and so on. That is not at all what I think when I speak of “relationships of power”. I mean in human relations, whatever they are—whether it be a question of communicating verbally... or a question of a love relationship—power is always present.

In such a characterisation of power as omnipresent, there remains no space either for resisting human subjects or for human relations, untainted from power drives and motives. In this respect, Foucault’s notion of subject becomes important. He sees the human subject as the nodal point of discourse. Subjects are decentred and distributed in the differential fields of power. Foucault shares
with the structuralists an aversion to the role of human agency, vis-à-vis the valorisation of the idea of structure.

Foucault tries to get rid of the difficulties, which generate from the total absence of subjectivity, by regarding power as 'intentionality without a subject.' It implies the intentionality of power without subject. Therefore, there is no question of holding a person, who is in a position of domination or oppression, accountable for his/her wrongdoings. The understanding of subjects merely as effects of power undermines the importance of the notions like discipline, regime, resistance, etc.63

Such a distrustful and cynical view of human subjectivity emerged out of his Nietzschean notion of entanglement of the realm of knowledge with ubiquitous power. Foucault is not contented by the view that noble attributes and lofty ideals like love, caring, solidarity, etc. can be used to legitimise power relations or these virtues and values can be manipulated for all wrong reasons. This was the contention of Karl Marx and of the other critical theorists, with whom Foucault was eager to affect a break. He departs from the view that truth and goodness can be used for the service of lies and evil and reaches to the view that truth and good are nothing but other names of lies and evil. From the view that knowledge, philosophy, and reason can be transmuted into ideology, which are ideas in the service of power relations, he reaches to the view that knowledge is nothing but the manifestation of power.

Foucault's conception of power is modelled on the Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of power. Nietzsche believes that 'truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live.'64 Truth serves the powerful, there is not something true, but always 'something is held to be true.'65 The source of truth is in power: 'The methods of truth were not invented from motives of truth, but from motives of power, of wanting to be superior.'66 For him the will to truth serves the will to power. Foucault maintains:

Power and knowledge directly imply one another... that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of
knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.\textsuperscript{67}

If subjects of history are looked at only as the effects of power, and there remains no difference between knowledge and power, as truth-claims simply turns into the effects of power, then there also remains no possibility of counter-hegemonic movements of the subjugated. If there would be no movements and thoughts, which can demystify and counter domination, then there would also be no possibility of a better world. In this context, David Howarth, who is rather sympathetic to Foucault's writings, observes:

More particularly, Foucault needs to explain how movements and actors construct counter-hegemonic discourses that can weld together contingent and at times contradictory ideological elements, and he needs to account for the way they can recruit a diverse range of social actors in support of their objectives.\textsuperscript{68}

Foucault had himself remarked on the relationship on truth and power in the following manner:

The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn’t outside power or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn’t the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power.\textsuperscript{69}

Charles Taylor explains Foucault's approach to the question of truth thus:

There is no truth, which can be espoused, defended, rescued against systems of power. On the contrary, each such system defines its own variant of truth. And there is no escape from power into freedom, for such systems of power are co-extensive with human society. We can only step from one to another.\textsuperscript{70}

In contrast to Foucault's conception of power, Anthony Giddens responded in the following manner:

But I also think that it quite wrong to be thereby seduced by a Nietzschean radicalisation of power, which elevated to the prime position in action and in discourse. Power then becomes a
mysterious phenomenon, that hovers everywhere, and underlies everything. I consider it very important to reject the idea that power has primacy over truth, or that meanings and norms can be explicated as congealed or mystified power. A reductionism of power is as faulty as economic or normative reductionisms are.71

These are four distinct perspectives on the contemporary readings of power. Foucault's view of power tends to encourage pessimism and passivity vis-à-vis the forces of domination. Resistance to power is difficult if it is mystically dispersed. It also applies to the question of collective political resistance to domination. Since power works in a diffused manner, that is why resistance, if any, is only possible at the local level, a realm of 'micro-politics'. The logic of local-specific resistance precludes any appeal for a unified resistance based on a collective identity as class domination or gender oppression.

One result of Foucault's theorisation of power as ubiquitous and dispersed is that there is no account of the "centralised" and bullying power of state power. The reason behind this lies in his discourse theory, which provides the basis for his "dispersed" microphysics of power. Foucault lays emphasis on 'the perpetual slippage of meaning', and 'the endless sliding of signifier'.72 He sees the state as an abstract empty space, which has hardly any linkages with other forms and institutions of power. We can compare this position with Louis Althusser, who maintains that the School, Church, Family, etc. work as Ideological State Apparatus. The state is still (in Althusser) a crucial Institution of class domination, which sustains and legitimises other from of power by its juridical-legal power. However, Foucault's conception of dispersed power ignores this problem.

It is surprising that Foucault's theory came at such a time, when the centralised power of the state was strengthening. The state is still the most crucial form of social domination. In the era of powerful imperialist states, the absence of the adequate conceptualisation of the state is surprising. State provides that space where different forms of power relations and institutions are concentrated and channelised. In the context of Foucault's undermining of
the problematic of the state in favour of the ‘microphysics of power’ Stuart Hall observes:

The function of the state is, in part, precisely to bring together or articulate into a complex structured instance, a range of political discourses and social practices which are concerned at different sites with the transmission and transformation of power – some of those practices having little to do with the political domain as such, being concerned with other domains which are nevertheless articulated to the state, for example, familial life, civil society, gender and economic relations. The state is the instance of the performance of a condensation, which allows that site of intersection between different practices to be transformed into systematic practice of regulation, of rule and norm, of normalisation, within society. The state condenses very different social practices and transforms them into the operation of rule and domination over particular classes and other social groups.

The question arises: where Foucault’s truth-claims in the form of theory of power stand. Are Foucault’s assertions, statements just the manifestation of some power relationship? Why does Foucault not inform us which side of power relations he represents? Foucault’s portrayal of knowledge as the product of different regimes of truth also faces the problem of incommensurability. Andrew Sayer remarks that Foucault’s position ‘involves a performative contradiction which invites ridicule— “there is no truth beyond whatever anyone defines as the truth— and that’s the truth!”’

Not only Foucault but also Derrida, Deleuze and other poststructuralists regard power as ‘all-pervasive, albeit mysteriously elusive, phenomenon.’ However, if we say power is everywhere, then it also means that power is nowhere. In the absence of the concept of hegemonic power, every power relation becomes the same. The power of a despot who kills hundred people would be equal to the power of a guard who does not allow someone an entry into a museum.

Taylor highlights Foucault’s confusion between the categories of truth, power, and freedom and presents a critique of this approach:
“Power” belongs in a semantic field from which “truth” and "reedom" cannot be excluded. Because it is linked with the notion of imposition on our significant desire and purposes, it cannot be separated from the notion of some relative lifting of this restraints... So “power” requires "liberty", but it also requires “truth”—if we want to allow, as Foucault does, that we can collaborate in our own subjugation... Because the imposition proceeds here by foisting illusion upon us, it proceeds by disguises and masks... The truth here is subversive of power.76

In equating knowledge with power, Foucault becomes guilty of radical relativism. In an attempt to overcome this difficulty, Foucault takes the recourse of the concept of discourse. For him power relations and discourses presuppose each other. Truth-claims are produced within the realm of particular discourses corresponding to particular forms of power. The validity of these claims is relative to particular discourses.

Foucault reformulated the meaning of the term discourse accordingly to his conception of power/knowledge. The common meaning of the word ‘discourse’ according to the Cambridge International Dictionary is ‘communication in speech or writing.’77 Discourse implies language in use—oral or written. The discipline of discourse analysis generally focuses upon the analysis of utterances.

V.N. Voloshinov, a Russian formalist-Marxist, writes in Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (1929):

Village sewing circles, urban carouses, worker’s lunchtime chats, etc., will all have their own type. Each situation, fixed and sustained by social custom, commands particular kind of organisation of audience.78

This insight paved the way to study the discourses of different specialised groups and social settings. Michel Pecheux’s Language, Semantics, and Ideology was a study of ideological employment of discourses and statements. The theory of ideology holds that there can be ideological as well as non-ideological articulation and enchainment of meaning and norms, which constitute discourses, a point we have discussed in chapter three.
However, the poststructuralist tradition of thought includes almost everything in the domain of discourse, so that there remains no distinction between discursive and extra-discursive. Discourse becomes the other name of world or society. For Ernesto Laclau ‘the discursive is coterminous with the being of objects.’79 Stuart Hall explains Foucault’s concept of discourse. Discourse, for Foucault is:

A group of statements, which provide a language for talking about—a way of representing the knowledge about—a particular topic at a particular historical moment... Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But ... since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do—our conduct—all practices have a discursive aspect.80

Foucault’s equating of knowledge and power, Hall argues, rejects and makes the traditional question of Marx’s theory of ideology, i.e., ‘in whose class interest does language, representation and power operate,’81 meaningless. The re-conceptualisation of the term discourse by Foucault was a purposeful endeavour. David Howarth opines:

The new conception of discourse also marks a deliberate exclusion of the concept of ideology, which historically has represented one possible means of connection discourses and materially practices.82

If one source of inspiration of the Foucauldian theory of discourse is the Nietzschean concept of “will to power”, the other source is the poststructuralist undoing of the subject in the operation of language. Now subjects do not speak (according to the poststructuralists), but they are spoken by language or discourses. At best, a human speaker is the effect of discourse or power/knowledge. Jonathan Culler remarks about the effacement of the human subjects from the pages of poststructuralism:

As the self is broken down into component systems, deprived of its status as source and master of meaning, it comes to seem more and more like a construct: a result of systems of convention. Even the idea of personal identity emerges through the discourse of a culture.83

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On the fading of the subject into 'subject-positions' earmarked by the discourses, Foucault says that 'In short, it is a matter of depriving the subject...of its role as originator, and of analysing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse.'

Structuralist and poststructuralist semiotics have contributed in decoding forms of culture immensely. Their study of trans-individual aspects of the discursive practices plays a role in understanding the materiality of ideational and intangible characteristic of culture. However, they have gone too far in wiping out the creative presence of subjects. Poststructuralists and postmodernists are fond of the words of "death", "post" and "end". They may have issued a death-sentence, but as the speakers of discourses, subjects are very much there to be seen, heard, and spoken. Rapport and Overing remark:

Discursive exchange, moreover, is never unmediated by a creative-individual improvisation of its conventions... Indeed, it is individuals' personalisation of discursive structures that causes them to remain alive: here are structures granted contemporary relevance, validity, and significance, by being imparted with personal meanings and intent.

We have discussed in a prior chapter that the dimensions of reality, consciousness, language, and ideology should not be reduced into one another. Discourse cannot take the place of consciousness or subjectivity. Legitimisation or normative integration with societal norms is never just a passive affair. The ideological forms are contested and challenged by dominated subjects in the context of every day life, sometime in articulated form and sometimes in a disguised form. In the same manner, socialisation within an available set of discursive expressions is not a completely passive affair. Different peoples do not receive or internalise the same repertoire of discursive signs and expressions identically. The character of language is social and people use the social stock of meanings, but they also improvise and interpret. These are the persons, who bring to life linguistic structures. Otherwise, who brought creativity in language? Language and communication are not the medium for only routine and clichéd expressions. In this regard,
George Steiner comments that 'the language of a community, however uniform it social contour, is an inexhaustibly multiple aggregate of speech-atom, of finally irreducible, personal meanings.\textsuperscript{87}

Poststructuralism reduces the extra-discursive dimension of reality to a discursive dimension. This scheme either discards the referent or includes it in the discursive field. Intentionality and desire of human subjects cannot be exhausted in the discursive networks of significations.

The poststructuralist treatment of language is based on Saussure’s linguistics. Saussure has a great contribution in the field of linguistic and social theory. But the problem with his linguistics is that he concentrates solely on two aspects of sign, that is the signifier and the signified, and ignores the aspect of the referent. Stuart Hall observes:

[Saussure] gave little or no attention to how this relation between \textit{signifier/signified} could serve the purpose of what earlier we called \textit{reference}—i.e. referring us to the world of things, people and events outside language in the ‘real’ world.\textsuperscript{88}

According to Hall, Saussure’s notion of signification includes both the aspects of meaning and reference, but he concentrated solely on signification. Later linguist like Charles Sanders Pierce restored the position of reference.\textsuperscript{89} Saussure’s model of signification entails an internal analysis of the networks of sign. This detachment of meaning from reference or the reduction of reference to meaning set in motion a separation of semiotic and social analysis.\textsuperscript{90}

We have discussed earlier that there is a tendency in social thought of reducing certain aspect of the problem into other aspects. There is nothing wrong in comparing and understanding society on the model of language. However, problem starts when it is assumed that language is itself society. Society as a whole or social practice cannot be reduced to the discourse or the workings of language.
Poststructuralist theory lacks an account of ontology of subjectivity. They close their eyes to 'the importance of the embodied, practical and non-semiotic, indeed non-social (in the sense of intersubjective) dimensions of human practice, and their status as preconditions of language learning and use.'

In the context of the poststructuralist conception of the endless sliding of the signifier, Stuart Hall argues that without some random "fixing" or "articulation", "there would be no signification or meaning at all. What is ideology but, precisely, this work of fixing meaning through establishing, but selection and combination, a chain of equivalences?" Ideological mobilisation of meaning is concerned with the ways and means of making a meaning stick. Infusion of meaning and power can be achieved through the process of legitimation, reification, dissimulation, etc., which are also the modes of operation of ideology.

5.3 DOES IDEOLOGY-CRITIQUE NEED AN ARCHIMEDEAN POINT?

This section of the chapter looks into the criticism of the poststructuralism and postmodernism that the concept of ideology relies on the false/true or scientific criterion and refers to a coherent and conscious subject. In the last chapter, we have discussed in detail the confusion that prevailed on the notion of "false consciousness". We have argued that even cognitively true statements can also be employed ideologically and Marx's notions of "distortion" and "mystification" do not imply empirical or rationalistic falsity. Likewise we have argued that Marx's notion of ideology should not be confused with the objectivist, scientist or determinist accounts of ideology, existent in both Marxist and non-Marxist circles. A contemporary theory of ideology should be wary of reductionism associated with the approaches of scientism and historicism. It was the tradition of ideology-critique, particularly Adorno and Marcuse's work, which rang the alarm bell that science and technology have become prime ideological strategies of the ruling classes of advanced Western societies.
In this section, we would discuss the charge of the poststructuralists against the concept of ideology from a different angle. The question before us is: is ideology-critique not possible without the recourse to an ideology-free point? It would be argued that ideology-critique does not need any such platform. Simultaneously, those forms of ideology-critique would be criticized, which raise the necessity of such ideology-free vantage point. The question also arises that whether a scholar should not examine his own thought and that of others on the basis of the same criterion. Would this attempt be a self-defeating exercise?

David McLellan observes that from the time of the inception of the concept of ideology, theoreticians attempted to discover 'a firm Archimedean point outside the sphere of ideological discourse, an immovable spot from which to observe the levers of ideology at work.' Does an act of criticism require the access to an extra-ideological reality? Is there a possibility of a privileged site beyond the conflicts of social life and paradoxes of human existence? As observed by Kant: 'the light dove, cleaving the air in free flight, and feeling its resistance, might imagine that its flight would be still easier in empty space."

Do the realms such as reason, science, and objectivity constitute ideology-free spaces or can they be conceived alternatively? Attraction towards science for the search of a point beyond ideology got diluted after the emergence of the Frankfurt School's view that taking cover of technocratic consciousness, and science's prestige became the prime ideological strategy in the times of late capitalism. Now, the rulers present political issues as technical issues.

Is not the claim of observing ideological mechanism from an ideology-free site itself ideological? Slovaj Žižek gave an example of the paradoxical nature of characterizing any instance as ideological. Usually, it is assumed that holding any individual completely responsible for an act of crime, in fact, puts a cover on the role of socio-historical circumstances. Personal responsibility and guilt relieve the society of the demand for introspection into the deeper
structure of the problem. However, alternatively, the 'logic of putting the blame on the circumstances' leads to another ideological position, as reflected in a dialogue in Brecht's play *Three Penny Opera*— 'We would be good instead of being so rude, if only the circumstances were not of this kind!'\(^{96}\)

For a rational critique of ideology, should one have some kind of ideologically neutral reason? The postmodernist proponents of ubiquity and pervasiveness of knowledge/power hold that there cannot be an ideology-free reason because reason is a cultural construct and hence is always infested with ideology. The rationality of a culture is shaped by its normative framework and ideology. It can be seen that this position uses a very general or descriptive definition of ideology, which we have discussed in the last chapter. We have given arguments against the blurring of the concept of ideology with the concepts such as culture, worldview, and normative frame-works.

The relativist and postmodernist insistence is that there cannot be an ideologically neutral reason. They assert that a universalistic argument is a form of rational inquiry, which necessarily presupposes an ideologically neutral reason. Nevertheless, relativists also use such arguments. For arguing against ideology-critique, the postmodernists employ two variant of relativism. Rom Harré and Michael Krausz called these as "malign relativism" and "benign relativism". The first takes the form of scepticism and holds that 'no point of view is privileged, no description is true, and no assessment of value is valid.' The second takes the form of permissiveness and holds that 'all points of view are privileged, all descriptions are true, and all assessments of value are equally valid.'\(^{97}\) Hilary Putnam argues against both the positions: 'reason is.... both immanent (not to be found outside of concrete games and institutions) and transcendent (a regulative idea that we use to criticise the conduct of all activities and institutions).\(^{98}\)

If we believe that rationality is part of ideology of a culture, then the relationship between rationality and ideology seems to be that of a part to its whole. Now, ideology also contains in-itself a tradition of rational criticism. It
implies that a critique of tradition is possible immanently. Harvey Siegel argues against the need of any "Archimedean point" to evaluate ideologies. He says:

> We judge from where we are— from where else could we judge and we judge the strength and limitation of our own position even as we occupy it in judging other matters. We can acknowledge the cultural origins of our conceptions of rationality and still utilize our best conception in evaluating alternative claims and ideologies, including our own.100

It implies from this that ideology-critique is possible without any vantage point outside of given culture and within the realm of immanent rationality. However, is this possible transcendentally by going beyond the confines of one's culture? No culture can exist without transcendental dimensions of it. There cannot be a totally closed culture. On the paradox of relativism, W.V. Quine remarks: 'truth, says the cultural relativist, is culture-bound. But if it were, then he, within his own culture, ought to see his own culture-bound truth as absolute. He cannot rise above it without giving it up.'101

Whenever relativism makes a general or an absolute claim about the truthfulness of its position, it runs into a paradoxical situation. If it is true that 'truth is culture-bound,' then it cannot be true in every situation and every cultural setting. The truthfulness of this very sentence entails falsity— the paradox of relativism is such that the 'truth is culture bound' can only be true when at least this sentence is not culture bound. Then the falsity of this very sentence entails truthfulness.102

The paradox involved with relativist position is such that no relativism can exist as a philosophical position without accepting some non-relativist grounds. Rom Harré and Michael Krausz place two such principles before us:

1. The thesis of ontological independence: Entities, states, experiences and so on exist independently of culture for the fact of cultural diversity vis-à-vis these entities to show up. 2. The thesis of trans-cultural intelligibility: Description of some entity, state, experience, etc. must be universally intelligible, if it is to be
possible to realize that the entity, state, or experience being described is being treated differently in different cultures.\textsuperscript{103}

Without accepting these anti-relativist principles, even a comparison between different cultures is not possible. We have discussed that the concept of ideology should not simply be co-extensive with the general field of culture or with the notion of world-view or perspective. The chief concern of the theory of ideology is the critique of power relations. There are trans-cultural dimensions of organisation and dynamics of power relations. Power relations may take particular forms within different cultures such as casteism (India) and racism (Europe). Yet these cultural forms of power relationship can also intersect with other kind of power relations, e.g. caste-class intersection, patriarchy-caste-class intersection, etc. With regard to power relations, the critique based on both immanent and transcendent reason is possible. Emily Robertson says:

We need to reject the false dilemma that says that either we are "imprisoned" within our own framework (which cannot be rationally evaluated since what counts as "rational" is specified by the framework itself) or there must be framework neutral criteria of rationality.\textsuperscript{104}

From this vantage point, let us now take up the question of truth and objectivity. There is a certain relativist ploy, which postmodernists use for denouncing the idea of ideology-critique. Firstly, they equate every truth with an absolute truth and then declare it as authoritarian. If position of truth is undermined, then one cannot talk of falsity either. Secondly, they insist that there must be a demarcated and secure place of truth for making any truth judgement. Nonetheless, they themselves actually do not believe in certain and absolute truth, but presuppose absolute truth imaginatively for making a case against the idea of truth. They also insist that without an idea of absolute truth or ideology-free-space one cannot talk of ideology. As these things are difficult to attain, hence they deduce from this that one cannot talk about ideology.\textsuperscript{105}

We have already discussed that epistemological property is only one of the conditions for the characterisation of a discourse or belief-system as ideological. There are two other properties namely functional and genetic,
which fulfil the condition of "ideological". Both the properties involve contexuality. Therefore, a secured and non-contextual truth cannot be the criterion of ideology. Likewise, not every falsity is ideological. Legitimization of power relations provides the context for a falsity to be ideological. An exclusive access to absolute truth or systematic critique is not the condition for terming a belief-system or discourse as deceptive, distorted, illusory, or false.

Theories of ideology make a systematic critique of ideologies, but they can have no monopoly over the process of critique. Legitimisation of dominance is not just a passive affair. The ideological forms are being contested and challenged in the context of every-day life by dominated subjects—sometimes in more articulated forms and sometimes in disguised forms (e.g., humour, parody, satire, ridiculing etc.). These can be termed as common-sensical forms of the critique of ideology. A relationship of these common-sensical forms with more systematic forms of critique of ideology can be identified. This insight also goes against those theories, which exaggerate the degree to which normative obligations are internalized by the agents. Anthony Giddens comments:

It is not a coincidence that the forms of social theory, which have made little or no conceptual space for agents' understanding of themselves, and of their social context, have tended greatly to exaggerate the impact of dominant symbol systems of ideologies upon those in subordinate classes: as in Parsons or Althusser.106

To equate the concept of truth with absolute truth is a post-modern trick. Most of the theories of ideologies do not have such kind of presupposition for spotting a falsehood or distortion in discourses. The contestory knowledge of resisting peoples should not be equated with science or totality; however, science or any other theoretical claim can be used for a critique of power at times. Oppressed and exploited people often need an access to 'correct picture' of the thing for unmasking the veil of ideology over the power relationship. Terry Eagleton observes:
There are those for whom accurate knowledge is vital, just because they need urgently to change their situations; and there are others (postmodernist academics among them) who can afford their cognitive indeterminacy. Because seeking a true self-understanding, in conditions of illusion and obscurantism, involves certain virtues (of honesty, realism, tenacity, and so forth), emancipatory knowledge is at once cognitive and ethical, bridging a gap Immanuel Kant declared unspannable.\textsuperscript{107}

All theoretical positions including that of the postmodernists presuppose a claim to validity. These claims may only be contextually or relatively valid. In this sense, truth is\textit{ a priori} of all positions.\textsuperscript{108} If someone posits a claim or takes a position, then s/he cannot refute the fact that a validity claim is being posited. Jorge Larrain comments that ‘the position that denies the distinction between truth and error is bound implicitly to reintroduce the same distinction.’\textsuperscript{109}

A position, which claims to have the truth, does not automatically present a case of dogmatism. Claims to truth as such are not tantamount to dogmatism. Dogmatism operates only when one refuses to give reasons for its position or when one denies reviewing or inquiring into its premises in the face of criticism.\textsuperscript{110} The Sociology of knowledge tradition questions ideology-critique and particularly Marx’s position. Karl Mannheim reached the conclusion that knowledge is socially determined hence ideological. For him, Marx’s views are also ideological. There cannot be a privileged vantage point of criticism. We have already discussed that a standpoint does not becomes ideological simply because it is limited, partial, inadequate or socially determined. In the sense of Mannheim, Marx does not claim to have a privileged vantage point. Marx was aware of the sources and determinants of his own thought and linked it with the ‘emergence and development of contradictions in capitalism.’\textsuperscript{111} Eagleton comments that those who reject an idea of truth are quite often inverted dogmatists, for these peoples claim that one position is preferable to another is objectionable.\textsuperscript{112}

Objective historical truth is different from absolute truth. This does not entail, however, that the truth, which is not absolute in some ‘divine’ sense, becomes ambiguous. There are many things between absolute truth and
untruth. If we consider the usage of the term ‘absolute’ we find that even this term can be used contextually. Can there be something absolute in a limited sphere? It should not be forgotten that the “absolute” is an abstract category. There are numerous truths of mundane daily life, which can be “absolute” in the sense of their “certainty”. If one is unsure of something, one is unsure ‘absolutely’. It is not possible to be sure and unsure at the same time. If one is sure and unsure at a time than s/he would be considered simply as unsure. If a postmodernist says that I am now in Bhopal, then I am now in Bhopal and I am now in Delhi cannot be true if spoken by the same person at the same moment in time.113 If a statement is partially true, then ‘it absolutely is partially true, as opposed to being completely true or not true at all.’114

Here absolute truth does not entail a divine truth or truth above any criticism. There can be different and changing truths in different and changing time. These examples regarding absolute truth have been invoked only to demonstrate ‘a claim about what it means to call something true.’115

The argument of ‘ideology-free space’ is based on a particular notion of objectivity. It presupposes that an objective observation cannot be made from a certain angle. Then does objectivity imply that one should judge from a position of void, from nowhere? It must not be forgotten that objectivity itself is a value. Objectivity comes only with a passion for justice, a passion for reviewing one’s biases and prejudices for the sake of justice. This is the reason why those who are exploited, oppressed, and victimised are likely to know the truth more than their oppressors, exploiters, and victimizer do.116 Terry Eagleton remarks:

Objectivity and partisanship are allies, not rivals. What is not conducive to objectivity on this score is the judicious even-handedness of the liberal. It is the liberal who falls for the myth that you can only see things aright if you don’t take sides. It is the industrial Chaplin view of reality. The liberal has difficulty with situations in which one side has a good deal more of the truth than the other—which is to say, all the key political situations. For this is to equate truth with one-sidedness rather than with symmetry, which is not how liberals tend to see the matter. For them, the truth generally lies somewhere in the middle. Or, as
Raymond Williams once commented: when in doubt, the Englishman thinks of a pendulum.\textsuperscript{117}

The domains of objectivity and subjectivity are not exclusively separated from each other. Objectivity and subjectivity are not external to each other. Objectivity is also constitutive of the condition for the endeavour of self-knowledge. Objectivity does not necessarily imply a third person discourse. Objectivity is not a realm beyond subject. Besides, a critical standpoint should take into the account the dissonance created between the subject and the object by capitalism. The capitalist mode of production turns the process of objectification into alienation and then the object becomes a thing, a commodity, and a property.\textsuperscript{118}

Theodor W. Adorno comments that the disjunction of subject and object is, 'both real and illusory. True, because in the cognitive realm it serves to express the real separation, the dichotomy of the human condition, a coercive development. False, because the resulting separation must not be hypostatized, not magically transformed into an invariant.'\textsuperscript{119}

Under the condition of capitalist alienation, the notion of autonomous or coherent subjectivity remains a myth. Alienated subjectivity posits an antagonistic relation to its own objectification.\textsuperscript{120} It can be said that Adorno's above-mentioned passage warns against the essential and fixed notion of transcendental subjectivity on the one hand and against the seeing of subjectivity as completely decentred and unstable on the other hand.

Let us now discuss the question of subjectivity in historical perspective. The process of modernity also inaugurated the age of subjectivity in the sense human beings are seen as the measure and masters of reality. The \textit{a priori} self of Descartes was abstract, isolated and individualistic. It was conceptualised as an inherent essence: \textit{cogito ergo sum}.\textsuperscript{121} Then arrived the Kantian notion of subject, which remained 'ahistorical, supra-temporal, and abstract.'\textsuperscript{122}
For Hegel, the subject remains absolute consciousness, but with a historical dimension and a reference to the other. From the beginning, "the modern subject" contains two interconnected aspects: political and philosophical. In the era of the Enlightenment, the "subject" emerged as a key category of philosophical enterprise. This theoretical notion of "the generic subject" had a practical side to it and in a way was related to the idea of self-education, self-legislation, self-correction and self-liberation of humanity from the varied forms of ignorance, poverty, operations, etc.

Etinne Balibar comments:

In Kant, that subject was humanity; in Fichte it became at a certain point the people, the nation; and in Hegel, lastly, it was the historical peoples as successive embodiments of the 'world-spirit', i.e. the progress of civilization.

Marx on the one hand criticises the idealist subject, that is Hegel's inversion of subject into predicate, and on the other hand criticises the individualistic and isolated subject of old materialism. Marx rejects both the position of individualism and organicism or holism. He criticises Hegel's approach by saying:

But the subject only comes into being as a result. This result—the subject knowing itself as absolute self consciousness—is therefore God, absolute Spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting idea. Real man and real nature become mere predicates—symbols of this hidden, unreal man and of this unreal nature. Subject and predicate are therefore related to each other in absolute reversal—a mystical subject-object or a subjectivity reaching beyond the object—absolute subject as a process, as subject alienating itself and returning from alienation into itself, but at the same time retracting this alienation into itself, and the subject as this process; a pure, incessant revolving within itself.

Étienne Balibar suggests that categories like consciousness or reason refers to two sides simultaneously: representation and subjectivity. Both the aspects integrated in idealism, when subjectivity also constitutes representation. When Marx speaks in the Theses on Feuerbach that the 'active side was developed by idealism' then he also means that idealism keeps under
wraps a materialistic point of reference while taking the constitutive character of subjectivity. Likewise, old materialism conceals an idealist's foundation, when it takes the problematic of representation, without working out a theory of subjectivity.\textsuperscript{128}

Marx not only unmasks the ideas of representation and subjectivity but also takes this conflict out in the open. The idea of representation and along with it (contemplation and interpretation) and the idea of subjective activity (labour, practice, and change) make way to a new dialectical concept, i.e. the category of practical activity or praxis.\textsuperscript{129}

In this regard, Marx's reformulation of the question of the human essence \textit{(das menschliche Wesen)} as an "ensemble of social relations" was most radical. This radicalisation not only of "human" but also of "essence" transcends firstly, both the realist and the nominalist position and secondly both the individualistic and holistic perspectives. Balibar argues that this move indicates towards a \textit{transindividual} reality, that is, 'not what is ideally "in" each individual (as a form or a substance), or what would serve, from outside, to classify that individual, but what exists \textit{between individuals} by dint of their multiple interactions.'\textsuperscript{130} However, this transindividuality must be related to the site of transformative praxis, where development of each is the precondition of the development of all.

We have discussed earlier that autonomisation of the sphere of consciousness is itself an ideological process, which is based on the social division of labour. The phenomenon of division of labour is intrinsically related to the emergence of alienation, which coupled with the autonomisation of realm of consciousness, generates the phantasmagorical existence of ideology. Balibar says that ideological process can be defined as \textit{the alienated existence of the relation} between individuals.\textsuperscript{131}

Marx refers the relation between individuals as 'intercourse', which has two aspects of production and communication.\textsuperscript{132} On this basis, it can be said
that the phenomena of alienated existence can be discussed at the level of labour as estranged activity and at the level of communicative process as distorted communication. The limited mode of communication between individuals also related to the concept of limited mode of activity.

The concept of commodity fetishism also indicates towards the process of thingification of human relations. Relation between things (also property/money) takes the place of personal relations and subjectivity passes through the process of reification. Estranged labour in the forms of commodities and capital get autonomy and real individual get dependent upon it. Recalling the use of world “subject” by Althusser it can be said that subjectivity involves the double meaning of subject: subject as agent and subject as subjected to the power of things or commodities.

Marx’s introduction of the real and practical subject altered the notion of the subject. It displaced the hegemony of idealism and “disguised idealism” of the mechanical materialist tradition. Radical praxis became in Marx the subject. In other words, praxis is the essence of subjectivity since the Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844 and Theses on Feuerbach and from The Manifesto of the Communist Party onwards gets to be associated with the revolutionary activity of the proletariat. However, did this association, asks Balibar, open the ‘possibility of representing the proletariat to itself as a “subject” in the idealist sense of the term?’ This is the question, to which the tradition of historical materialism and revolutionary praxis has to confront.

In The Holy Family, Marx says that the proletariat has no particular interest to defend and this entails what one may call a “negative universality” for them. This “negative universality” can be transformed into a “positive universality” only when development of one becomes the basis of development of all.

Marx tends not to use the expression like “false consciousness” or “class consciousness” because he neither sees the subject as emancipated or
autonomous nor believes that the problem of ideology lies in the ignorance or wrong education of the subjugated masses. The concrete and practical subject is not outside the processes of fetishisation and anti-fetishisation. They live in the world where social relations between peoples are commoditised. Commoditisation or thingification does not only refer to the rule of the thing or the object over subject, but also to the genesis of a dislocated, damaged, and alienated subjectivity.

John Holloway argues that the subject of bourgeois theory is an 'innocent, healthy, freely self-determining individual: admittedly, certain individuals have psychological problems, but they are just personal problems, nothing to do with the social schizophrenia that cuts through every aspect of our existence.' On the contrary, Marx’s theory sees subjectivity as collective subjectivity, which is damaged and alienated because of the capitalist mode of production.

Some currents of Marxist theory, argues Holloway, transposed the bourgeois concept of the innocent, autonomous, wholesome subject on to the notion of working class. It includes the Soviet images of heroic working class revolutionaries. The fact of fetishism poses a question to those who want to transform the oppressive, exploitative dehumanised world that how can a society would be changed in which subjects or peoples are so commoditised, alienated and dehumanised? If one takes fetishism as an established or accomplished fact, stable or intensifying feature of capitalist society, then there arises a risk of moving towards the position, which talks from a vantage point outside of fetishism. Holloway characterised it as hard understanding of fetishism. He comments:

"[It] implies that there is something special about us, something that gives us a vantage point above the rest of society. They are alienated, fetishised, reified, suffering from false consciousness; we are able to see the world from the point of view of the totality, or true consciousness, or superior understanding. Our criticism derives from our special position or experience or intellectual abilities, which allow us to understand how they (the masses) are dominated. We are implicitly an intellectual elite, a vanguard of some sort."
Theories of Georg Lukács and V.I. Lenin are the example of this line of thinking. This line of thinking either leads to a conception of science (Althusser), scientific ideology (Lenin), against ideology/bourgeois ideology or to a conception of party (Lukács) as a guiding vanguard of the working class. Science or scientific ideology then becomes the privileged vantage point or supposedly "ideology-free space". In some Marxist theories, the proletariat as an emancipatory subject of history fills this place. However, the tendency to seek an ideology-free space is also strong in non-Marxist stream of thought, where positivist science (Karl Popper), liberal capitalist democracy (The end of ideology theorists), etc., become the other of ideology.

Georg Lukács introduced a distinction between empirical or psychological consciousness of the proletariat and "imputed" consciousness or class-consciousness of the proletariat. At the level of empirical consciousness, the proletariat remains reified. When Lukács faced the problem that from where de-reified class consciousness would come to empirical proletariat, then he resorted to the idea of party as a bearer of correct class consciousness of the proletariat, which can see the things from the perspective of totality. George Lukács says:

The form taken by the class consciousness of the proletariat is the Party... The Party is assigned the sublime role of bearer of the class consciousness of the proletariat and the conscience of its historical vocation. However, Lukács could not provide an explanation of how the party would be able to transcend reification and fetishism and achieve a perspective of totality. According to Holloway, a different approach towards the reality of fetishism could be the one, which contrary to a "hard fetishism" approach sees it in the form of "fetishisation-as-process". Here fetishism and anti-fetishism are not separated. Capitalism is not seen as a total reification of the subject. There is a contradictory nature of not only the fetishism, but of us also. Holloway writes:
Fetishism is a process of fetishisation, a process of separating subject and object, doing and done, always in antagonism to the apposing moment of anti – fetishisation, the struggle to the reunite subject and object, to the compose doing and done. [...] we are not a sleeping beauty, a humanity frozen in our alienation until our prince-party comes to kiss us, we live rather in constant struggle to free ourselves from the witch’s curse.141

In this approach the subject exists neither merely as an alienated victim of capitalism nor outside the capitalist forms. There is no question of capitalism-free existence or a privileged side of unfetishised life. If we apply this insight to the question of ideology, then it can be said that for a critique of ideology and resistance against ideology, there is no need of an "Archimedean point" or a space completely untainted from ideology or some privileged vantage point. Although, unlike postmodernists, relativists and other apologists of status-quo, we would not take the position that nothing is outside of power relations and therefore every knowledge claim is an instance of knowledge/power.

This entails a processual understanding of ideology and its critique. If the subject’s containment within capital and other forms of dominations is a constant process of fetishism, then its resistance against this containment is a constant process of de-fetishism. For the critique of ideology one need not to go outside of society, to some fantastic ideology-free space, or to the realm of "absolute truth". Critique and resistance to power and ideology can be an ordinary everyday affair. It does not imply that the concept of totality is unimportant or useless. It only means that one cannot know totality, but totality, certainly, remains an aspiration. As Holloway says:

At most we can only aspire to totality. Totality cannot be a standpoint, for the simple reason that there is no one who can stand there: it can only be a critical category– the social flow of doing.142

For the critique of ideology, one certainly needs epistemological categories including the concept of truth, because truth as a negation of untruth is the necessary resource for the resistance against legitimised or ideological power. Resistance to power is not confined to everyday or incipient forms of
struggle and common-sensical critique. It also needs a theoretical critique, a systematic unmasking of legitimisation.

Although the intellectual is not the knower outside of and above society, s/he must be a part of the process of resistance. It can be said that for the critique of ideology it is not necessary to stand on the space of "non-ideology". A critique is possible from the site of "anti-ideology". However, the concept of non-ideology is required because a critical distinction between ideology and non-ideology makes possible the position of anti-ideology. Maintaining a distance or tension between ideology and non-ideology keeps the ideology-critique flourishing.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

3 Emphasis added, David Howarth, Discourse, Viva Books, Delhi, 2002, p. 79.
4 See ibid, p. 100.
15 Ibid, p. 231.
16 Ibid, p. 231.
19 Ibid, p. 11.
21 See ibid.
25 Ibid, p. 204.
27 Ibid, page XI.
28 Emphasis added. See ibid.
30 Barbara Goodwin cited in ibid.
32 Daniel Bell, *End of ideology*, p. 373.
37 Seymour Marten Lipset cited in ibid, p. 8.
40 Ibid, p. 166.
45 Malcom Waters, *Daniel Bell*, p. 81.
55 Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings*, edited by M. Poster, Polity Press, Cambridge 1988, p. 120.
56 Ibid, p. 120.
58 Jeans–Francois Lyotard cited in ibid, p. 106.

63 See ibid, p. 59.


69 Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power”, p. 131.


81 See ibid.
82 David Howarth, *Discourse*, p. 79.
85 See ibid, p. 124.
86 See ibid, pp. 123-125.
87 George Steiner cited in ibid, p. 124.
89 See ibid.
91 Ibid.
102 See this argument in Rom Harré and Michael Krausz, *Varieties of Relativism*, p. 28.
132 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 See ibid, pp. 69-71 and 78-81.
139 Ibid, p. 80.
143 Ibid, p. 104.