ArtMonitor

WORKING PAPER

"Ideology, Intellectuals and the Subaltern"

Prof. Dave Beech (UAL)

ArtMonitor Working Paper No. 005a (Eng)
January 2024

Artistic Faculty
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Abstract

This paper surveys the changing fortunes of the theory of ideology in recent decades and proposes an original re-contextualisation and re-reading of theories of ideology. The analysis developed leads to the assertion that the first task of the intellectual is to critique ideology and ideological production. This must be done through ideological production, of course, but ideological production led by the principle of ideology critique, namely the reinsertion of ideas into material intercourse, material production and real history. It requires a class politics within the relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern. Class relations have to be addressed, therefore, even when the intellectual and subaltern are brought together in emancipatory movements primarily concerned with race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion or coloniality.

Keywords

Ideology; Marx; Class; Subaltern.

Ideology, Intellectuals and the Subaltern. Dave Beech

Ideology was one of the casualties of postmodernism. While Irigaray,[1] Cixous[2] and Kristeva[3] occasionally deploy the term ideology as part of their critical vocabulary, most of the prominent men of so-called French theory in the 1970s and 1980s consigned the theory of ideology to the scrapheap of critical theory. For Baudrillard, ideology was outmoded. "It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real".[4] Lyotard, in his *Postmodern Condition*, includes ideology at the end of a list of types of thinking of which the conventional 'scientist' disapproves: "savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology".[5] Foucault said that "ideology appears to me to be difficult to make use of" because it "always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth … [it] refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject … [and it] stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant, etc".[6] Finally, Deleuze and Guattari, for their part, stated categorically: "There is no ideology and never has been".[7]

The exception to the rule was Derrida. The significance of this will be spelled out below through the contrast that is drawn out by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak between Derrida on the one hand and Foucault and Deleuze on the other hand in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?". A single example will suffice here. "If I define notions of Condillac's kind as ideological", Derrida said in his paper "Signature Event Context" delivered in Montreal in 1971, "it is that against the background of a vast, powerful, and systematic philosophical

---

[1] Irigaray argues that sexual roles have to be understood "within an economy and ideology of (re)production" and says that Freud "is enmeshed in a power structure and an ideology of the patriarchal type". Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985), p. 64, 70.
[2] Cixous uses phrases such as 'the ideology of mastery', 'phallocentric ideology' and even 'our ideology'.
[3] Kristeva refers to 'logical and ideological constructs' and uses phrases such as 'ideological interpretation', 'ideological commitment' and 'Fascist ideologue'. She also deploys the concept within the following opposition 'an ideological stance, not an analytic or literary position'.'
[4] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. by Paul Foss, Paul Patton , and Philip Beitchman (New York, 1983), p.25.
[5] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, 1984), p.27.
[6] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (Harvester Press, 1980), p.118.
[7] Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis ; London, 1987), p.4.

tradition … of the French "ideologues" who, in Condillac's wake, elaborated a theory of the sign as a representation of the idea, which itself represents the perceived thing".[8]

Wendy Brown offered a brief explanation of the difference between Foucault's concept of discourse and Marx's concept of ideology in a footnote to her book *States of Injury*. Foucault's formulation of the relationship of power and discourse, she says, does not oppose ideology to materiality. Rather, discourse 'naturalizes or ontologizes' power. "Thus", she explains, "the discursive production of the subject can be conceived as ideological not in relation to some 'real' subject … but insofar as this discourse naturalizes itself".[9] Interestingly, Terry Eagleton makes a similar claim for Marx's theory of ideology. In Eagletone's reading, Marx argues that all consciousness "is in fact bound up with practice"[10] but that for intellectuals, and the German Idealists in particular, "it becomes separated from these practices … and so, by a process of inversion, can be misunderstood as the very source and ground of historical life".[11] One important result of this, Eagleton explains, is that, when "ideas are grasped as autonomous entities, then this helps to naturalize and dehistoricize them; and this for the early Marx is the secret of all ideology".[12]

Foucault misreads this point in the early Marx when he says, "In traditional Marxist analyses, ideology is a sort of negative element through which the fact is conveyed that the subject's relation to truth … is clouded, obscured, violated by conditions of existence".[13] Brown confirms Foucault's interpretation when she says, "ideology is that which obscures the terms of its own making along with the power that makes the world".[14]

---

[8] Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982), p.314.
[9] Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton University Press, 1995), p.142f.
[10] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (Verso, 1991), p.70-1.
[11] Ibid. p.70-1.
[12] Ibid. p.71.
[13] Michel Foucault, *Power: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*., ed. by James D. Faubion, trans. by Robert Hurley (Penguin Books, 2000), p.15
[14] Brown, *States of Injury*, p.142f

For Brown, there is an additional problem with Marx's theory of ideology: "what Marx did not explain … was the extent to which ideology does not simply (mis)represent the world but is itself productive of the world, and particularly of the subject".[15] Perhaps Brown, here, has a closer eye on Marx's assertion in the 'Preface' to *A Critique of Political Economy* from 1857 that "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness", rather than on his remarks, at the end of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, that it is not the objective fact of class that is decisive but the consciousness of class.

One of the reasons for the decline of theories of ideology is the development of alternative theories of power, oppression and exploitation in the 1960s and 1970s. If the Marxist concept of ideology presupposes the politics of class struggle, then the new politics after 1968 had to substitute the vocabularies of ideology with the terminologies of hegemony, discourse, episteme, codes, rhetorics, epistemologies and social imaginaries.[16] "A more analytical framework was required", Dick Hebdidge said, and therefore "a new vocabulary had to be learned".[17]

Amongst other things, the new analytical lexicon signified changes in political and intellectual affiliation and carried different epistemological and social connotations. Postmodern theory demanded new kinds of scrupulousness and these had to be learned in addition to and in most cases in opposition to what had previously occupied the place of

---

[15] Ibid. p.142f. There is a legitimate issue here insofar as Marx did give the kind of priority to identity and the subjective element of social change in his conception of political history. It would be overstating the case, however, to imply that he was actively opposed to, or had no inkling of, the role of the subject - what he called 'consciousness' - in the formation of society and in the concrete lived experience of individuals.

[16] In some formulations it is hard to see anything more than a linguistic substitution without any fundamental theoretical change. For instance, Christopher Butler advocates for the postmodern rejection of the idea of 'dominant ideology' in favour of the idea of 'dominant discourse', as follows:
"Postmodernist thought, in attacking the idea of a notional centre or dominant ideology, facilitated the promotion of a politics of difference. Under postmodern conditions, the ordered class politics preferred by socialists has given way to a far more diffuse and pluralistic identity politics, which often involves the self-conscious assertion of a marginalized identity against the dominant discourse". Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p.57.

[17] Dick Hebdidge, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, (Routledge, 1979), p.10.

critical thought. But crediting postmodern thinking in this way can also be misleading insofar as it helps to distract from the fact "that the defeat of Marxism in British academia [was] primarily a political and not a theoretical or empirical fact".[18]

Angela McRobbie, who was one of the leading figures who introduced postmodern theory to feminism and cultural studies in Britain, advocated for a pivoting away from the theory of ideology to the new resources provided by postmodernism.

> *The study of culture has, over the last few years, been quite dramatically transformed as questions of modernity and postmodernity have replaced the more familiar concepts of ideology and hegemony which, from the mid-1970s until the mid-1980s, anchored cultural analysis firmly within the neo-Marxist field mapped out by Althusser and Gramsci*.[19]

Like Baudrillard, she described the relationship between her 'feminist postmodernism' and the Marxist theory of ideology in narrative terms that assigned contrasting values to the old and the new. Postmodern theory, therefore, not only demanded new types of scrupulousness, then, but also, as a consequence of this, implied that the critical theory that preceded it lacked scrupulousness.

This was given its classic formula in Baudrillard's 'critique of critique', which was largely a critique of Marxism. For Baudrillard, Marxism was in no position to criticise dominant ideology. In Victoria Grace's interpretation of Baudrillard, Marxism's concept of ideology is therefore 'epistemologically flawed' and politically 'historical', that is to say obsolete because the "assumption of the transformative role of critique and social revolution or change (and hence the role of an intelligentsia) no longer animates the landscape that has been called 'political'."[20]

---

[18] Alberto Toscano and Jamie Woodcock, Spectres of Marxism: A Comment on Mike Savage's Market Model of Class Difference, *The Sociological Review*, 63:2 (2015), 515. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12295.
[19] Angela McRobbie, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (Routledge, 1994), p.23.
[20] Victoria Grace, *Baudrillard's Challenge: A Feminist Reading* (Routledge, 2000), p.1

However, as Jorge Larrain pointed out in the early 1980s, "there is no single Marxist conception of ideology or agreement as to which version should be considered the properly Marxist one".[21] For the same reason, it is pointless to imagine that the critique of the postmodern misrepresentation of the Marxist theory of ideology paves the way for the revival of the true Marxist theory of ideology. A better starting place is to reconsider the usefulness of theories of ideology within a range of emancipatory discourses and practices that for whatever reason did not take up the postmodernist or poststructuralist antipathy to the concept of ideology.

Since Black Feminist theory did not embrace poststructuralism to the extent that mainstream feminism had, the postmodern critique of ideology did not taken root in the way it had elsewhere. The persistence of the vocabulary of ideology within Black Feminism is an important corrective to postmodernism. Ideology, in the hands of these critical thinkers, does not correspond to McRobbie's characterisation of the presumption of victims. Nor does it present the critique of ideology as dependent on the opposition between science and ideology, or as if the critical work of confronting ideology presupposes a form of knowledge free from all error and illusion. Black feminism's use of the concept of ideology does not commit it to a troubling trio of assumptions based on truth, the universal subject and a base-superstructure model of knowledge, either. And finally, it goes without saying, that ideology for Black Feminism is not restricted to the power relations of class.

Patricia Hill Collins, for instance, noted that the "popularity of postmodernism in U.S. higher education in the 1990s … foster[ed] a climate where symbolic inclusion often substitutes for bona fide substantive changes".[22] She placed a strong emphasis on thought and

---

[21] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology* (Macmillan, 1983), p.1. Elsewhere in the text Lyotard uses the term ideology as a critical term in phrases such as 'scientistic ideology', 'the ideology of the 'system', and 'the idea (or ideology) of perfect control'.

[22] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Routledge, 1999), p.6

consciousness in her politics of empowerment and defined ideology as a "the body of ideas reflecting the interests of a group of people".[23] This use of the term is shared by Ange-Marie Hancock, Vivian M. May, Barbara Smith and Linda C. Powell who defines feminism as "a political ideology".[24] While this conception of ideology does not correspond to the one that Marx outlined in *The German Ideology* as ideas putatively independent from social life, it corresponds very well with the way that the Marxist tradition, since Karl Mannheim,[25] has identified the various ideologies of specific classes, sub-classes and other groups.

Even poststructuralist Black Feminists have not been averse to the theory of ideology in the way other poststructuralists have. For instance, Julia S. Jordan-Zachery includes ideology within a study of discourse and representation informed by poststructuralism in which ideology "serves to normalize and naturalize what are human constructions".[26] Barbara Tomlinson, too, uses the concept of ideology within Black Feminist intersectional theory. In one instance she uses ideology to critique mainstream middle-class white feminism's 'powerblindness' as a structural issue, saying it "is not an individual problem of politeness or etiquette but a problem of ideology".[27]

Consider Edward Said's critique of Foucault. "Foucault's eagerness not to fall into Marxist economism causes him to obliterate the role of classes, the role of economics, the role of insurgency and rebellion in the societies he discusses".[28] In Said's reading, Foucault studies ideologies without calling them ideologies, saying "These ideologies are his

---

[23] Ibid. p.5.
[24] Linda C. Powell. Black Macho and Black Feminism. In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, edited by Barbara Smith. (Rutgers University, 2000), p.277.
[25] See Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, (Routledge, 1936).
[26] Julia S. Jordan-Zacharey, *Shadow Bodies: Black Women, Ideology, Representation, and Politics* (Rutgers University, 2017), p.34.
[27] Barbara Tomlinson, *Undermining Intersectionality: The Perils of Powerblind Feminism* (Temple University Press, 2018), p.16.
[28] Edward Said, Traveling Theory, *The Edward Said Reader*, eds. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin (Vintage Books, 2000), p.214.

discourses and disciplines".[29] This is achieved, according to Said, by a programmatic restriction of the scope of the inquiry in which Foucault examines ideologies "from the inside" and through the "concrete presentation of local situations".[30] Here is another example of a specific conception of scrupulousness in postmodernism and poststructuralism that implies the lack of scrupulousness in connecting the inside to the outside or connecting local situations to broader social and historical structures or systems.

Another major critique of the postmodern 'critique of critique' worth revisiting in terms of its discussion of ideology is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?". Divided into four unequal sections, the essay establishes its main investigation of the troubled relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern through a reflection on the absence of a theory of ideology in the writings of Foucault and Deleuze, particularly in reference to a conversation between the two recorded in 1972 published under the title "Intellectuals and Power" which included, towards the end, a phrase by Foucault that gave the title to Spivak's original paper, 'Power, Desire, Interest'. The conversation is a kind of joint manifesto. Deleuze says the relationship between theory and practice has been reset because "theory is always local and related to a limited field".[31] For Foucault, during the events of May '68, "the intellectual discovered that the masses no longer need him to gain knowledge".[32] Is this what happens when intellectuals come face to face with students rather than the masses? Either way, according to Foucault, intellectuals themselves discovered during '68 that they are part of "a system of power that blocks, prohibits, and invalidates this discourse"[33] of the masses.

---

[29] Ibid. p.213.
[30] Ibid. p.213.
[31] Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, Intellectuals and Power, *Language, Counter-Memmory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, eds. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Cornell University Press, 1977), p.205.
[32] Ibid. p.207.
[33] Ibid. p.207.

Spivak's question of whether the subaltern can speak is raised, initially, in connection with Foucault and Deleuze's perception of the changing relationship between intellectuals and the masses. "The intellectual's role is no longer to place himself 'somewhat ahead and to the side' in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity", Foucault said, adding, "it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of 'knowledge', 'truth', 'consciousness', and 'discourse'."[34] Spivak responds by stressing a new kind of complicity of the new kind of intellectual who rejects the concept of ideology and the role of the intellectual in the ideological sphere.

"The two", Spivak says, "systematically ignore the question of ideology and their own implication in intellectual and economic history",[35] not despite but because of their vivid image of the implication of other intellectuals who preceded them. Tellingly, Spivak montages together "their indifference to ideology"[36] with the limit of "our best prophets of heterogeneity and the Other" to give voice to the subaltern. Spivak does not approach the question directly. Her implied connection between the absence of ideology theory and the absence of accounting for the role of the intellectual in the representation of the subaltern is explored through the intersection of power, desire and interest.

Since, as she puts it, they "seem obliged to reject all arguments naming the concept of ideology … they are equally obliged to produce a mechanically schematic opposition between interest and desire".[37] In other words, asserting the actual or spontaneous subjecthood of all - Spivak calls this the 'undivided subject' - under the sign of 'desire', Foucault and Deleuze (et al) leave no room for the "divided and dislocated subject whose parts are not continuous or

[34] Ibid. p.208.
[35] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Can the Subaltern Speak? *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Macmillan, 1988), p.272.
[36] Ibid. p.273.
[37] Ibid. p.274.

coherent with each other".[38] Desire, here, is the name for a relationship between the subject and the world in which interests cannot be mediated, interrupted or redirected by market forces, state power, cultural hegemony or dominant ideology.

"These philosophers will not entertain the thought of constitutive contradiction - that is where they admittedly part company with the Left", she said. Explaining: "In the name of desire, they reintroduce the undivided subject into the discourse of power".[39] Desire is central to poststructuralism, in Spivak's deconstructive reading, because it is presented as the antonym of deception. This is illustrated by Spivak through a series of quotations from the conversation. Deleuze: "We never desire against our interests";[40] then Foucault: "the masses know perfectly well, clearly";[41] Deleuze again: "no, the masses were not deceived; at a particular moment, they actually desired a fascist regime";[42] and finally Foucault: "they know far better than [the intellectual] and they certainly say it very well".[43]

Reading these comments, which she describes as a "thematics of being undeceived", Spivak notes: "The ventriloquism of the speaking subaltern is the left intellectual's stock-in-trade"[44] and "the Other as Subject is inaccessible to Foucault and Deleuze".[45] She may have also been thinking about Deleuze's claim: "If the protests of children were heard in kindergarten, if their questions were attended to, it would be enough to explode the entire educational system".[46] Or Foucault's anti-intellectual affirmation of the voice of prisoners in the assertion: "when the prisoners began to speak, they possessed an individual theory of

---

[38] Ibid. p.276.
[39] Ibid. p.274.
[40] Deleuze and Foucalt, *Language, Counter-Memmory, Practice*, p.215.
[41] Ibid. p.215.
[42] Ibid. p.207.
[43] Ibid. p.207.
[44] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Can the Subaltern Speak, *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, eds. Rosalind C. Morris (Columbia University Press, 2010), p.27.
[45] Spivak, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, p.282.
[46] Deleuze and Foucalt, *Language, Counter-Memmory, Practice*, p.209

prisons, the penal system, and justice. It is this form of discourse which ultimately matters, a discourse against power, the counter-discourse of prisoners".[47]

"Neither Deleuze nor Foucault", Spivak declares, "seems aware that the intellectual within socialized capital, brandishing concrete experience, can help consolidate the international division of labor."[48] This latter phrase, the 'international division of labor', is repeated by Spivak in her critique of Deleuze and Foucault. For her, a theory of power that "valorizes the concrete experience of the oppressed, while being so uncritical about the historical role of the intellectual"[49] is a theory that is obliged to affirm that the subaltern can speak and therefore that there is no relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern. "Foucault's work cannot work on the subject-constituting register of ideology because of its tenacious commitment to the sub-individual and, at the other end, the great aggregative apparatuses (dispositifs)."

Their "indifference to ideology (a theory of which is necessary for an understanding of constituted interests within systems of representation)" is necessary for their affirmation of desire, power, and subjectivity. Desire may take a stance against the family, capitalism and colonialism but, in Spivak's analysis, it "renders them incapable of articulating a general or global theory of interests textualized to the conjuncture".

Following her discussion of the absence of ideology in Deleuze and Foucault, Spivak recasts Gramsci's concept of the subaltern classes as the name for the Hindu widow or South Asian women. Without saying it, the introduction of the subaltern sheds light on the subjects who are centred by Foucault and Deleuze's discussion of the masses, prisoners and schoolchildren. There is, therefore, a double purpose to inquiring into whether the subaltern

[47] Deleuze and Foucalt, *Language, Counter-Memmory, Practice*, p.209
[48] Spivak, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, p.275
[49] Spivak, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, p.275

can speak. First, it is a way of interrogating the assumption that the speech and desire of the subaltern is as uncomplicated as postmodern theories claim. And second, it is a way of reintroducing the question of ideology and interests into the postmodern theory of power, discourse and desire. Without specifying how exactly,[50] Spivak proposes that ideology is a theory of the separation of desire from interests by power. If the relationship between the intellectual and the working class has been compromised by Leninism, Stalinism and the role of the intellectual within the official Communist Party, Spivak invokes the subaltern woman to ask searching questions about the intellectual.

Spivak, Said and the Black Feminist tradition are strong reminders of what is lost when postmodernists press all references to ideology into a mould set by a stereotype of dogmatic thinking. David Lloyd's theory of the 'racial regime of aesthetics' adds to this by bridging between the Black Radical tradition of cultural critique and the use of the concept of ideology by Marxist art historians. What is important about Lloyd's thesis is that he responds to the "need to account for the seemingly unyielding racism of the so-called liberal institutions" of art and aesthetics. Lloyd asks: "How could institutions whose missions promised democratic inclusivity and enlightened inquiry remain in practice so resistant to the project of racial desegregation?" Raising a set of questions about taste, race, politics and postcolonialism, Lloyd discloses a "racial regime of aesthetics" that runs parallel to the Marxist sociology of art which discloses the presence of social divisions within artworks themselves. "To approach that question was, in the context of the intellectual left's then-pressing concern with ideology and institutions", Lloyd reflects, "to inquire into the political

[50] Perhaps we can reconstruct something of the 'how' by sampling a couple of the dominant voices on ideology from the period. Terry Eagleton, a few years later, put the same point in Adornian terms: "The study of ideology is among other things an inquiry into the ways in which people may come to invest in their own unhappiness". (Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction*, London: Verso, 2007 (1991), p.xxii.) And a several years earlier, Nicos Poulantzas said that ideologies "constitute the point of men's insertion into an objective system of relations". (Nicos Poulantzas, "Preliminaries to the Study of Hegemony in the State", (1965), *The Poulantzas Reader: Marxism, Law and the State*, edited by James Martin, London: Verso, 2008, p.94)

formation of subjects that educational institutions were charged with producing." This is, therefore, a distinctively ideological inquiry, albeit in terms of a definition of ideology that Lloyd does not himself use.

For postmodernists and poststructuralists, the study of ideology was preserved in various ways only on the condition that it appeared that the problem of ideology was obsolete. For instance, Nicos Poulantzas translated the problem of ideology into the theory of the 'social imaginary', Foucault studied epistemes, discourses and speaking truth to power, Derrida deconstructed Western metaphysics, Laclau and Mouffe switched to the concept of hegemony, John Tagg investigated the conjuncture of art history and ideology by pursuing 'cultural politics and the discursive field' and Judith Butler turned to Austin's theory of 'speech acts'. On the one hand we could say that ideology had taken on an unprecedented centrality in poststructuralist politics, but on the other hand we have to say that the term ideology and the Marxist theory of ideology in particular had gone into crisis.

Since the key text on ideology by Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, was not published until 1924 (Russian), 1926 (German) and 1932 (English), the Marxist theory of ideology was developed by the first generation of Marxists between the 1880s and the 1920s. By 1960, the Marxist theory of ideology was fully supplanted by a conservative theory of ideology that regarded Marxism itself as prime example of an ideology. Daniel Bell's bestseller *The End of Ideology* was not a critique of the theory of ideology but an essay on the alleged exhaustion of the political ideologies of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which he also called 'the exhaustion of utopia'. Shortly afterwards, the significance of the theory of ideology for Marxism was rekindled by Louis Althusser in his theory of 'ideological state apparatuses' which, among other things, shored up the distinction between science and ideology.

Etienne Balibar argues that the study of the Marxist theory of ideology should begin by understanding the distribution of the terminology of ideology within the body of work by Marx and Engels, especially the lengthy gap in their writings between the mid-1840s and the 1870s. "I think it is worth considering this eclipse, not as an accident or an irrelevant terminological quirk, but as the sign of a difficulty, if not a fundamental contradiction".[51] What Balibar has in mind, here, is the possibility that Marx abandoned the term 'ideology' when he swapped the critique of Hegelian philosophy for a critique of political economy which is characterised by 'commodity fetishism'. I want to add, first, that Marx also went on to develop the idea of capitalism's 'mute compulsion',[52] which explains the subordination of subalterns without resorting to the ideas of deceit, error and passivity that bothered postmodernists so much. Second, it is important to say that the period after Marx and Engels wrote *The German Ideology* not only coincided with Marx shifting his attention to the critique of political economy rather than the critique of philosophy (under conditions that Gareth Stedman Jones describes in which Idealism had lost significant ground to positivism), but also in changed circumstances for the political struggle for socialism sandwiched between Chartism in the 1840s and the Paris Commune in 1871.

The leading exponents of the theory of ideology (Labriola, Mehring, Bernstein, Kautsky, Plekhanov, Lenin, Gramsci and Lukacs) had either not read the manuscript of *The German Ideology* or, in the case of Bernstein, considered most of it unworthy of publication. This was not, in itself, remarkable since Marx had condemned the manuscript in his 'Preface' of 1859 and Engels found nothing much in it to use in his critiques of Feuerbach in 1886 and Dühring in 1877. Larrain correctly states that "the absence of this text until 1926 had an

[51] Etienne Balibar, "The Vacillation of Ideology", *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, London: Macmillan, 1988, p.162
[52] See Søren Mau, *Mute Compulsion: A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital*, London: Verso, 2023

important bearing upon the evolution of the theory of ideology".[53] Larrain also explains the intellectual circumstances in which "little by little, a new meaning of the concept began to emerge".[54] In short, this first generation of Marxists after Marx drew on Marx's 'Preface' and Engels' *Anti-Dühring* to develop "the theory of an ideological superstructure".[55] In Larrain's reading, this substituted Marx's 'negative' or 'critical' theory of ideology characterised by inversion and distortion, with a 'positive' theory of ideology, characterised as the entire realm of consciousness and ideas, albeit distinguished into specific forms of consciousness determined by specific social and historical conditions.

However, it is important to note, also, that the circumstances of the political struggle had changed again after the death of Marx and Engels. When a Marxist theory of ideology was, in a curious sense, first formulated the urgent ideological task, so to speak, no longer focused on either the problem of Idealism or positivism, but the confrontation between the political rivals. Larrain points out the significance of the changing historical circumstances on theories of ideology. During revolutionary periods, the "accentuation of the struggle necessarily leads to intense confrontation on all fronts, especially in the field of ideas".[56] For the first generation of Marxists, therefore, ideas are seen as tied more directly and obviously to classes or class fractions, the political struggle appears as a battle between ideologies.

This is the situation in which Lenin distinguishes between different kinds of consciousness. It is Plekhanov who first refers to ideologies in the plural, he is referring initially to "science, philosophy, the arts, etc",[57] not to the different ideologies of different classes. However, when Lenin followed Plekhanov in writing about the difference between

---

[53] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.54
[54] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.54
[55] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.55
[56] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.64
[57] G. V. Plekhanov, *In Defence of Materialism: The Development of the Monist View of History*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1947, p.193

the genuine class consciousness of the working class and trade-union consciousness, he introduced a new way of classifying the spontaneous consciousness of the working class within an ideological struggle. It was Lenin who gave ideology its new prominence by arguing for urgent critique of dominant ideas and the development of working class consciousness. And it was Lenin who gave the Marxist theory of ideology its character as a struggle between rival ideologies that belong to rival class positions.

It is Lenin's theory of class consciousness and especially trade-union consciousness which sets the terms of the Marxist theory of ideology in the twentieth century. Lukacs built the distinction between the actual and imputed consciousness of the working class on this Leninist framework, and the idea of ideology as false consciousness, which is first formulated by Lukacs, has its roots in Lenin. And it is Lenin who establishes the basis for Lukacs and Karl Mannheim to develop the model for the study of the ideologies, norms, cultures and styles of subaltern groups as symbolic forms of resistance.

When the pioneers of cultural studies turned to Gramsci's concept of hegemony as an alternative to the Marxist theory of ideology, they were in fact returning to a theory of the spontaneous consciousness of classes and sub-classes that had been established by Lenin. However, since Gramsci paid much more attention to the problem of ideology than Lenin, his writings are a richer source for cultural studies than Lenin. It is important to note, nevertheless, that Gramsci's schema for thinking about ideology and hegemony is strictly speaking Leninist. The Leninist theory of different ideologies corresponding to different classes included the observation that some ideologies contradict the objective class position of the person who espouses it. This critical aspect of the theory of ideology is lost in the postmodern rejection of ideology as deception, illusion and error.

When *The German Ideology* was published the theory of ideology in it was interpreted through the existing Marxist theory of ideology developed after Marx's death and was seen

by Marxists from the 1930s until the 1960s to correspond to what had been established by Bernstein, Kautsky, Plehkanov and Lenin as the Marxist theory of ideology. In fact, for decades to come *The German Ideology* was noted principally for its formulation of historical materialism rather than its specific theory of ideology.

Ideology became an urgent problem for Marx and Engels in 1845. This was the period when they were striving to extricate themselves from the *milieu* of radical intellectuals to which they had recently belonged. Ideology, at this point, did not refer to the culture or thought of the masses to explain, as it did for later Marxists, how workers submit to 'voluntary servitude' or adopt a national, bourgeois 'social imaginary', or to use Terry Eagleton examples: Islamic fundamentalism, revolutionary nationalism, Stalinism, Christian evangelicalism, Thatcherism. For Marx and Engels, the 'German ideology' was the thought of the German 'ideologues'. It is vital to remember that the ideologues of the 1840s, for Marx and Engels, were not the masses, prisoners, schoolchildren or the subalterns but young Hegelian philosophers.

There are two possible opening sections to the *German Ideology*. Both, however, start with a similar confrontation with the Young Hegelians. In one the achievements of the 'German ideologists', are lampooned as "an unparalleled revolution [...] beside which the French Revolution was child's play". They add that "in the three years 1842–45 more of the past was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries" before revealing that this has all "taken place in the realm of pure thought". The alternative opening begins with a sarcastic reference to 'The Holy Family' of philosophers and theologians and comments that a) "the 'liberation' of man does not get a single step further when they have dissolved philosophy, theology, substance & all that foolery into 'self-consciousness'" and b) "it is not possible to achieve actual liberation other than in the actual world & with actual means".

The polemical point contained in both of these initial assertions is repeated in the statement that it is "not criticism but revolution [that] is the driving force of history". This, in effect, is their conclusion, but Marx and Engels state this upfront, so to speak, and proceed by explaining, step by step, the nature of the problem of ideology and the nature of its negation. First, they say, "the Young Hegelians consider conceptions, thoughts, ideas, in fact all the products of consciousness, to which they attribute an independent existence, as the real chains of men". They explain, "the Young Hegelians logically put to men the moral postulate of exchanging their present consciousness for human, critical or egoistic consciousness, and thus of removing their limitations". And they conclude: "The Young Hegelian ideologists, in spite of their allegedly "world-shattering" statements, are the staunchest conservatives [because] they are only fighting against "phrases" [...] and they are in no way combating the real existing world".

Marx and Engels set up their theory of ideology on the basis that revolutions in philosophy are confused with or given more weight than real social revolutions. Ideology, they say, consists of "the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships [or] the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas". So, when "we detach the ideas of the ruling class from the ruling class" they "increasingly take on the form of universality". Therefore, on the one hand, "Viewed apart from real history", Marx and Engels say, "these abstractions have in themselves no value whatsoever". And yet, on the other hand, these abstractions appear to have a value all of their own specifically when they are viewed apart from real history. In my reading, it is this apartness that is the signature of ideology.

The apartness of ideology, which is based on the apartness of mental production from material production, allows "consciousness [to] really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself

from the world and to proceed to the formation of 'pure' theory, theology, philosophy, morality, etc.". Marx and Engels comprehensively confront the apartness of ideology first by complaining that "It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the relation of their criticism to their own material surroundings". Subsequently, they propose that all "mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, meta-physics, etc. [...] are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these".

Ideas and consciousness, which are introduced as the "pure thought" of the ideologues, are reintroduced in a new formulation: "The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material inter- course of men, the language of real life". Initially, ideas are "the direct efflux of [the] material behavior [of actual living human beings]", but later, even though ideas are separated off from material behavior through the division of labour, "consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence", because "life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life". Ideology is theorized here, therefore, not as a long winded way of designating truth and falsity but as an effect of the division of between mental and manual labour that results in ideas being separated off from and elevated above the material circumstances that give rise to them.

The aim is not to replace talk of abstractions with talk only of individuals, but to investigate the historical and social conditions that make both (abstractions and individuals) possible. In other words, rather than opposing abstractions (philosophical Idealism) with concrete particularities (philosophical materialism), Marx and Engels call for a new kind of materialism "proceeding from the material production of life as such, & grasping the form of social interaction connected with that mode of production".

Ideology critique, here, requires a specific kind of inversion. “If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process”. This analogy is drawn not to describe how ordinary folk think or how popular culture and commonsense operate but describes the specific circumstances in which German Idealists regard philosophical revolutions as superior to political revolutions. The mechanism of the camera-obscura is not proof that the theory of ideology propounds a mechanistic relationship between all ideas and the material world but is used figuratively to express two things. First, that the Young Hegelians’ prioritization of ideas over reality can and must be inverted; and second, that any distortions resulting from the emphasis on ‘pure theory’ by these philosophers are not to be attributed to thought alone but, like the camera obscura, can be traced back to material circumstances.

The two meanings of the camera obscura analogy point in two directions. First, it explains how the division of labour results not only in the separation of ideas and reality but also in the overstatement of the former and the neglect of the latter. Second, it proposes that all “phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process”. Hence, ideology still expresses something about the world from which it attempts to separate itself. From this Marx and Engels conclude: “Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology [...] have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their think- ing and the products of their thinking”. It is this series of inversions that the camera obscura analogy was meant to elucidate. It takes on its strongest connotation, perhaps, in the claim that the Young Hegelians have substituted the revolution of ideas for real revolutionary activity.

Having explained that ideology is a product of the division between intellectual and manual labour, however, what needs to be explained next is the social basis of revolutionary ideas and ideology critique. This question leads ineluctably to the controversy around the statement that “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”. But, in my reading, this remark does not reveal its full meaning until we twin it with the statement that the “existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular period presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class”. By identifying the material basis of “revolutionary ideas” Marx and Engels indicate the material difference between the Young Hegelians and themselves, which is to say that the critique of the Left-Hegelians is rooted materially in the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, “from which emanates the consciousness of the necessity of a fundamental revolution, the communist consciousness, which may, of course, arise among the other classes too through the contemplation of the situation of this class”.

Apartness, which corresponds in some ways to Jameson estranged image of ideology as “a kind of floating and psychological world view, a kind of subjective picture of things already by definition unrelated to the external world itself” is ideological only if it is also grounded, albeit in ways that often go unnoticed. The apartness of ideology is a feature of it being “upside-down” insofar as it is embedded in the social reality from which it is palpably disembedded. And so, I need to refine my earlier statement that apartness is the signature of ideology. Ideology is characterized by its apartness, inversion and embeddedness.

Ideology is described by Marx and Engels in terms of phantoms, inversion, distortion and the descent from heaven not because ideology is ‘false consciousness’ in the way that it Lukacs described it, but because these great abstractions rise above lived experience, appear to be detached from social life, come to be regarded as autonomous and subsequently take on a power independent of the people who produce them. Ideology separates ideas from real history and estranges ideologues from real historical activity. And, because of this, the

critique of ideology must reconnect ideas with real history and convert the philosopher into a revolutionary. Consequently, ideology critique does not reveal the reality behind appearances but traces the social life of ideas in which the most abstract thought derives its content and value from the world to which it belongs.

Returning to Marx and Engels' words in *The German Ideology* is not my attempt to reground the theory of ideology in a properly Marxist idiom. On the contrary, the theory of ideology found in these pages from the youthful period of their development, in a text more famous for its explication of the principles of historical materialism than its ruminations on ideology, is to expand the diversity of the literature on ideology still further. When Terry Eagleton listed sixteen varieties of the meaning of the word ideology 'currently in circulation', the one that can be found in *The German Ideology* was not among them.[58] And this conception of ideology is not included in Jorge Larrain painstaking reconstruction of the various strains of the Marxist theory of ideology. When Larrain distinguishes Marx's own theory from the theories of Plekhanov, Lenin, Lukacs and Gramsci he does so by classifying the former as 'negative' ("which refers to a kind of distorted thought"[59]) and the latter as 'positive' ("which refers to the totality of forms of social consciousness"[60]). Summarising the negative concept of ideology, Larrain says, "For Marx the 'ideological' is the attribute of any thought that conceals contradictions. In so far as the concealment of contradictions cannot but help perpetuate the actual system of domination, ideology necessarily serves ruling-class

[58] Eagleton's 16 meanings of ideology in circulation in 1991 were: (1) the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life; (2) a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class; (3) ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power; (4) false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power; (5) systematically distorted communication; (6) that which offers a position for a subject; (7) forms of thought motivated by social interests; (8) identity thinking; (9) socially necessary illusion; (10) the conjuncture of discourse and power; (11) the medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world; (12) action-oriented sets of beliefs; (13) the confusion of linguistic and phenomenal reality; (14) semiotic closure; (15) the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure; (16) the process whereby social life is converted to a natural reality.

[59] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.4

[60] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.4

interests".[61] And he explains: "Marx produced a concept of ideology which is negative and restricted".[62] It is negative, he explains, because "it involves a distortion, a misrepresentation of contradictions",[63] and it is restricted because "it does not include all kinds of errors and distortions",[64] which is to say the "relationship between ideological and non-ideological ideas cannot be interpreted as the general relationship between falsity and truth".[65]

Larrain arrives at his definition of Marx's theory of ideology not by restricting himself to a reading of *The German Ideology* but by synthesising remarks in Marx's critique of Hegel before it, the theories of alienation and commodity fetishism after it, as well as other related passages. One of the reasons for employing this type of synthetic reading is that Larrain's purpose is to reconstruct a theory of ideology suitable for critical social science. My purpose, on the contrary, is to return to the conception of ideology in *The German Ideology* in order to raise issues about the relationship between theory and practice, including the relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern as Spivak puts it, that might cause some trouble for the critical social scientist, among others.

One of the most striking differences between the theory of ideology in *The German Ideology* and the theory of ideology in Plekhanov, Lenin, Lukacs and Gramsci is concerned with the question of class. Whereas the former is concerned principally with the ideas of intellectuals, the latter is concerned principally with the ideas of rival groups. Insofar as the revolutionary intelligentsia is presented as the cure for the 'trade-union consciousness' or 'false consciousness' of the non-revolutionary workers and peasants, ideology comes to be identified mainly with the masses rather than the ideas of intellectuals. This is another kind of inversion with negative consequences. The original force of the concept of ideology in my

---

[61] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.89
[62] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.29
[63] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.29-30
[64] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.30
[65] Jorge Larrain, *Marxism and Ideology*, London: Macmillan, 1983, p.30

reading is drained when the object of ideology critique is shifted from the ideas of intellectuals to the ideas of the oppressed. This is not only a politically significant *volte face*. It has seriously impacted on all subsequent assessments of the theory of ideology.

Consider, for instance, the analogy of base and superstructure. Originally, Marx and Engels did not deploy this figure of speech to explain how the idea of the masses passively express their economic situations but rather that the most radical philosophy of the day is, despite its Idealism and abstraction, ultimately attached to the social circumstances of its production, especially the division between intellectual and manual labour. The insight that the ideologues are connected to the capitalist mode of production by virtue of the social division of labour loses some of its explanatory power when the analogy of base and superstructure is applied not to ideological producers but to manual workers.

Class is essential to the definition of ideology that Marx and Engels formulated in *The German Ideology*. Ideology is not only characterised, here, as inverted, distorted, upside-down and so on; it is explained as the result of the social division between mental and manual labour. Ideology, therefore, is the product of ideological production, that is to say, of the autonomy of intellectual production. For the first generation of Marxists after Marx, however, the Marxist theory of ideology established a very different relation to class. Instead of ideology being the product of a particular class of intellectuals tied to the dominant class, ideologies were seen as expressions of the different worldviews typical of classes, sub-classes and other social groups.

Also, Marx's argument that ideology has no history is often misunderstood as as assertion of economic determinism when it is isolated from the specific circumstances of German Idealism that it was meant to clarify. Spivak misinterprets Althusser on this score. "I think when Althusser speaks of ideology having no history, he was really writing as a

philosopher and was suggesting that we think ideology before we can think history".[66] We need to remember, first, that when Althusser announced that ideology has no history he was quoting Marx directly from *The German Ideology*. "Morality, religion, metaphysics, and all the rest of ideology", Marx said, "have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their actual world, also their thinking".[67] What Marx pointed to with this phrase, in the context of his dispute with the Young Hegelians, and I think Althusser understood this fully, was that the history of ideology *is* the history of class struggle.

For Marx, history, as the history of changes to the social relations of succeeding modes of production, is the history of class struggle. This statement has lost a lot of the force it would have had for Marx since it appears today as an expression of the secondariness of the politics of gender, race, sexuality, colonialism and so on. I will argue in the following chapters that the politics of the mode of production that Marx contrasts with ideological revolutions is constituted by a diverse set of social relations that determine access to the means of life based on class, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, imperialism, colonialism and religion. With this in mind, I want to state, here, that this book is written at the precise intersection of art and class precisely because the intellectual revolutions of art and culture are currently overstated while the real revolutions of the full range of subalterns are so often demeaned by intellectuals who have a better idea of what the subalterns ought to do to emancipate themselves.

It is the Marxist theory of ideology rather than Marx's theory of ideology that has been taken up and modified within the social sciences, the humanities and art. Prominent examples of this Marxist and non-Marxist legacy include Charles Taylor's concept of 'social

[66] Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic*, edited by Sarah Harasym, London: routledge, 1990, p.54
[67] Karl Marx, "The German Ideology", *Marx and Engels Collected Works Volume 5*, p.36-7

imaginaries', John Searle's theory of the 'background' of social reality, Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities', Antonio Gramsci's theory of 'hegemony', Michael Baxandall's concept of 'cognitive style', Lyotard's concept of the postmodern condition, Bourdieu's theory of habitus, Ranciere's theory of the 'distribution of the sensible' and Foucault's investigation of 'discourses'.

Historically, these reworkings of ideology are conceptually closer to Hippolyte Taine's theory of milieu than to Marx and Engels' theory of ideology. In fact, the orthodox Marxist theory of ideology is itself, in large measure, a theory of 'milieu' in the sense given to it in Taine's sociology of literature. So, even if the academic challenge to account for the social character of ideas, including the social history of art, was for long periods associated exclusively with Marxism, it's origin and its character is not derived from Marx, but Taine.

Although Taine's theory of literature published in the 1860s was influential in the latter part of the nineteenth century, by 1959, according to the pioneer of comparative literature René Wellek, "the name Taine almost compulsively evokes three words: *race-milieu-moment*".[68] According to Wellek, Taine's concept of race[69] is not only politically objectionable but has degenerated into a poor scholarly tool that leads to "vague racial theorizing".[70] At the same time, his concept of 'moment' has become philosophically obsolete. Hence, for Wellek, the "term 'milieu' is the only one which has preserved its usefulness and has survived intact".[71] If "the mind of man was his accumulated sensations", then "Taine reasoned, literature must be to a large extent the written record of an author's experience of his environment and national institutions".[72] Taine "is recognized only as a

[68] René Wellek, "Hippolyte Taine's Literary Theory and Criticism", *Criticism*, 1:1, 1959, p.1
[69] Taine: "A race exists having acquired its character from the climate, from the soil, the food and the great events that it underwent at its origin".
[70] René Wellek, "Hippolyte Taine's Literary Theory and Criticism", *Criticism*, 1:1, 1959, p.3
[71] René Wellek, "Hippolyte Taine's Literary Theory and Criticism", *Criticism*, 1:1, 1959, p.2
[72] Jeremiah J. Sullivan, "Henry James and Hippolyte Taine: The Historical and Scientific Method in Literature", *Comparative Literature Studies*, 10:1, 1973, p.25

pioneer, as a precursor of a genuine sociology of literature",[73] and therefore, for the liberal Wellek, "those who believe in a social determination[74] of literature have gone rather to Marxism for a more rigorous method and a more concrete analysis with apparently far more certain results".[75]

However, since Taine was influenced by Comte's positivism rather than Marx's historical materialism or Marx's theory of ideology which was not yet published, the legacy of Taine's theory of milieu, not to mention his theory of 'race' or 'moment' (which Wellek recasts as "the age, the spirit of the time, the Zeitgeist"[76]), is more diffuse than this suggests. For instance, consider Foucault's famous exchange with Chomsky on Dutch television. Rejecting Chomsky's proposition that the opposition to repression required radicals 'to imagine a future society that conforms to the exigencies of human nature as best we understand them', Foucault said any speculations of a future society "are only the inventions of our own civilisation and result from our class system". This, it seems to me, is a perfect example of milieu theory. Speculation, for Foucault, does not point away from itself or away from its social conditions but only ever expresses its given milieu.

The preponderance of the sociology of ideas over the last hundred years owe more to Weber's theory of the 'spirit' than to either Marx's theory of the division between mental and manual labour or a specifically Marxist understanding of the relationship between the material base and the ideological superstructure. In his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of*

---

[73] René Wellek, "Hippolyte Taine's Literary Theory and Criticism", *Criticism*, 1:1, 1959, p.2

[74] For Saint-Beuve and Emile Faguet, who were early critics of Taine's reduction of literature to social and historical conditions, it might be possible to argue that a person's thoughts, beliefs and behaviours are shaped by their surroundings, physical environment, social norms and cultural traditions, but neither the mind of the artist nor the quality of the artwork could be explained as the result of their social causes. Henry James was more generous, arguing that humanity is a plant growing out of natural and social conditions whose flower is art. (For a discussion of James and Taine see Jeremiah J. Sullivan, "Henry James and Hippolyte Taine: The Historical and Scientific Method in Literature", *Comparative Literature Studies*, 10:1, 1973, p.28)

[75] René Wellek, "Hippolyte Taine's Literary Theory and Criticism", *Criticism*, 1:1, 1959, p.2

[76] René Wellek, "Hippolyte Taine's Literary Theory and Criticism", *Criticism*, 1:1, 1959, p.6

Capitalism, published in 1904-5, Weber argued that the sober, calculative bourgeois 'spirit' of capitalism had its origin in the Protestant idea of 'the calling' in which the devotee rationalises their everyday conduct in this world for the sake of the world beyond. Talcott Parsons explains that *The Protestant Ethic* was written "with polemical intent",[77] particularly in relation to "the cruder forms of Marxist historical analysis which were prominent at the time".[78] It should be remembered, however, that only two years before Weber published The Protestant Ethic, Lenin wrote at length in *What is to be Done?* about the 'profound mistake' of "those who talk about 'overrating the importance of ideology', about exaggerating the role of the conscious element, etc.," and Karl Kautsky had even earlier criticised the 'revisionist critics' who "believe that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle create, not only the conditions for socialist production, but also, and directly, the *consciousness* of its necessity". Rather, Kautsky explained, "socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge".

More likely, Weber had in mind Marx's assertion, in the 'Preface', that "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness".[79] It is expressly against this position that "Weber argued for the transformative force of certain religious ideas, thus earning the opposition of most contemporary Marxists".[80] Kautsky and Lenin, two of the most prominent contemporary Marxists, had underlined the significance of ideology, political theory and social science in revolutionary social change. In the context of an intellectual milieu marked by intense and

---

[77] Talcott Parsons, "Introduction", *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Routledge, 2001, p.xviii
[78] Talcott Parsons, "Introduction", *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Routledge, 2001, p.xviii
[79] Karl Marx, "Preface", *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, translated by S.W. Ryazanskaya, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1981, p.21
[80] Talcott Parsons, "Introduction", *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Routledge, 2001, p.xix

urgent ideological struggle, therefore, there was something deliberately provocative about reading capitalist rationality as rooted in Puritan asceticism. Social change, in this conception, appears to be opaque to itself, takes a curious detour and perhaps even occurs by accident or against the wishes of its historical agents. By explaining the rise of capitalism through the protestant ethic, therefore, Weber also subverted the Marxist theory that ideology expresses class interest.

Weber identified the irrational element of the calculative self-interest of wealth accumulation through a vivid narrative of origin. Kathi Weeks has correctly pointed out that Weber's narrative should be read 'less as a strictly historical claim than as a genealogical device'.[81] I want to go further and suggest that Weber's text is best read as a variant of allegory, in which one thing, namely capitalism, is illuminated and distorted by recoding it according to the signifying system of another, namely Puritanism. The problem, therefore, is not that the causal account does not stick, but that the force of the image is so strong that the allegorical double-reading (ie reading one thing as another) dissolves. Weber's narrative links two distinct historical moments with two quite different normative landscapes, but they appear to merge into one another largely because of the specific form of narrative that binds them, structured around the trope of origin.

Weber plays down what is specifically modern and secular about the spirit of capitalism, and he magnifies any residual trace of sixteenth and seventeenth century piety that can be detected in the ethos of entrepreneurs and business owners in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He suppresses what happened historically in the interim between these two historical moments. What needs to be accounted for, therefore, is not just the similarity of the two or their shared characteristics, but also the prodigious difference between them. Historical veracity demands analysiing this interval but it is also in the conceptual gap

[81] Kathi Weeks 2011, p. 41

between them that artistic labour finds its own normative legitimacy, in Kant and Schiller, for instance, as 'free in a double sense'[82] and in which poetry and the aesthetic occupy a utopian third place between 'on the one hand intensive and exhausting labor [and] on the other enervating indulgence'.[83]

The two historical moments of Weber's narrative are personified by Richard Baxter, the English Puritan, who represents the religious foreshadowing of the spirit of capitalism, and Benjamin Franklin, in the eighteenth century, who represents the spirit of capitalism proper. Weber reverses the chronology in his presentation of their respective writings meaning that the book does not face the difficulty of demonstrating how Puritanism was converted into the capitalist ethos. Weber is no doubt right to detect something more than business astuteness in Franklin's compulsion to accumulate money.

It is not too far-fetched to claim, as he does, that Franklin's motivation is an ethos, a duty, which 'expresses a type of feeling which is closely connected with certain religious ideas',[84] since certain distinctive accents of Puritanism can be heard in the normative pronouncements of the early capitalists, and perhaps some contemporary ones. The fact that Franklin had a Calvinist father is introduced to assure the reader that Franklin's obsession with money is justifiably connected to religious piety despite the complete absence of spiritual values in his proclamations. In the same vein, Weber points out that Protestants were successful in business. Weber treats the Reformation as an exclusively spiritual investment in labour isolated from the political and social instrumentalisation of religious enthusiasm in the control of vagabonds and idleness.

---

[82] Kant explains how art must be free in a double sense as follows: 'it must not be a matter of remuneration, a labor whose magnitude can be judged, enforced, or paid for in accordance with a determinate standard; but also, while the mind is certainly occupied, it must feel itself to be satisfied and stimulated (independently of remuneration) without looking beyond to another end'. Kant 2000 (1790) p.198 (5:321)
[83] Schiller 1966 (1795), p. 170
[84] Weber 2003 (1904-5), p. 53

There is a more striking attachment between the two historical moments when the resemblances with Puritanism are found in the capitalist spirit rather than the other way round, where the capitalist spirit is entirely absent from the Puritan ethic. For instance, both Baxter and Franklin deplore time wasting, but whereas Baxter refers to the 'needless recreations and idleness' of 'voluptuous time-wasters!' or argues that it is a sin to get out of bed to pray at midnight because it wastes time dressing and undressing, Franklin objects to the individual who 'idly loses five shillings' worth of time' and therefore might as well 'throw five shillings into the sea'. Baxter's Puritan attack on time wasting as a sin can be seen as having some resemblance to Franklin's book-keeper's tallying of time, but the differences are just as striking. What's more, this disparity between wasting time and wasting money corresponds to a political rift.

The Protestant Ethic is almost entirely constructed as a narrative of the emergence of acquisitiveness, with very scant attention paid to the 'corresponding' emergence of a new normative framework for labour. Weber identifies the spirit of capitalism with the former, namely 'the earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life',[85] and characterises the spirit of capitalism as an ethos of a restless diligent and calculative acquisitiveness, not with the wage labourer's willingness to work, even if this distinction is compromised by the rhetoric of work attached to business. For Weber, the spirit of capitalism is exemplified by Franklin's commitment to 'thrift, industry, pursuit of money and hard work',[86] but the inclusion of 'industry' and 'hard work' on this list does not refer to wage labour or manual labour or skilled labour or handicraft – Franklin and Weber have in mind, here, the activity of the businessman.

This is an ethic for entrepreneurs and managers, not labourers, and it does not give value to work but to the productivity and profitability of the refusal of consumption and

[85] Weber 2003 (1904-5), p. 53
[86] Beder 2000, p. 36

leisure. The labour of the capitalist is a virtue according to the capitalist ethos, but it does not follow that the labour of the labourer enjoys the same status. Acquisitiveness shares certain principles and dogmas with the new normative framework for labour, such as the rejection of time-wasting and the condemnation of idleness, but the two are not the same historical phenomenon. Weber documents how the Reformation rejected leisure, time wasting, consumption and spontaneous enjoyment by focusing on the norms of capitalists which he extends to a subsidiary tendency of the 'willingness to work'.[87] That is to say, Weber acknowledges the existence of these two distinct outcomes of the historical transition but bundles them together, saying the 'treatment of labour as a calling became as characteristic of the modern worker as the corresponding attitude toward acquisition of the business man'.[88]

In the few remarks that Weber makes about the new attitude to labour he speculates about two feasible historical processes. Weber says both that this new attitude to labour by the worker is 'imposed' on the 'propertyless classes'[89] and that workers become willing to work according to a normative transformation within the working class itself. However, he does not document either of these processes and does not address any conflict between them or their relationship to the 'corresponding' spirit of capitalist acquisitiveness. So, despite Weber's *Protestant Ethic* becoming the standard text for explaining how the social condemnation of labour was turned on its head, the book itself does not carry off this argument successfully. The emergence of a specifically modern regime of labour, therefore, still needs to be explained. It took two centuries or more for work to be satisfactorily reconfigured for capitalist purposes and even then the regime of labour that it installed was incomplete, contested and contradictory. It was not enough that certain religious values were attached to a

[87] Weber 2003 (1904-5), p. 178
[88] Weber 2003 (1904-5), p. 179
[89] Weber 2003 (1904-5), p. 179

calling expressed through labour. Old social divisions based on privilege were abolished to make way for new social divisions based on property.

Weber's difference from Marx and Marxism is not restricted to this statement of principle or to the dispute over the degree to which ideas can bring about social change rather than follow from it. The rise of economic self-interest that he charts requires a new *ethic* because it is irrational. This basis on irrationality is intentionally devised as the polar opposite of economic determinism. History, for Weber, is not the history of class struggle partly because, in his telling, the pioneers of capitalism are not the capitalists themselves but the Puritans who preceded them. It is the Protestant 'ethic', not class or class consciousness, that brings about the end of the old world and the birth of capitalism. This does not merely negate Marx's assertion that "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their social existence". Not does it invert the relationship between ideas and social conditions allegedly espoused by orthodox Marxist theory of ideology.

Strangely, though, Weber's 'spirit' is closest to Marx's original concept of ideology in my reading of *The German Ideology*. Weber's account differs from Marx's principally insofar as he ascribes historical agency to the ideas, just as the German Idealists had, and he neglects questions of class. This ascription and this neglect, of course, are two of the tell-tale signs of ideology that Marx objected to in Young Hegelian philosophy. The Protestant 'spirit' is ideological in the literal sense that it belongs to the sphere of ideological production. It is also ideological insofar as it is theological, which Marx consistently includes as one of the three or four original forms of ideology. Moreover, the content of the Protestant ethic, which calls on men and women to give priority to the afterlife over material existence, is a precise match for Marx's description of the abstraction and apartness of ideology.

Since Marx formulated the concept of ideology to criticise philosophy and theology, abandoning the idea when he entered into his protracted inquiry into the capitalist mode of

production, it is worth considering his own account of the rise of capitalism. Three ingredients of social change stand out: systemic crisis, class struggle and the 'mute compulsion' of economic force. "At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing social relations of production", he said, adding that the existing "relations turn into fetters".[90] Ideas, religious or otherwise, do not bring about the systemic crisis of a mode of production. Weber, in fact, does not make this claim but in not doing so he begs the question of what conditions are favourable to a new set of religious ideas becoming the basis of a revolutionary new set of economic practices. Crisis alone does not bring about the radical social change that Marx and Weber are interested in, as is evident in the fact that capitalism has survived long after its productive forces had first come into conflict with its social relations. So, how does crisis turn into revolution?

The crisis can only turn into revolution, for Marx, with the successful realisation of class struggle. Political economists had their own fable of the origin of a wealthy class, known as 'primitive accumulation', in which it was proposed that previous generations who had worked hard and saved had granted future generations an inheritance of capital. Marx replaced this fable of 'primitive accumulation' with an historical account of enclosures, state violence and legal measures that separated the worker from the means of production, principally land, which forced the worker, by mute compulsion, to seek for paid work in the service of capital. Enclosure, which is prominent in Marx's account of the transition to capitalism but is absent from Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, is an example of class struggle. Without it, the crisis of the feudal mode of production limps along.

"Class struggle alone cannot account for the transition from one mode of production to another".[91] It is not religious ideas that are missing from any account of transition that gives

---

[90] Karl Marx, "Preface", *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, translated by S.W. Ryazanskaya, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1981, p.21
[91] Alex Callinicos, "The Limits of Political Marxism", *New Left Review*, 184, 1990, p.113

priority to class struggle but the circumstances that must be in place before class struggle can be successful, namely the crisis of the existing mode of production. This, of course, is a feature that is we have already noted is missing from Weber's fable. It is only with the crisis of the mode of feudal production and as a result of the class struggle of the capitalist class and its allies against the feudal order that, ultimately, "the mute compulsion of economic relations seals the domination of the capitalist over the worker".[92] As Søren Mau puts it in his book on Marx's theory of 'mute compulsion', in the modern literature on power, power has two fundamental forms, violence and ideology (also known as coercion and consent, hard and soft power, dominance and hegemony, repression and discourse). Violence and ideology, "are forms of power that directly address the subject, either by immediately forcing bodies to do certain things or by shaping the way in which these bodies think".[93] The mute compulsion of economic power, by contrast, "addresses the subject only indirectly, by acting on the environment".[94] That is to say, the capitalist mode of production establishes social relations of production in which the propertyless can gain access to the means of life only via waged labour. The mute compulsion of economic power operates therefore at the level of social relations not the individual. It does not require a 'work ethic' but only that "the worker wants to live".[95]

Mute compulsion is not another name for economic determinism. It is itself a consequence of a complex set of social conditions. Immediately before coining the phrase Marx repeats another phrase: 'it is not enough'. First, he says "it is not enough that the condition of labour are concentrated at one pole of society in the shape of capital, while at the other pole are grouped masses of men who have nothing to sell but their labour-power".

---

[92] Karl Marx, *Capital Volume I*, p.899
[93] Søren Mau, *Mute Compulsion: A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital*, London: Verso, 2023, p.4
[94] Søren Mau, *Mute Compulsion: A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital*, London: Verso, 2023, p.4-5
[95] Søren Mau, *Mute Compulsion: A Marxist Theory of the Economic Power of Capital*, London: Verso, 2023, p.134

Following this he says "nor is it enough that they are compelled to sell themselves voluntarily". Mute compulsion does not even follow from this. Even these are not enough. In addition, Marx says, it is necessary that capitalist society "develops a working class which by education, tradition and habit looks upon the requirements of that mode of production as self-evident laws". Here, then, for the first time in this brief recap of his account of the transition to capitalism, Marx refers to something recognisably ideological. None of these things, by itself, is enough. Taken together, though, they add up to a social system that reproduces itself efficiently: "The organisation of the capitalist process of production, once it is fully developed, breaks down all resistance". Only now does Marx say that capitalism dominates the worker through 'mute compulsion'.

Moishe Postone fills out this picture of "a form of social compulsion whose impersonal, abstract, and objective character is historically new",[96] by explaining exactly how "this form of domination is not grounded in any person, class or institution" but is due instead to "socially necessary labour time [which] expresses a quasi-objective social necessity with which the producers are confronted".[97] Workers who are subject to average socially necessary labour time do not add value to their work by taking longer than the average amount of time to produce an item but work extra hours without adding value. This is why, in addition to the formal subsumption of labour under capital through the wage system, the capitalist mode of production is characterised by the real subsumption of labour under capital through the division of labour, use of mechanisation and automation, the application of science to production, deskilling and supervision. Value production requires the acceleration of average socially necessary labour time. In Postone's memorable phrase, "*time becomes necessity*".[98] Or, in long hand, "as a result of general social mediation, labor time expenditure is

[96] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domnination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, p.158-9
[97] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domnination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, p.191
[98] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domnination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, p.191

transformed into a temporal norm that not only is abstracted from but also stands above and determines, individual action".[99]

Mau's argument that mute compulsion acts indirectly on the individual by working directly on the environment, which is broken down into is component parts by Postone's analysis of abstract labour, value and time, and the historical conditions of which is sketched out by Marx in the 'Preface', gives a new meaning to the milieu. In Taine's milieu theory, the physical and social environment are treated as social causes of patterns of thought and national character which are evident in the behaviour and products of individuals. This relay of context, ideology and action is replicated by Weber and Weberian Marxists, but it is refuted by the Marxist concept of mute compulsion and the argument that the "abstract form of time" brought about by "the new structure of [capitalist] social relationships … expressed a new form of domination."[100]

Once 'mute compulsion' is operative, there is no need for a 'protestant ethic' to drive capitalists to accumulate profits or for a 'work ethic' to compel large numbers of propertyless workers to submit to the wage system. In fact, the so-called 'work ethic' is ideological in a double sense. Not only is the work ethic an attempt to explain the worker's "willingness to work" through an ideological, inner, psychological impulse, it is itself an ideological theory insofar as it abstracts 'work' from the specifically capitalist form of 'abstract labour'. In other words, the theory of the work ethic fails to distinguish between concrete labour and abstract labour or the production and maintenance of material wealth, on one hand, and the production of value, surplus-value and profit on the other. Or, more strongly, the Weberian schema needs to attach the worker to concrete labour via ideology because it has no theoretical resources for explaining how the specifically capitalist form of abstract labour differs from concrete labour

[99] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domnination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, p.214
[100] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domnination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, p.214

only through the system of social relations that privilege value production over actual production or the production of material wealth.

Changing ideas about time, such as those traced by E.P. Thompson[101] and David Landes,[102] are not the vital ideological glue that binds workers to work but are the cultural and affective representation of a world transformed by capitalist relations. Both present the transition from the "irregular labour rhythms"[103] of pre-capitalist work to the "restructuring of working habits - new disciplines, new incentives, and a new human nature upon which these incentives could bite effectively"[104] as a shocking historical accomplishment. Thompson is right to point out, also, that "enclosure and agricultural improvement were both, in some sense, concerned with *the efficient husbandry of the time of the labour-force*".[105] However, we need to proceed with caution here. "The transition in time reckoning to a system of commensurable, interchangeable, and invariable hours is very closely related to the development of the mechanical clock in Western Europe in the very late thirteenth century or the early fourteenth century",[106] but, "the emergence of abstract time cannot be accounted for solely with reference to a technical development such as the invention of the mechanical clock".[107] The point that needs to be underlined is that "the appearance of the mechanical clock itself must be understood with reference to a sociocultural process that it, in turn, strongly reinforced".[108]

This leads to some important questions about the relationship between culture, ideology, affect and capitalism. Consider Frederic Jameson's notion of postmodernism as the

---

[101] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present*, 38, 1967
[102] David Landes, *Revolution in Time*
[103] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present*, 38, 1967, p.75
[104] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present*, 38, 1967, p.57
[105] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present*, 38, 1967, p.78
[106] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, p.203 (Emphasis added)
[107] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, p.203
[108] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, p.203

'cultural logic of late capitalism'. Jameson deliberately evades the Leninist idea that different ideologies correspond to different groups or classes, only to rekindle the concept of culture as expressive of a particular milieu, albeit in this instance of a global milieu rather than one defined by race, national traditions, climate and soil. Jameson himself aligns his theory of postmodernism to Weber's thesis of the Protestant Ethic. Postmodernism is the 'cultural logic' of 'late-capitalism' in the same way that "(for Weber) new inner-directed and more ascetic religious values gradually produced 'new people' capable of thriving in the delayed gratification of the emergent 'modern' labor process".[109]

Since, in my reading of Weber, the Protestant ethic is ideological in Marx's original sense and does not explain the rise of the capitalist mode of production but is explained by it, Jameson's 'cultural logic' might be best viewed through the lens of *The German Ideology*. We can start with a simple observation: the 'cultural logic' of 'late-capitalism' consists exclusively, in Jameson's account, of works of architecture, art, music and literature. It is the poetic, metaphysical, ethical, aesthetic and abstract expression of the experience of a certain 'age', albeit an age "in which we are not even sure there is so coherent a thing as an 'age', or zeitgeist or 'system' or 'current situation' any longer".[110] Jameson's theory of postmodernism is a representation of late capitalism from the perspective of intellectual labour. Hence, from the perspective of Marx's theory of ideology in *The German Ideology*, Jameson connects postmodernism to late capitalism in an incomplete, imperfect and mysterious way.

By focusing on the ideological production of intellectuals (architects, artists, poets, musicians etc), Jameson's 'cultural logic' is an account of the 'ideologues' of postmodernism that reconnects ideology with the material circumstances of its production, namely 'late capitalism'. As such, despite the absence of a Leninist theory of the different ideologies of

[109] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London: Verso, 1991, p.xv
[110] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London: Verso, 1991, p.xi

different classes, Jameson's periodizing conception of postmodernism does not exclude class completely insofar as it consists of an investigation into postmodern ideological production in Marx's sense.

Roughly speaking, the allegorical method attempts to reconstruct the world and its fissures from traces of it within the distorted products of ideological production, "like lightning striking from the superstructure back to the base",[111] as Jameson puts it.

Marx argues that ideology consists of "phantoms formed in the human brain [which] are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process". Ideologies are characterised by phantoms in Marx's account because they are the result of the division of labour and therefore of the separation of ideas from reality. So, if ideology expresses something about the world from which it attempts to separate itself, it does so only in a distorted and inverted way that is abstracted from those conditions, seemingly autonomous from them, set apart and standing above them. Ideology is the disembedding of ideas from material discourse. Ideological critique, on the other hand, is the *reinsertion of ideas into the material circumstances of their production*.

Ideology is about class. It is about the damaging effects of the division of intellectual and manual labour which is simultaneously evident in and hidden from ideological production itself. It is also a critical tool for thinking about the relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern, which means that it is also a way for intellectuals to look at themselves. Historically, ideology has not only exaggerated the value of abstract ideas and justified the neglect of material existence, including the body, physical labour and political action, but also converted the actual social elevation of the intellectual over the subaltern into an expression of unequal individual capacities.

---

[111] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London: Verso, 1991, p.xiii

Ideological production does not only produce ideology but also, in the form of a university education, the intellectual itself. In this double action, the ability to speak is withdrawn from the subaltern whose vernacular appears by contrast as falling short of formal speech and intellectual capacity. The subaltern cannot speak because of the intellectual. The solution is not for the intellectual to grant the subaltern the right to speak. So long as the structural division between intellectual and manual labour survives then the troubling relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern cannot be resolved by either the intellectual activity of the intellectual or the spontaneous activity of the subaltern.

Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual softens the line dividing the intellectual from the subaltern without abolishing the social division between intellectual and manual labour. Lukacs' concept of praxis, which combines both in the activity of a single person, only offers an individual solution to a structural problem that can only be abolished structurally. Similarly, David Lloyd's reflection on the "dismayed paralysis" of the postmodern intellectual who has learnt that the subaltern can neither speak for themselves nor be lent a voice by the intellectual is small beans compared to the structural condition. The problem of the division between intellectual and manual labour or the intellectual and the subaltern is not the problem of the intellectual's 'dismay' but this feeling says something about the social imaginary of intellectuals as professionals who justify their elite status as the reward for providing a service to society.

It is still the case, as it was in the days of Marx and Engels, that the subaltern lacks revolutionary knowledge. Nevertheless it remains the case that the subaltern is collectively capable of revolutionary events, like the Paris Commune, the Arab Spring, MeToo and Black Lives Matter, which, among other things, teach intellectuals about revolutionary theory. The class division between the intellectual and the subaltern is not overcome but expressed by the radical intelligentsia who lead emancipatory movements or back off to let the subalterns work

it out for themselves, and when the radical intellectuals teach the subaltern how to speak or announce that the subaltern can speak perfectly well for itself.

The first task of the intellectual is to critique ideology and ideological production. This must be done through ideological production, of course, but ideological production led by the principle of ideology critique, namely the reinsertion of ideas into material intercourse, material production and real history. This is not just about being a materialist or a new materialist, as if the style of thinking itself can dissolve the social division of labour. It requires, instead, a class politics within the relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern. Class relations have to be addressed, therefore, even when the intellectual and subaltern are brought together in emancipatory movements primarily concerned with race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion or coloniality.

References

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulations*. translated by Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman. (Semiotext(e), 1983)

Brown, Wendy. *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton University Press, 1995).

Butler, Christopher. *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2002)

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Routledge, 1999).

Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Félix. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis; London, 1987).

Deleuze, Gilles and Foucault, Michel. Intellectuals and Power, *Language, Counter-Memmory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, eds. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Cornell University Press, 1977).

Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosophy* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982).

Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology: An Introduction* (Verso, 1991).

Foucault, Michel. *Power: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*., ed. by James D. Faubion, trans. by Robert Hurley (Penguin Books, 2000).

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (Harvester Press, 1980).

Grace, Victoria. *Baudrillard's Challenge: A Feminist Reading* (Routledge, 2000).

Hebdidge, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, (Routledge, 1979).

Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985)

Jordan-Zacharey, Julia S.. *Shadow Bodies: Black Women, Ideology, Representation, and Politics* (Rutgers University, 2017), p.34.

Larrain, Jorge. *Marxism and Ideology* (Macmillan, 1983).

Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, 1984).

Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, (Routledge, 1936).

McRobbie, Angela. *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (Routledge, 1994).

Powell, Linda C. Black Macho and Black Feminism. In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, edited by Barbara Smith. (Rutgers University, 2000).

Said, Edward. Traveling Theory, *The Edward Said Reader*, eds. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin (Vintage Books, 2000), p.214.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. Can the Subaltern Speak? *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Macmillan, 1988), p.271 – 313.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. Can the Subaltern Speak, *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, eds. Rosalind C. Morris (Columbia University Press, 2010).

Tomlinson, Barbara. *Undermining Intersectionality: The Perils of Powerblind Feminism* (Temple University Press, 2018).

Toscano , Alberto , and Woodcock, Jamie. Spectres of Marxism: A Comment on Mike Savage's Market Model of Class Difference, *The Sociological Review*, 63:2 (2015), 512–523. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12295