

KARL MARX: IDEOLOGY

MARX'S THEORY OF IDEOLOGY

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

April 1988

MASTER OF ARTS (1988)
(Philosophy)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Marx's Theory of Ideology

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NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 102

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an interpretive exercise aimed at clarifying the structure of Marx's theory of ideology. It is also a critical exploration of issues stemming from Marx's ideas about ideology. The central argument of the thesis is that Marx's theory of ideology is constituted by two concepts of ideology, the early concept, sketched in the German Ideology, according to which ideologies are the ruling ideas of a society corresponding to the economic interests of the ruling class, and the later concept, present in the Capital, according to which ideologies conform to the appearances of the mode of production.

The early concept is applicable to all class societies, but the later concept holds true of societies based on commodity production for exchange-value. The early concept identifies ideologies in terms of three modes of representation of social phenomena: inversion, mystification, and universalisation. The later concept adds two more modes of representation: reflection and fetishism. We argue that, although the early and the later concepts are individually consistent, there are important incompatibilities between them, and that this renders Marx's theory inconsistent.

Chapter One points out the importance of Marx's critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right in the development of Marx's early concept of ideology. Chapter Two is a critical interpretation of Marx's early concept of ideology as sketched in his German Ideology. Chapter Three is devoted to an analysis of Marx's later concept and of the question of the truth of ideology in terms of the two concepts. We conclude with some unsystematic reflections on the relation between the two concepts.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to John McMurtry and Evan Simpson for their lucid and stimulating comments on earlier versions of this thesis. I am also thankful to McMaster University for the financial support extended to me. I record too my appreciation of helpful suggestions by Tony Couture and Kevin Halion.

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List of Abbreviations

BM	Bourgeois Morality
C-1	Capital vol.1
CCS	Class, Crisis, and the State
CSK	Class, Structure, and Knowledge
CHPR	Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right
CJP	Canadian Journal of Philosophy
DIT	The Dominant Ideology Thesis
EC	The Essence of Christianity
ESSP	Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology
GI	The German Ideology
ISS	Ideology in Social Science
KMTH	Karl Marx's Theory of History
MTI	Marx's Theory of Ideology
PEM	The Political Economy of Marx
PESC	The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
PN	Prison Notebooks
PR	Philosophy of Right
RTN	The Real Terror Network
SW	Selected Writings
SMWV	The Structure of Marx's World-View
TI	Truth and Ideology
TPTI	The Passions and the Interests
TNCW	Towards a New Cold War

For I doubt not, but if it had been a thing
contrary to...the interest of men that have
dominion, that the three angles of a triangle
should be equal to two angles of a square;
that doctrine should have been, if not disputed,
yet by the burning of all books of Geometry,
suppressed, as far as he whom it concerned
was able.

Thomas Hobbes

Leviathan

CHAPTER ONE INVERSION AND MYSTIFICATION

1.1 Introduction: Marx's Precursors

The roots of Marx's conception of ideology are buried deep in the Enlightenment. Two central figures in this movement, Helvetius and Holbach, can be considered as forerunners of Marx in this regard. Helvetius certainly had original insights into the relationship between ideas and social conditions. He said that "Our ideas are the necessary consequences of the societies in which we live" (TI p.33). His analysis of ideas or "opinions" invokes the concept of power. For Helvetius, one of the most important forms of power is the enslavement of the consciousness of the subordinates by the opinions or ideas of the powerful. In conceiving of the opinions of a society as basically the ideas of its powerful members, Helvetius anticipated Marx's thesis in the German Ideology about the relation of the ruling ideas of an epoch to its ruling class. As Helvetius remarked:

...experience shows that almost all moral and political questions are decided by the powerful, not by the reasonable. If opinion rules the world, in the long run it is the powerful who rule opinion. (TI p. 35)

Helvetius is also, perhaps, the first thinker of the Enlightenment to have held the view that ideas and values were simply masks or disguises of instincts and interests. For him, the seemingly noble values of honour, justice, and virtue, were, in reality, disguised

expressions of the desire for powers and privileges. As he says: "...honour, respect, justice, virtue...all these are but different names and disguises of our love of power" (TI p.34). Religious and political doctrines were to be treated with suspicion because they were often instruments with which the powerful subjugated the masses and perpetuated their own dominance.

In a similar vein, Holbach criticised religion as an instrument of power-greedy priests. He was also sensitive to the legitimising functions of religion. He pointed out that religion provides a sanction for an unjust social order by appealing to God's will and so on. And Holbach too espoused the Helvetian concept of Enlightenment as an enterprise devoted to the unmasking of prejudices of power and domination. "Tear off the veil of prejudices", "Unmask the impostures", were among his favorite slogans (TI p.36). Helvetius and Holbach were thus the original propounders of the "hermeneutics of suspicion", i.e., the idea of interpretation as circumspection, which is of the very essence of Marx's critique of religion and "bourgeois ideology". Marx's advance over them consisted in endowing the concept of power with a specific socio-economic content by conceiving it in terms of class domination deriving from ownership relations to the society's means of production.

1.2 The Critique of Hegel

It is not our intention in this section to assess Hegel's political thought or to examine the veracity of Marx's understanding of Hegel. Instead we will consider the meaning of two concepts which not only play a seminal role in Marx's critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right but are also formative of his concept of ideology: inversion and mystification.

1.2.1 Inversion

Inversion is a mode of representation of the social world which, for Marx, was widely employed in the Philosophy of Right, and consists in the distortion of the true order of relation between two constituents of a social entity or between two social entities. The distortion typically takes the form of representing the condition of a social phenomenon S as conditioned by S or the determining factor of S as determined by S.

Marx's concept of inversion was derived from Feuerbach's critique of religion and Hegelian idealism. Feuerbach argued that religion inverts the true relation between God and man. In religion man is conceived as a creation of God, and thus in religious statements he has the status of a "predicate" of the true subject God. Feuerbach's "transformative criticism" of religion takes the form of establishing man as the real "subject" of religious conceptions. God is simply a creation of a finite and determinate being, man. In Feuerbach's view, God is an

abstraction created by man as a symbol of the transcendence of his finitude and mortality. God is, thus, man himself but mystified. Feuerbach extends his point to the abstractions of philosophical idealism. He says:

The infinite of religion and philosophy is
and was never anything other than some finite
thing, some determinate thing, but mystified;
that is, a finite and determinate thing
postulated as being not finite, not determinate.
(CHPR p. xxx)

Since the course taken by religion from God to man, and by "speculative philosophy" from the abstract to the concrete is an inverted one, their transformative criticism must consist in inverting that course and moving instead from man to God, and from the concrete to the abstract. In order to represent the truth, we must make the alleged predicate of religion and speculative philosophy into the real subject. Thus Feuerbach:

We need only...invert the religious relations,
regard that as an end which religion supposes
to be a means, exalt that into the primary which
in religion is subordinate, at once we have
destroyed the illusion, and the unclouded light
of truth streams in upon us. (EC pp. 274-75)

The method of the reforming criticism of
speculative philosophy in general is no
different from that already used in the
philosophy of religion. All we need do is
always make the predicate into the subject
...in order to have the undisguised, pure,
and clear truth. (CHPR p. xxix)

In a similar vein Marx argued that Hegelian social and political thought inverted social and political relations. We will consider here his critique of Hegel's analysis of property and the relation of the state to

family and civil society. Hegel's justification of property rests on his concept of will. The will, for Hegel, is the bearer of rights and the most basic right is the right to property. Man as embodied will is, therefore, entitled to the right to property. Hegel also argued that property is the embodiment of the will's essential attribute, freedom, and constitutes the will's substantive end: "...property is the first embodiment of freedom and so is in itself a substantive end" (PR p.42). Property was also defined in terms of its subjection to will, in terms of what Hegel calls its "alienability" from the will. Hegel then argued that the will can dispose of property as it pleases only because property is the objectification of the will: "The reason I can alienate my property is that it is mine only insofar as I put my will into it" (PR p.52). Thus, in establishing an intrinsic relation between property and the will, Hegel can view appropriation as the fulfillment of an ontologically grounded purpose. His condemnation of theft as the violation of a cosmic decree is a consequence of his metaphysics of the will.

Marx examined Hegel's conception in the light of the institution of primogeniture or entailed landed property. He pointed out that, contra Hegel, this institution entails the inalienability of property from the will, its indispensability by the owner. Landed property must be transferred to the eldest son irrespective of the will of the owner. Contrary to Hegel's representation of

the relation in terms of the power of the will over property, primogeniture shows the power of the institution of property over the will. Property here exists as an independent power coercing the will. Hegel had thus inverted the real relation of property to the will. He had made the determining factor, property, into a determined one, or in Feuerbach's terminology, the "subject" into a "predicate", while the analysis of primogeniture, for Marx, showed that:

...private property has become the subject of the will and the will is merely the predicate of private property. Private property is no longer a determined object of willfulness, but rather willfulness is the determined predicate of private property...Here it is no longer the case that property is in so far as I put my will into it, but my will is in so far as it is in property. Here my will does not own but is owned.
(CHPR p. 101)

Marx then turned to Hegel's analysis of the state and found inversion at work here too. Hegel separated the institutions of family and civil society from the state. The institution of family is constituted by emotional bonds between individuals, and civil society is constituted by the private economic interests of particular individuals. The state, by contrast, is not constituted by personal emotions or private interests, and represented, for Hegel, the general or universal interest of the society. The state was based on a higher principle and stood above the particular spheres of family and civil society. The laws of the state, therefore, had priority over the principles of family and civil society. Hegel concluded that the state

was a necessary condition of the existence of family and civil society:

In contrast with the spheres of private rights and private welfare (family and civil society) the state is...an external necessity and their higher authority; its nature is such that their laws and interests are subordinate to it and dependent on it. (PR p. 161)

For Marx, on the other hand, the state could not exist without the natural basis of the family and the artificial basis of civil society. Hegel had inverted the relation of the state to family and civil society in establishing the state as the condition of family and civil society. As Marx said:

Family and civil society are the presuppositions of the state; they are really active things; but in speculative philosophy it is reversed...

...the political state cannot exist without the natural basis of the family and the artificial basis of civil society; they are its *conditio sine qua non*, but (in Hegel) the conditions are established as the conditioned...

(CHPR pp. 8-9)

Marx also observed that Hegel's discussion of the "Sovereign" was another example of inversion. Hegel conceived of the monarch as the personification of the will's absolute self-determination, and argued that he had, therefore, sovereignty or powers of final decision (PR p.181). For Marx this was an inversion of the fact that the monarch's powers of final decision endowed his will with "absolute self-determination":

Hegel makes all the attributes of the contemporary European constitutional monarch into the absolute self-determinations of the will. He does not say: the will of the monarch

is the final decision, but rather, the final decision of the will is the monarch. The first statement is empirical, the second twists the empirical fact into a metaphysical axiom.

(CHPR p. 25)

At the heart of these inversions lay Hegel's conception of reality. Hegel conceived of reality as constituted by gradations of manifestations or moments in the development or the process of self-realisation of the Idea. The Idea was the subject and empirical entities were simply its "predicates", and actual, historically conditioned relations were subsumed in the dynamics of its development. Marx, by contrast, viewed the "Idea", and indeed the whole of Hegel's metaphysics, as a manifestation of actual history, as determined by the social relations of Hegel's epoch. Thus, for example, Marx viewed the "concept of state" as a function of actual civil society, instead of interpreting civil society, as Hegel did, as an instantiation of the "concept of state". Marx described the difference between his outlook and Hegel's in Capital-1 thus:

To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea", he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea". With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.

(SW p. 420)

1.2.2 Mystification

Marx also discerned in Hegel's social theory another mode of representation of the world he called

mystification. As he remarked in the German Ideology, both in its questions and its answers Hegelianism was a mystification of reality (GI p.28). Mystification represents an empirical, historically conditioned entity or relation in terms of transcendental, supra-historical concepts. It also takes the form of "deducing" actual facts from concepts which are themselves abstractions from features common to those facts. As Marx remarked in the GI, this was the method by means of which Hegel succeeded in depicting all existing relations as relations of the "objective spirit" (GI p.410).

Hegel's account of the state is an illustration of mystification. We saw earlier that Hegel inverted the relation of the family and civil society to the state. He endowed the state with an ontological primacy and provided a metaphysical justification for this alleged primacy. He conceived of family and civil society as "spheres" of the concept of state, as "finite phases" of its development. The idea achieves its self-determination in the concept of state and the concept, in its turn, sunders itself into spheres of its self-determination, family and civil society. Thus, as Marx argued, the actual fact of the emergence of the state from relations constitutive of family and civil society was mystified in Hegel's theory by being represented as an achievement of the Idea and as possessed of significance invested on it by a metaphysical existent. The rationality of the state, for Hegel, was thus

a function of its being the "actuality of the ethical Idea" (PR p.155). The constitution and the significance of the state, therefore, were explained in terms of an external, metaphysical principle. As Marx observed:

Empirical actuality is admitted just as it is and is also said to be rational; but not rational because of its own reason, but because ...it has a significance other than itself. The fact which is the starting point is not conceived to be such, but rather to be the mystical result.
(CHPR p. 9)

Hegelian mystification transformed empirical existents into what Marx called "allegorical existents", entities whose reality is not intrinsic to them, but is a function of their being moments or manifestations or receptacles of something else. This is a consequence of Hegel's wanting to write actual history as the "biography of the Idea". If the Idea is conceived as the real subject, then actual subjects acquire an allegorical existence and significance. Thus Marx:

...if the idea is made subject, then the real subjects, civil society and family...become unreal and take on the different meaning of objective moments of the Idea...
(CHPR p. 8)

...(and) the mystical substance becomes the real subject and the real subject appears to be something else, namely a moment of the mystical substance.
(CHPR p. 24)

Elsewhere Marx observed that the inversion at work in Hegel's theory was a consequence of its overall programme of the mystification of reality. He pointed out the implications for the understanding of human praxis.

Human praxis, in Hegel's theory, appeared as the activity of something transcendental:

This inversion of subject into object and object into subject is a consequence of Hegel's wanting to write the biography of the Idea...with human activity...having consequently to appear as the activity and result of something other than man.
(CHPR p. 39)

Thus, social practices and institutions appeared, in virtue of the severance by mystification from their human roots, as alien and coercive of human praxis itself. There is, therefore, no possibility of their transformation by human activity. The most rational thing is to accept them as they are and leave the question of their transformation to the immanent teleology of the Idea. Mystification and inversion are thus not only forms of representation of social reality, but also forms of legitimation of that reality. As Marx was to remark in Capital vol. 1, Hegelian thought became fashionable because it "seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing stage of things" in just this way.

1.2.3 Appearance and Essence

Marx's critique of Hegel spawned another concept which became the linchpin of his critique of capitalism. This is the distinction between the appearance of a social phenomenon and its essence or reality. Marx made this distinction in the context of his critique of Hegel's analysis of the state as the embodiment of reason. Hegel made this claim on the grounds that what is actual is the embodiment of reason and the "universality" of the state,

i.e., its alleged representation of the "general interest". Marx discovered, on analysing the state in its actual form of existence, that it everywhere serves particular interests and frequently acts contrary to the interests of some of its members. There is therefore a contradiction between reason and actuality, between Hegel's conception of the state and the state's actual form of existence. And the source of the error of the Hegelian conception of the state, Marx said, consisted in its presentation of the apparent form of universality of the state as its real or essential form. As Marx put it:

The claim that the rational is actual is contradicted precisely by an irrational actuality which everywhere is the contrary of what it asserts and asserts the contrary of what it is. Hegel is not to be blamed for depicting the nature of the modern state as it is, but rather for presenting what is as the essence of the state...

(CHPR p. 64)

Marx's critique of Hegel, then, is of seminal importance in the formation of his theory of ideology. But we must note that although Marx identified the peculiar nature of Hegel's account of society in terms of its modes of representation of its object, i.e., inversion and mystification, he did not conceive of Hegel's theory as ideological at this stage. This is because he did not as yet analyse the precise nature of the relation of Hegel's theory to existing social conditions. It is only in the German Ideology that he conceived of inversion and mystification as the mechanisms by which an ideology could

legitimise the class structure of the society, and it is to that work we must now turn.

Chapter Two Class and Ideology

2.1 Consciousness and Material Practice

At the core of Marx's analysis of ideology in his German Ideology is his conception of the relation of consciousness to social reality. He seems to have believed that the connections between men's conceptions, or what he called the "theoretical products of consciousness", and their social world are determined by the general form of the relation of consciousness to that world. Therefore, an examination of his view of this relation is necessary for an understanding of his concept of ideology.

Man's social reality, for Marx, is the the totality of human material practice i.e., material production and its relations. The question of the relation of consciousness to social reality, therefore, must be construed as the problem of the relation of consciousness, not to some abstraction or brute physical universe, but to something constituted by human material praxis and its relations. Marx's conception of this reality rests on two presuppositions: the existence of real, living individuals conditioned by their "physical organisation" and environment, and the production of their means of subsistence by these individuals. Marx regarded the latter as a form of reproduction of the material life of these individuals and a necessary condition of their historical development. He even remarked that the very nature of these

individuals corresponds to the mode of production of their means of subsistence (GI p.31). And in the production of their means of subsistence, these individuals enter into definite relations or "forms of intercourse" with one another, relations which become complex with the growth of population and the development of their means of production. Thus we have, on the one hand, the mode of production, and on the other, the relations of production, and they constitute the basic structure of social reality as it is conceived by Marx.

Marx conceived of the relation of consciousness to social reality as intentional in nature. Consciousness was for him essentially consciousness of social reality. Marx also said that consciousness was a social product dependent on the "need, the necessity of intercourse with other men". As he put it:

...consciousness only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me; the animal does not "relate" itself to anything..
..For the animal its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all.

(GI p. 44)

Two things follow from all this. Since the general form of the relation of consciousness to social reality is intentional in character, the relation of the products of consciousness, viz. conceptions or ideas, to social reality must also be an intentional one. That is, man's conceptions can only have social reality as their object. Secondly,

since consciousness is a social product, conceptions must also be social products, i.e., they arise from the need and necessity of intercourse with other men. We shall see later on how these implications are given a more pointed articulation.

Marx also claimed that consciousness, like material reality, was subject to historical development. He distinguished between two main stages in the development of consciousness. In the first stage, or what Marx dubs "herd-consciousness", consciousness is of nature existing as an alien and unassailable force and of the necessity of associating with other individuals of the species. As Marx says:

Consciousness is at first, of course, merely consciousness concerning the immediate sensuous environment...it is consciousness of nature, which first confronts men as a completely alien, all-powerful and unassailable force, with which men's relations are purely animal and by which they are overawed like beasts; it is thus purely animal consciousness of nature (natural religion) precisely because nature is as yet hardly altered by history-on the other hand, it is man's consciousness of the necessity of associating with the individuals around him...

(GI p. 44)

This state of consciousness develops through the development of material existence, through the development of production, increase in population, extension of needs etc., culminating in the stage marked by the division of material and mental labour. Marx observed that it is at this stage that the illusion of the autonomy of consciousness and of its ability to represent something

other than material reality was engendered. And in a marginal note he also remarked that the appearance of the first form of ideologists, priests, coincided with this stage (GI p.45n). Thus Marx:

...This sheep-like or tribal consciousness receives its further development and extension through increased productivity, the increase of needs, and, what is fundamental to both of these, the increase of population. With these there develops the division of labour...Division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears. From this moment onwards consciousness can 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.

(GI p. 45)

One might argue against Marx that the fact that consciousness can oppose existing reality by means of its "theoretical products" demonstrates its autonomy, its real ability to represent what is other than the existent. In other words, the fact that "theology, philosophy, morality, etc." can contradict social reality, by negating it in criticism and by positing alternatives, proves the independence of consciousness from that reality. Marx in fact anticipated this objection and argued that the contradiction between these theoretical products and reality was only a function of the fact that there is contradiction within social reality itself in the form of the conflict between existing productive forces and existing social relations. Thus, for Marx, the explanation

of the contradiction between consciousness and reality was not to be found in the former's autonomy, but in reality itself:

But even if this theory, theology, philosophy, morality, etc., can come into contradiction with the existing relations, this can only occur because existing social relations have come into contradiction with existing productive forces... moreover..."the higher being", "concept", "scruple", are merely idealist, speculative expressions...the mere images of very empirical fetters and limitations, within which move the mode of production of life, and the form of intercourse coupled with it.

(GI p. 45)

There is also a suggestion here that, since the concepts of theology, philosophy, and morality are "images" of material contradictions, their conflict with material reality has no ontological basis, i.e., is not a conflict between two independent realities, the ideal and the actual, but is an apparent form of the representation, by those concepts, of the contradictions in actuality. Here, then, is the essence of Marx's materialism: What is the case is human material practice. Consciousness and its products are only the components of that world and have no autonomous reality. The contradictions between ideas, and between ideas and reality, are a function of contradictions within human material practice.

2.1.1 Two Models

But we should not overlook the fact that there are also tensions in Marx's concept of the relation of ideas to material practice. He alternates between two models of the

relation of "mental production" or the production of conceptions and material practice. One of them is the "organic model" implicit in this remark: "The production of ideas, of conceptions...is directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men..." (GI p.36). Here "mental production" is organically related to material practice as a strand woven into the latter's fabric, as it were. The other, the "efflux model", appears when Marx says that "conceiving, thinking...appear as the direct efflux of material behavior" and refers to ideas as "reflexes" and "echoes" of "men's real life-process" i.e., material practice (GI p.36). Here ideas are conceived as some sort of products or emanations of material practice.

The tension surfaces elsewhere in a slightly different form. Marx now argues that material activity, i.e., the production of means of subsistence, is the fundamental form of activity "on which depend all other forms-mental, political, religious, etc.", and wants to trace the origin and development of the various "theoretical products" from a given mode of production (GI p.82). But he also thinks that "the whole thing can be depicted in its totality (and, therefore, too, the reciprocal action of these various sides on one another)" (GI p.53). The conflict here is between his thesis of the primacy of material activity intrinsic to the "efflux model", and the notion of reciprocal action, of material and other forms of activity on one another, constitutive of

the "organic model". Marx says that the distinctive feature of the materialist conception of history is that, in contrast to the idealist method, it does not explain material practice from the idea, but explains the formation of ideas from material practice (GI pp.53-54). He thus affirms, on the one hand, that:

Morality, religion, metaphysics, and all the rest of ideology as well as the forms of consciousness corresponding to these, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They 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 and the products of their thinking.

(GI pp. 36-37)

On the other hand, in acknowledging the influence of thinking and the products of thinking on material activity, he opens himself to the charge of inconsistency for the reason that it entails explanation of the development of the "actual world" by reference to the influence of ideas. We will argue that Marx reconciles these two models in his concept of "correspondence". This concept unifies the idea of the primacy of material practice with that of the efficacy of thinking and its products in regard to material practice.

2.1.2 The Concept of Correspondence

Marx, in the GI and in all major works of his later period, described the relation of the "forms of intercourse" or the social relations of production to the productive forces as one of correspondence. In the GI he

spoke of "a definite development of productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms" (GI p.36). He also remarked that these forms of intercourse correspond to the productive forces at every stage of their development (GI p.82). In The Poverty of Philosophy he said:

...the relations in which productive forces are developed...correspond to a definite development of men and of their productive forces and a change in men's productive forces necessarily brings about a change in their relations of production.
(SW p. 210)

Here correspondence is conceived as a relation which involves the primacy of the productive forces in this sense: if the productive forces are changed, then, necessarily, there is a change in the relations of production. This sense of the primacy of the productive forces is also affirmed in this remark:

In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production, and in changing their mode of production...they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, the society with the industrial capitalist.

(SW p. 202)

Marx also held that the relations of production augment the development of the productive forces. He said: "...till now the productive forces have been developed by virtue of this system of class antagonisms" (SW p.196). Consider also these remarks in the Communist Manifesto:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production...

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all

instruments of production...draws all...nations into civilisation.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarcely one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all the preceding generations together.

(SW pp. 224-225)

Marx is making the point that social relations, in this case the bourgeois relations of production, have been functionally optimal for the tremendous development of the productive forces in our epoch. As early as in the GI Marx held that the relations of production are functionally determined by the productive forces such that if the existing relations contradict or fetter the development of production, they will be replaced by those corresponding to or functionally optimal for production. As he put it:

...an earlier form of intercourse, which has become a fetter is replaced by a new one, corresponding to the more developed productive forces...a form which in its turn becomes a fetter and is then replaced by another.

(GI p. 82)

The concept of correspondence, then, includes the idea of the functional optimality of the relations for the productive forces, and the primacy of the productive forces in two senses: (a) a change in the productive forces brings about a change in the relations, (b) if a given set of relations contradicts or turns into a fetter on the productive forces, i.e., becomes dysfunctional for the development of the productive forces, those relations will be selected out and replaced by another set of relations optimal for the productive forces.

We should distinguish these two senses of primacy from what G.A. Cohen calls "explanatory primacy". Cohen espouses a functionalist interpretation of the relation of the production relations to the productive forces in holding that "the character of the forces functionally explains the character of the relations" (KMTH p.160). But he also thinks that this accords an "explanatory primacy" to the productive forces and that this is part of the meaning of "correspondence" (ibid., pp.28-29). We think that the concept of correspondence does not imply that the forces have an "explanatory primacy" in an important sense of that expression. To accord explanatory primacy to a factor x, in an x-y relation, is to claim that while y must be explained in terms of x, the explanation of x need make no reference to y. In this context this means that the state of development of the productive forces can be explained without reference to the relations of production. This is at odds with Marx's idea that relations of production augment the development of the productive forces because this implies the contrary of the sense of "explanatory primacy". We now have to refer to the relations as (partly) explanatory of the state of development of the forces of production.

2.1.3 McMurtry's Interpretation

Before we resume our discussion of Marx's concept of the relation of ideas to material practice, we should

also consider an alternative construal of "correspondence" proffered by the Canadian Marxist John McMurtry. McMurtry dissents from Cohen's functional interpretation of the relation of the economic structure of a society to its state of development of productive forces, and of its "superstructure" to the economic structure. He dubs it an "all-embracing teleologism" which regards all historical economic and superstructural phenomena as always serving some technological or economic goal. On the contrary, he avers, Marx's view posits "...limits of material possibility within which an infinite variety of historical phenomena--many with no systemic purpose or function at all--can be shown to take place" and that "...laws of correspondence govern classes of social phenomena which, as so governed, admit of the absurd, the excrescent, and the arbitrary as well as the functional within the ranges of possibility they delimit" (CJP p.345).

Thus in contrast to Cohen's view that, for Marx, a given economic structure E is what it is and persists because it is functionally optimal for the stage of production P, McMurtry declares that Marx's position involves no such teleological reading of economic and superstructural phenomena. Instead, economic relations persist because they fall within a "field of viability" set by Marx's "laws of social factor correspondence", within the non-contradictory range of conformity to the requirements of the society's productive forces. Thus, for

McMurtry, "correspondence" is not a relation which entails that the corresponding element is functional to the other because "E can correspond to, that is, not be incompatible with, the requirements of P, but, at the same time not be functional to P" (CJP pp.346-47). In his construal correspondence signifies the "functionable range" of the productive or economic structure and to say that a phenomenon P falls within the functionable range of a given economic structure E is to say that P is not incompatible with the requirements of E. P may in fact be functional for E, but not necessarily; it may simply not contradict E.

McMurtry illustrates his point with an example of state policy--the Reagan administration's dismantling of government controls on acid-making industrial effluents--and argues that this policy cannot be explained functionally. This major state policy is not, contrary to appearances, functional at all to the U.S economic structure because its long term consequences are destructive of natural and human productive resources. It can, on the other hand, be explained, McMurtry claims, as falling within the non-contradictory range of the U.S economic structure insofar as it has no immediate detrimental effects on the U.S's state of productive development.

Let us first consider McMurtry's charge that a functional account, such as the one offered by Cohen, rests on a teleological metaphysic according to which every

economic or superstructural element or event serves some productive or economic goal and contributes to the maintenance of the existing system. Cohen's thesis that functional explanations are explanations of the existence of a social factor in terms of its function in a given social system, as distinguished from explanations of the functions of that social factor, clearly has teleological overtones (KMTH p.283). Cohen is saying that, for example, a functional explanation of the liver or its presence in an organism is an explanation in terms of its function of promoting digestion, as distinguished from an explanation of how it enables digestion. The teleological thrust is in the implied view of the liver as existing for the purpose of promoting digestion in the organism.

But Cohen's position does not entail that all existing economic and superstructural elements have the purpose or function of maintaining and promoting productive development or the economic relations. This smacks of the theory of functionalism in anthropology which Cohen takes care to distinguish from functional explanation and disavow. One of the central theses of the theory of functionalism, Cohen points out, is the explanatory functional interconnection thesis which holds that each element in a social system is what it is because of its contribution to the maintenance of the system as a whole, and therefore must be explained in terms of this contribution (KMTH pp.283-85). Cohen points out that this

thesis is at odds with the known facts of conflict and crisis within social systems and that Marxian functionalism, on the other hand, accords a central role to conflicts and contradictions between the different elements of a social system.

Cohen's functionalism is avowedly Marxian and its teleological thrust is not that of the theory of functionalism in its appropriate version here, i.e., that all economic and superstructural phenomena contribute to productive development or the maintenance of the economic structure. He holds rather that every economic and superstructural phenomenon is either functional or dysfunctional for the society's state of productive development, or its structure of economic relations. McMurtry, nevertheless, could justifiably maintain that this is no less an "all-embracing" teleologism than the view that all economic and superstructural phenomena are functional for the society's state of productive development, or its structure of economic relations.

McMurtry's argument can be construed as an attack on this social "law of excluded middle", i.e., that all economic and superstructural phenomena of a society fall into two mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive classes, the functional and the dysfunctional or contradictory, and in favour of possibilities that are neither functional nor dysfunctional for a society's economic structure or production. He is in fact claiming that there are "real-

life" examples of economic and superstructural phenomena which neither promote nor fetter a society's technological or economic requirements, but which nevertheless correspond to or fall within the functionable range of those requirements.

Marx's concept of correspondence, as can be gleaned from his analysis of the relation of production relations to the forces, has the following general form: X corresponds to Y = df (1) Y is primary, i.e., (a) If Y is changed, X changes, (b) If X contradicts Y, X will be replaced; (2) X is functionally optimal for Y's stability or development. On McMurtry's account (2) should be reformulated in these terms: X falls within the functionable range, i.e., within the non-contradictory range, of Y's requirements of stability or development. While this amendment secures Marx's concept from the charge of an untenable teleologism, it detracts from the explanatory power of Marx's concept in the face of what we call dominance.

2.1.4 The Problem of Dominance

But consider the following problem. We assume an epoch of social upheaval. The old social relations are being overthrown, but there are two competing alternatives to the dissolving economic structure Eo. Ex is maximally optimal for the new stage of production while Ey, though not maximally optimal, is not incompatible with the stage

of production. How will McMurtry's "range interpretation" help us to predict which of the two structures of relations will actually supplant the old order? On his account Ex and Ey are both compatible with and fall within the functionable range of the requirements of the new stage of production. Does this entail that both will prevail? What if there are incompatibilities between them?

A strict functionalist theory would entail that Ex will actually supplant the old order because it satisfies the criterion of being functionally optimal for the existing stage of production. But it can allow that Ey may be adopted in some sectors of the society. A functionalist account is also compatible with the fact that remnants of the old order Eo may continue to persist for some time, albeit in subordination to Ex, since only the dominance of Ex has been predicted here. As Marx remarked in the GI, social change is often a protracted process in which the old relations and interests are never completely annihilated, but whose remnants persist in subordination to the prevailing relations and interests (GI p.83).

We should, therefore, interpret Marx's functionalist thesis as explanatory of the dominance of a given structure of production relations, or a class, an institution, or a set of ideas as the case may be. The dominance of these entities can be defined in the following ways: (a) The dominance of an economic structure is a function of the dominance of the class whose relations to

the society constitute that economic structure, (b) The dominance of a class is a function of its degree or extent of appropriation of the society's means of production, (c) The dominance of an institution is a function of its degree of control over the society's social and/or political practices, (d) The dominance of a doctrine or set of ideas is a function of its degree of social currency in the society.

Marx's functionalist thesis involves the claim that an economic or superstructural element is dominant in a society because it is functionally optimal for that society's productive or economic requirements. This means that the relation of correspondence obtains between any two factors x and y iff the non-primary factor satisfies the condition of dominance in a society. Thus if an economic structure Ex is in fact dominant in a society, Marx's theory entails that Ex is dominant because it corresponds to the society's stage of production P . We believe that this does not imply that all the elements of Ex would correspond to or are functional for P . To affirm that it does would be to commit the fallacy of division--that what is true of the whole is also true of each of its parts. Further, the corollary to Marx's thesis is not that Ex will be annihilated if it contradicts P , but that it will cease to be dominant.

The problem we posed earlier for McMurtry's range interpretation can be resolved in his account by according

a privileged position to what is actually functionally optimal within the non-contradictory range of the stage of production or economic structure. McMurtry must also reckon with the argument that what does not contradict a society's stage of production or economic structure, and is also not functional for either, may be simply irrelevant to them, and that, therefore, its existence poses no significant problem for Marx's account. The range of functionability encompasses the functional and the non-functional, but the functional has priority over the non-functional. This fact must be acknowledged for McMurtry's construal to have explanatory power in the face of what we have called dominance.

2.2 Class and Ideology

We now resume our discussion of Marx's concept of the relation of ideas to material practice. Some clarifications are necessary. Marx did not make it clear, in the GI, whether he was talking about ideas in general or about a specific kind of ideas. However, his choice of examples indicates that he was thinking of ideas or conceptions of social affairs, i.e., conceptions of a society's economic, ethical, political, legal, and religious practices. He also focussed on an important constituent of "material practice", the "forms of intercourse" or social relations of production. His central claim was that a society's conceptions of its social

affairs corresponded to its social relations of production in just the way those relations corresponded to the stage of production. As he was to remark later in The Poverty of Philosophy:

The same men who establish their social relations in conformity with their material productivity produce also principles, ideas, and categories in conformity with their social relations.

(SW p. 202)

We said earlier that correspondence is a relation in which one factor has primacy over the other in the sense that a change in the primary factor brings about a change in the corresponding factor. Consistent with this accepted interpretation Marx affirmed the primacy of the social relations in this context. In the Manifesto he remarked that "...man's ideas, views, and conceptions...change with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relation..." (SW p.236).

But "social relations" is a broad category subsuming all sorts of relations, kinship relations, relations between generations, between classes, between religious and political groups and so on. Which of these relations was Marx talking about? Marx meant by "social relations" the property relations of a society. These relations, for him, were structured and obtained between groups of individuals or classes. They consisted in the ownership of the society's means of production like natural resources and machinery by a class which Marx called the ruling or dominant class, and in the relations of this

class to the rest of society, primarily the producing class, relations which were, for Marx, exploitative in that the ruling class systematically appropriated a part of the product of the producers without compensation.

Since these "social relations" are governed by the economic interests of the dominant class, its interests of ownership of the means of production and exploitation of the producing class, Marx's thesis amounts to the claim that a society's conceptions of its social affairs correspond to the economic interests of its dominant class. The thesis does not entail that those conceptions must correspond to the economic interests of any particular member(s) of the dominant class because the interests in question are class interests, interests stemming from the conditions of existence of the class, conditions that, as Marx was fond of reiterating, were independent of the will of any particular member of the class.

In this context it is worth taking note of an important distinction made by Erik Olin Wright. Wright distinguishes between immediate and fundamental class interests. The immediate interests of the dominant class consist in interests obtaining within the structure of its relations of ownership and exploitation. The fundamental interests pertain to this very structure of relations of ownership and exploitation. As Wright puts it:

Immediate class interests constitute interests within a given structure of social relations; fundamental interests centre on interests which call into question the structure of social

relations itself.

(CCS p. 89)

For example, the immediate interests of the capitalist class consist in interests of investment, taxation, marketing etc. Its fundamental interests involve the institutions of private property and wage labour. Fundamental interests have priority because they ensure the dominance of the class and make possible the securing of its immediate interests. We will discuss the importance of Wright's distinction later on.

Marx's thesis about the correspondence of a society's conceptions of its social affairs to the economic interests of its dominant class means, on McMurtry's construal of "correspondence", that those conceptions fall within the non-contradictory range of the economic interests of the dominant class. On Cohen's construal, the thesis asserts that those conceptions will be functional for the economic interests of the dominant class, i.e., serve to maintain and promote those interests. Both these construals are plainly at odds with the known fact of the existence of "revolutionary ideas", ideas or conceptions which contradict or undermine the interests of the society's dominant class. Is Marx's thesis, then, so swiftly disposed of as on these construals?

We think not. Marx's thesis should be read, not as a claim about all conceptions of social affairs of a society, but as a claim about its dominant or widely prevalent social conceptions. His thesis asserts that the

dominant social conceptions of a society correspond to the interests of its dominant class, to those social relations of ownership and exploitation which constitute the class's dominance. As Marx put it:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas...The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations...of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class...rule as a class and...rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. (GI p. 59)

This well-known passage makes two important claims. The dominant or ruling ideas are an "ideal expression" of the dominant-class's material relations, i.e., relations of ownership and exploitation. And, secondly, that the individuals of the dominant class by controlling the distribution of ideas ensure that the ideas which are an "ideal expression" of their class's material relations are the ruling ideas of the epoch.

We suggest that "ideal expression" be construed thus: the ideas in question represent the object as either necessary, or immutable, or of universal significance, or all of them. In this context this means that the ruling ideas will represent the relations of the dominant class as necessary, or immutable, or in the interests of the whole society or even of humanity, or as all of these together. Marx gave the example of Montesquieu's doctrine of the separation of powers. He said that this doctrine was

dominant in an epoch in which domination of society was shared between the royalty, nobility, and the bourgeoisie. The doctrine corresponded to the separation of powers at the level of social relations by representing it as an "eternal law", i.e., as necessary and immutable.

It is worth noting that the concept of an "ideal expression" of social relations points to the operation of a mode of representation of social relations distinct from inversion and mystification: the universalisation of the interests of a class, i.e., the representation of class-specific interests as identical with the interests of the whole society or even of all humanity. Marx observed that every class that aims at dominance must take recourse to this mode of representation of its interests (GI p.60). He analysed the phenomenon of "universal ideas", ideas which seem to have a universal significance like, for example, "Freedom of the individual", in terms of the universalisation of class interests. The universality of such ideas, for Marx, was only a function of their underlying mode of representation, and not real.

Marx's other claim was that the dominance of the "ruling ideas" is a function of the ruling class's regulation of the distribution or circulation of the ideas of their epoch. The ruling class does this in virtue of its control over what Marx called the "means of mental production", i.e., the apparatuses of education and dissemination like the university and the mass media. We

need to invoke the concept of selection here to explain Marx's claim. McMurtry has used it to explain Marx's "economic determinism". As he put it:

...the economic structure determines the legal and political superstructures, the ideology... by blocking or selecting out all such phenomena that do not comply with it. (SMWV p. 161)

Selection, thus, is the mechanism that ensures the correspondence of the dominant ideas of a society to the interests of its dominant class. Wright has distinguished between two kinds of selection, positive and negative:

Negative selection involves those mechanisms which exclude certain possibilities. Positive selection, on the other hand, involves mechanisms which determine specific outcomes among those that are possible. (CCS p. 17)

Negative selection, we suggest, consists in the restriction of the social currency of a conception, i.e., in the restriction of its extent of invocation and justification, explicitly or implicitly, in the apparatuses of education and dissemination. The restriction of a conception is secured by excluding it from the apparatuses of education and dissemination, or by repudiation and caricature, or by confinement to a small section of the society. Marx's thesis entails that conceptions which contradict the dominance of the ruling class, i.e., conceptions which represent the material relations of the ruling class as historically conditioned, transitory, and in the interests of only the ruling class, and which thereby undermine the reproduction of those relations, will be subject to negative selection by the ruling class.

Positive selection, as Wright says, pertains to specific outcomes among those that are possible given a structure of dominant-class relations. A number of conceptions will be compatible with a structure of dominant-class relations, in the sense of not contradicting those relations. How, then, do we account for the dominance, the maximal social currency, of some among those conceptions? It is positive selection that accounts for dominance. We suggest that positive selection is governed by functional considerations. Among those conceptions which are compatible with a given structure of dominant-class relations, some undoubtedly will be functionally optimal for those relations by representing them as necessary, immutable, and in the interests of the whole society, thereby providing maximal justification for the reproduction of the dominant-class relations. Marx's thesis entails that these functionally optimal conceptions will be positively selected and will have maximal social currency.

Selection, positive and negative, admits of degrees. We could speak of the degree of positive or negative selection of an idea as greater or lesser than another. Wright's distinction between immediate and fundamental interests is of help here. The degree of positive selection of a conception which is functional for the fundamental interests of the dominant class will be greater than one which is functional for the immediate interests of the dominant class. Similarly, the degree of

negative selection of a conception which contradicts the fundamental interests of the dominant class will be greater than one which contradicts its immediate interests.

We have been talking in terms of selection by the members of the ruling class. But certainly not all the members of the ruling class are engaged in the task of selection. We need, therefore, to distinguish, as Marx did, between the ideological agents who, in Marx's acerbic description, "make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood", and the "active members" of the ruling class. Selection is done by the ideological agents of the ruling class, e.g., state officials, academics, journalists, mass-media professionals, priests etc. Though he believed that the activities of these groups were generally functional for the interests of the dominant class, Marx acknowledged the possibility of conflict between the ideological agents and their dominant-class bosses. He remarked that the cleavage within the dominant class between its ideologists and others "can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts". But he added that this will never develop into a "practical collision" which threatens the very existence of the class as a whole (GI p.60).

We could again invoke Wright's distinction to clarify Marx's thesis. Marx's thesis allows for conflict between the ideologists and the active members of the

dominant class within the limits of the preservation of the class's fundamental interests. The activities of the ideologists may, on occasions, contradict some of the immediate interests of the dominant class, but this contradiction will not reach the extent of undermining the class's fundamental interests because then the whole class, including its ideologists, would be in jeopardy. The ideologists of the dominant class, on Marx's account, have a certain "relative autonomy", autonomy within the limits of the preservation of the class's fundamental interests.

Even this subservience to the fundamental interests of the dominant class is defeasible. Marx maintained that in epochs of revolution the ideologists who comprehend the historical movement may disavow their allegiance to the dominant class and go over to the revolutionary class. Thus he remarked that during the transition from capitalism to communism, some ideologists of the bourgeoisie will take up the cause of the revolutionary proletariat:

...in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour...a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.
(SW p. 229)

We now turn to another important issue. Does the dominance of a conception in a society imply that it must be espoused by the subordinate classes as well? The question of the espousal of the dominant conceptions by the

dominant class is relatively unproblematic. These are the conceptions which legitimize the interests of the dominant class, and, therefore, it is likely that, in virtue of the role of the ideologists as the educators of the class, the dominant conceptions will be espoused by the dominant class. But it is not their espousal by the dominant class that makes these conceptions the dominant conceptions of the society. What makes them the dominant conceptions is the fact that they are the ideal expressions of the material relations of the dominant class and have, in virtue of this, maximal currency in the apparatuses of education and dissemination.

Marx argued that the subordinate classes are subject to the ideas of the ruling class in virtue of the latter's control over the society's means of mental production (GI p.59). The ruling class ensures that ideas functional for its dominance have maximal currency in the educational and disseminational apparatuses of the society. It is via these apparatuses that the subordinate classes imbibe the ideas of the ruling class. But the dominance of conceptions in these apparatuses is not sufficient for the incorporation of the subordinate classes. The subordinate classes must have widespread access to the educational apparatus for their indoctrination to be made possible. And this is a function of the state of development of the means of dissemination and education of the society. As we shall see, this requirement is not met by feudalism and early

capitalism and, hence, the argument for the incorporation of the subordinate classes into the dominant ideology does not hold for these epochs.

Our remarks indicate that the incorporation of the subordinate classes is a contingent issue. But there is an argument that purports to show the necessity of the ideological incorporation of the subordinate classes from the fact of the dominance of a class. This argument invokes Gramsci's distinction between hegemony and force. The dominance of a class cannot be merely a function of its suppression of all opposition by means of force. The logic of class struggle also requires that the ascending class win over allies to its own cause and it can do this only by successfully legitimizing its control of the society. The consent of the other classes secured through ideological propaganda is also essential for the stability of the dominant-class order because suppression by force only provokes further rebellion destructive of social stability. In Gramsci's terms, the dominant class must establish hegemony over other classes if it is to perpetuate its dominance. Thus it is a constitutive feature of the dominance of a class that it has incorporated the other classes into its ideology.

If the subordinate classes do not challenge the dominant-class order, this does not imply that they have consented to its dominance. They may refrain from rebellion for pragmatic reasons. We must not underestimate the role

of everyday interests and the threat of punishment in accounting for the absence of rebellion here. Moreover, on Marx's theory we should explain the persistence of a structure of class relations in terms of its correspondence to the requirements of the stage of production. A class is dominant primarily because its order of material relations is functional for the society's requirements of production. We are not denying that the ideological incorporation of subordinate classes could be one of the factors explanatory of the dominance of a class. We are only rejecting the idea that this ideological incorporation is necessarily implied by the dominance of a class.

Back to the question of the ideological incorporation of the subordinate classes in the epochs of feudalism, early capitalism, and late capitalism. We mentioned that one important condition of incorporation is the accessibility of the apparatuses of education and dissemination to the subordinate classes, a function of the state of development of those apparatuses. We shall appeal to evidence adduced by Abercrombie et al., to show that this condition is not satisfied by feudalism and early capitalism. While we espouse their view that there is no ideological incorporation of the subordinate classes in these epochs, we reject their thesis that there is no dominant ideology in late capitalism.

Let us consider feudalism. It is well known that its dominant class, the landed nobility, widely subscribed

to the tenets of Christianity. There were two components of the Christian world-view which were eminently functional for the interests of the dominant class: theodicy and domestic morality. Christian theodicy sought to reconcile the existence of suffering and other forms of evil with the idea of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent creator. It argued that if a wise and omnipotent God actualised the existing world out of all the possible worlds he could have actualised, the existing world must be the best possible world because if there were a possible world better than this one God in his infinite wisdom would have actualised that world. This implies that the evils and inequalities of the existing world have a providential significance. As the old adage expressed it:

The rich man in his castle,
the poor man at his gate
God made them high and lowly,
And ordered their estate.

Christian cosmology, especially in its Thomist version, with its idea of the "great chain of being", in Lovejoy's words, justified all hierarchical divisions, natural and social, in which every element was in its proper place and every man in his proper station, and whose sole duty was to carry out the tasks of his station in accordance with God's will. This concept obviously provided the legitimation of the feudal social order as one ordained by God and exempt from alteration by human agency.

The clergy were also instrumental in securing the acceptance of the social order. No doubt there were men

like John Ball whose sermons condemned the nobles and the clergy for their neglect of the poor, and whose notorious query--"when Adam delved and Eve span, where was then the gentleman?"--had revolutionary implications. But, generally, the sermons of the clergy legitimised the existing order to the poor by glorifying the virtues of patience and of acceptance of one's place in a social world ordained by God.

Christian morality, with its emphasis on monogamy and familial duty, was obviously functional for the property system of the feudal nobles. The glorification of the family strengthened its role as a system of contract by means of which landed property was accumulated and transmitted.

The question here is whether this Christian ideology of the feudal lords was pervasive enough in the society so as to be called the dominant ideology of feudalism. There is evidence to the effect that the contact between the church and the peasantry was minimal. This was a function of the general cultural gulf, between the dominant and the subordinate classes, in medieval Europe, which had its roots in linguistic factors. The peasants spoke vernacular, and the church carried on with latin, while the nobility chattered in French. Illiteracy was also pervasive amongst the peasantry, as evident in the absence of even basic skills like personal signatures, and excluded accessibility to the ideology of the dominant class.

As Abercrombie et al., have pointed out, the work of historians generally establishes the fact that Christianity was the religion of a minority in Europe in the Middle Ages. The religion of the rural majority was largely a matter of witchcraft, pagan rituals and folklore. If theology was the favourite "hobby" of the feudal nobility, the peasantry literally lived by demonology (DIT pp.75-77). Perhaps the prevalence of witchcraft cults among the subordinate classes was an ideological expression of their struggle against the dominant class. Anyway, much of the evidence we have undermines Marx's notion that Catholicism was the dominant ideology of the feudal epoch. It remained the dominant ideology of only the feudal ruling class, i.e., had maximal currency within this class. The subordinate classes were relatively untouched by the "phantoms formed in the heads of the ruling class", solely due to the undeveloped state of the means of dissemination, and therefore, of the restricted influence of the nobility's chief ideological apparatus, the church.

If we turn to early capitalism, especially in England, we find again that the ideology of the rising bourgeoisie was not at all pervasive in the society. In fact, on the contrary, the working class, the displaced nobility and the petit-bourgeoisie, had distinct ideologies with which they resisted or opposed the increasing dominance of the bourgeoisie. The working class was being progressively incorporated into the ideologies of

utopian socialism and communism. Mannheim has pointed out that the displaced nobility fought an ideological battle with the ascending bourgeoisie by espousing conservatism which rejected the tenets of the rationalist ideology of the bourgeoisie. He defined rationalism as a "style of thought" characterized by quantification and calculation which became dominant with the change from a subsistence economy to a system of commodity production, the substitution of the quantitative conception of exchange-value for the qualitative conception of use-value (ESSP p.86). The rise of rationalism was interwoven with the social aims of the bourgeoisie in establishing a capitalist economy.

Conservative thought, for Mannheim, opposed rationalism by:

...its emphasis on concreteness as against abstractness; its acceptance of enduring actuality, as compared with the progressive desire for change; the illusionary simultaneity it imparts to historical happenings as compared with the liberal linear conception of historical development; its attempt to substitute landed property for the individual as the basis of history; its preference for organic social units rather than the agglomerative units such as "classes" favoured by its opponents.

(ESSP p. 114)

Conservatism thus was eminently functional for the interests of the displaced nobility and provided the ideological counterpoint to rationalism. It was, therefore, espoused by them in their struggle to regain dominance.

The dominant ideology, i.e., the ideology of the dominant bourgeoisie, had two major components: philosophic

radicalism and individualism. Philosophic radicalism was an amalgam of three ideological strands--Malthusian population theory, utilitarian moral and political philosophy, and the central doctrines of classical political economy--and played a very useful role in combatting conservative ideas resistant to the development of capitalism. Malthusian theory regarded the poor as solely responsible for their condition and discouraged any action by the rich towards betterment of the lot of the poor, for the reason that such forms of action, say a rise in wages, would only encourage the poor to proliferate their numbers which, in its turn, by the laws of supply and demand of that commodity of capitalism, human labour, brought down their wages again to the subsistence level or even lower. Thus the poor could improve their conditions only by controlling their population. This doctrine justified the privileged position of the dominant class while ending the pressure exerted on them, by traditional ideology, to ameliorate the condition of the poor by way of the legislation of poor laws and so on (DIT p.97).

Utilitarianism replaced the concept of obligation with individual utility or happiness as the principle of government. Government intervention in the affairs of individuals had justification only if it resulted in maximum happiness for the maximum number. This led to the distinction between the private and public spheres. The public sphere was the arena of government intervention to

resolve conflicts of interest in accordance with the principle of utility. By contrast, there was a natural harmony of interests in the private sphere where each pursued his interests only to, through some mysterious mechanism, ultimately promote the interests of everyone else. Therefore, intervention on the part of an external agency in this sphere was unnecessary and unjustified.

On this distinction, another was superimposed: "society" was the public sphere where conflicts of interest occurred and warranted legislative measures, while "economy" was the private sphere in which, left to itself, a harmony of interests prevailed. As Abercrombie et al., remark: "philosophical radicalism separated the economy from other social institutions, placed it beyond political control and claimed that it worked according to natural laws" (DIT p.99). Naturally, this had the most salutary effect on the vampire capitalist enterprise!

The idea of utility was also put to service in the interests of the existing system of property rights and distribution of wealth. Philosophic radicalism justified property rights with the argument that they maximised individual utility by encouraging capital accumulation leading to productive investment which provided the bulk of people with employment and the benefits of increased production. The concentration of property, in the hands of the bourgeoisie, was also justified in terms of individual utility, since the enterprising ways of this class, again,

led to the aforementioned results, obviously conducive to the welfare of all individuals in society (ibid., p.99). This argument clearly employs the method of universalisation of class-specific interests to legitimise the existing system.

Individualism was another important component of the ideology of the ascendant bourgeoisie. It was nourished by Wesleyan Methodism which placed so much emphasis on the moral transformation of the individual, quite congruent with the secular values of philosophic radicalism. Methodism appears to have legitimised the capitalist enterprise, by its acknowledgement of the importance of material success in the existing order by hard work, and deference to one's "superiors", to the hierarchies within church and society. As Abercrombie et al., point out, it particularly advanced the interests of the class of manufacturers of early capitalism:

Wesleyan Methodism was especially adaptable to the interests of manufacturers...since it justified their own privileged position and provided motives for the obedience and hard work of their employees. The transformation of self-discipline into a sign of moral virtue and the emphasis on working for salvation by means of material activity on earth placed a moral value on the personal qualities and the activities necessary for commercial success and justified the manufacturers' prosperity as evidence of their godliness.
(DIT p. 101)

Methodism with its emphasis on "work-ethics" helped the organisation of the labour force by providing the requisite motivation for work discipline lacking in the early factory workers. The emergence and growth of "sunday

schools" was probably responsible for the dissemination of religious doctrines emphasising the virtues of hard work and deference to authority. And, certainly, the working classes were infected with the virus of Methodism, though they did not mouth the fashionable cliches of philosophic radicalism.

We admit that in early capitalism, via sunday schools, some sections of the working class were probably indoctrinated with some component conceptions and values of the dominant ideology. But we do not think that there was a massive indoctrination of the working class into the ideology of the ruling class because of the absence of the infrastructure for the total control of existing means of dissemination, and of the unavailability of the essential "know-how of manipulation", i.e., social engineering based on social psychology. And, of course, there were significant dissenting working class and other political movements inspired by socialist and communist ideas which certainly had considerable social currency. Thus the "stability" of an order that was being punctured by one revolt after another at one time (1848) was maintained by repressive apparatuses like the police, the military, and the judicial system, and was not a function of the incorporation of the subordinate classes to the ideology of the dominant class.

Advanced capitalism, contrary to the views of Abercrombie et al., is an epoch in which there is an

incorporation, to a significant degree, of the subordinate class into the dominant ideology. This is because advanced capitalism meets the necessary and sufficient conditions of the ideological incorporation of the subordinate classes. But for Abercrombie et al., the coherence of the dominant ideology which was a feature of feudalism and early capitalism has broken down in advanced capitalism. According to them one could speak of the "ideology of the dominant class" in feudalism and early capitalism because of the internal unity of the ideology, stemming from Christian elements in the case of the former and individualistic considerations in the latter, and the dominant class itself. But in advanced capitalism, so they argue, there is no unity in the dominant class and therefore no such thing as the "ideology of the dominant class". The dominant class here is fragmented into different economic interest groups not always in harmony with one another. This is reflected in the so-called dominant ideology which is but a hodge-podge of conceptions and values corresponding to the different interest groups within the "dominant class" (DIT pp.155-57).

In other words, the differentiation of the "dominant class" into separate economic interest groups, e.g., into shareholders and managers, renders the idea of "class interests" inapplicable in the context of advanced capitalism. Therefore, we cannot speak of an ideology corresponding to the interests of the dominant class. There

is no dominant ideology in the sense of a coherent body of conceptions and values because there is no coherent set of interests to which it can correspond.

We acknowledge the fact of differentiation within a class while repudiating the inference that this renders the idea of "class interest" incoherent. We should again invoke Wright's distinction between immediate and fundamental interests. There may be conflict between different dominant groups in regard to their immediate interests, but they constitute a "dominant class" in virtue of the fact that there is a family resemblance, if not an identity, of their fundamental interests. The coherence of their fundamental interests is what constitutes the coherence of the idea of class interests in this context. Therefore, it also makes sense to talk of conceptions and values legitimising those fundamental interests as a coherent body or ideology.

The dominant class in advanced capitalist societies, in our view, is composed of three major groups. The capitalist group consisting of the owners of capital, the managerial group consisting of those who control the process of production and exchange of commodities in the interests of the owners of capital, the ideological group consisting of members with ideological functions (e.g., academics, experts, priests, journalists etc.), members with administrative functions (e.g., bureaucrats, state functionaries etc.), and those with repressive functions (e.g., the police, the military, and judges).

There is an interdependence of the interests of the managerial and the ideological group on the one hand, and the capitalist group on the other. Indeed, the owners of capital have the power to confer privileges on the managerial and the ideological group. The system of rewards, primarily economic, administered by the owners of capital, ensures the subservience, in general, of the managerial and the ideological groups, to the fundamental interests of the economic group. These three groups constitute a class which is dominant because of their virtual control of the society. A set of conceptions and values functional for the interests of these groups such as the ideologies of private ownership and accumulation, managerialism, expertism, and statism will be the dominant ideas of advanced capitalist societies.

The ideology of private ownership and accumulation legitimises the appropriation of surplus value, by the owners of capital, by mystifying the institution of property (e.g., by conceiving of property as having divine sanction or by describing the ownership relation in terms of a need intrinsic in human nature), and by making a "fetish" of capital. This conceals the exploitative nature of the appropriation of surplus value. The ownership ideology is invoked, where the contribution of labour is grudgingly acknowledged, to justify the appropriation of profit. Since the capitalist has invested his capital, he has a right to appropriate profits. And the labour that

might have contributed to the expansion of the invested capital has been "paid for". The private appropriation of profit, therefore, contravenes no principle of justice. So runs the liberal litany!

The managerial ideology glorifies individual achievement and conceives of the place occupied by the individual in the social hierarchy as a function of his intelligence and ability. It conceals class inequality by emphasising the opportunity for social mobility through individual initiative. Inequality, in this ideology, is a function of a mechanism analogous to natural selection, and income differentials, therefore, have a justification. The managerial ideology also legitimises the economic privileges and social power of the managerial group. It does this by exaggerating the role of managers in ensuring "economic growth", and therefore, their indispensability for the society. It also promotes the reproduction and expansion of the managerial group by making the occupation itself a symbol of achievement and "success", and enshrouding the species with an aura of charisma. The ideology also represents the institution in which the group is dominant, e.g., the firm or corporation, as a community of shared interests, thereby concealing inequality and antagonism, based on income differentials and authority, between the "management" and the workers. This obviously provides the justification for the existence and proliferation of such "communities of shared interests".

The ideology of expertism provides the legitimation for the intelligentsia, and their institutional lairs, the university and research institutes. The experts constitute the brain, as it were, of the social system. They enable the government of the society with their "plans" for its development and solutions for whatever problems it might face. No society is free of problems and every problem has to be referred to the expert in its domain, therefore, experts are essential and, in recognition of their vital role, need to be conferred with all sorts of privileges and powers. This ideology rules out the possibility of a resolution of the problems affecting a community by the affected members themselves. They do not have the "know-how" while the experts have it, and so why not let the experts do it for you? The experts are only interested in the welfare of the society. They do not serve or have any vested interests. This equation of the "interests" or "goals" of the experts with the "general interest" or "national interest" or "social welfare" is a constitutive feature of the ideology of expertism. Another feature is its emphasis on the absolute autonomy and objectivity of the experts. Thus, if Harvard professor and member of the "Trilateral Commission" for the monitoring of democracy, Samuel Huntington, advocates forcing the Vietnamese peasantry to flee to the urban areas, by employing such forms of terrorism as agrocide and massacre, as the only means of destroying the peasant revolution, then, in terms

of expertism this is an "objective" analysis, and in the interests not only of the alleged "national security" of the U.S, but also of the "welfare", eventually, of the Vietnamese peasantry itself (TNCW p.216).

Statism represents the capitalist state as an institution which is "neutral" between the dominant and subordinate classes in society, and which ensures equality of citizenship rights for all. It is an institution which is preeminently non-partisan in virtue of the fact that by protecting the citizenship rights of every member of the society, regardless of his class affiliation, it prevents superimposition of political subordination on economic subordination. Statism also represents the capitalist state as a sort of "night watchman", responsible for the stability of the economy, and who does not promote the interests of capital at the cost of other interests.

Statism also glorifies the state as an institution which expresses the "will of the people", and which, therefore, merits complete obedience from its citizens. And if it occasionally does seem to act against some of its citizens, this is again in the interests of the society, much like the benevolent father punishing his children for their own good. Statism, in its very nature, supports state paternalism. By emphasising the legitimacy of the state's use of force against its citizens if necessary, statism justifies the repressive apparatuses of the state like the police, the military and the courts. The true face of this

doctrine can only be seen, in our times, in Central America, where in the form of a legitimation of "National Security States", it has concealed and justified infinite misery and incomprehensible brutality. We should also note that, as E.S.Herman's laudable work demonstrates, statism incorporates a distinctive semantics for describing the state's policies and actions which, for example, do not permit a description, of a state action or policy, against its citizens or the citizens of other countries, as Terrorism effectively blocking any critique of the state's authority (RTN pp.21-45).

These ideologies of private ownership and profiteering, managerialism, expertism, and statism, through maximal invocation in the educational institutions and mass media will be the dominant ideas of advanced capitalist societies. We should note that while they may receive explicit and systematic articulation or statement in school and university curricula, their invocation in the mass media is often implicit and takes the form of "messages" conveyed with varying degrees of force and subtlety through popular fiction, television serials, commercials, movies, reports on contemporary events and so on. They will also be reinforced by negative selection of ideas and perspectives opposed to the interests of the dominant class.

Chapter Three Ideology And Truth

3.1 Two Concepts of Ideology

We should distinguish between two stages in the development of Marx's theory of ideology. In the period of the German Ideology onwards till the Preface to a Critique of Political Economy he conceived of ideology in terms of its correspondence to the interests of the ruling class. From the period of the Preface to a Critique of Political Economy onwards Marx conception of ideology became more abstract and was marked by a shift of emphasis from ideology's relation to the interests of the ruling class to its relation to what he called the form or mode of production. The Preface thus accords a formative role to the mode of production in relation to the society's political, social, and intellectual "life-process": "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life-process in general" (SW p.389). And in the Grundrisse Marx remarked that: "...every form of production creates its own legal relations, forms of government, etc." and added that this was a relation of "organic union" rather than an "accidental reflective connection" (SW p.349).

This shift of emphasis is most conspicuous in vol. 1 of Capital where Marx analysed religion and the concepts of classical political economy by reference to

forms of production like simple commodity production, and the capitalist form of commodity production, rather than to the interests of any specific class.

Marx did not always use the expression "mode of production" unambiguously. As Cohen has pointed out, he used it in three different senses (KMTB p.79). In the material sense it referred to the way in which a society produces its means of subsistence. In this sense the mode of production of a society changes when its members produce by means of power looms rather than hand looms. In the social sense it referred to the social properties of the process of production, properties related to but not identical with the properties of the economic structure. According to Cohen these properties consist in: (a) The purpose of production, (b) The form of the producer's surplus labour, and (c) The means or manner of exploitation of the producers. Finally, in the mixed sense it referred to the combination of the material and social elements of the process of production (ibid., pp.79-84).

We shall focus on the social sense of the expression. In this sense a mode of production is individuated in terms of its purpose, the form of the surplus labour of the producer, and the manner of exploitation of the producers. Cohen suggests that we could distinguish between the following "purposes" of production: production for use and production for exchange. A system of production for exchange can be of two sorts, production for

exchange-value or production not for exchange-value. Production for exchange-value, in its turn, could be either production for the maximisation of exchange-value or production not for the maximisation of exchange-value. And again, production for the maximisation of exchange-value could be either production for the accumulation of capital or production not for the accumulation of capital (KMTH pp.80-81).

The form of the manifestation of the producer's surplus labour varies from epoch to epoch. In slavery it has the form of the product appropriated by the master after provisioning the slave. In capitalism it has the form of profit on investment of capital (KMTH p.82). The manner of exploitation is the means by which the producer is made to perform surplus labour. In capitalism it consists in the wage contract between the producer and the capitalist.

Now how does Marx conceive of the relation of ideology to the mode of production? He views ideological conceptions as some sort of "reflections" of the mode of production. Consider his analysis of Christianity. Marx does not make any reference to class interests, instead he argues that Christianity was "suitable" for a society of simple commodity production (e.g., feudalism). He claims that the Christian doctrine of the abstract "Man" or human being is "suitable" for a form of production in which the labours of all the producers determine the value of the commodity in the form of abstract or undifferentiated human

labour. As Marx says:

Suppose a society made up of the producers of commodities, where the general relations of social production are such that (since products are commodities, i.e. values) the individual labours of the various producers are related one to another in the concrete commodity form as embodiments of undifferentiated human labour. For a society of this type, Christianity, with its cult of the abstract human being, is the most suitable religion--above all, Christianity in its bourgeois phases of development, such as Protestantism, Deism, and the like.

(Cap.1 p. 53)

The key issue here is the interpretation of what Marx means by "the most suitable" when describing the relation of the Christian doctrine of abstract "Man" to an essential feature of commodity production. We should take a cue from Marx's subsequent claim that the old natural and folk religions were simply the "reflections" of the primitive or tribal mode of production (Cap.1 p.53). We could then construe Marx's claim about Christianity in similar terms, i.e., that the Christian doctrine of abstract "Man" was the most suitable religious form of reflection or expression of the essential feature of commodity production.

Marx analyses economic conceptions in just the same way. He remarks that "...the categories of bourgeois economics...serve to express the relations of production peculiar to one specific method of social production, namely commodity production" (Cap.1 pp.49-50). This view of economic categories as the "expressions" or "abstractions" of the existing relations of production was in fact held by

Marx earlier in his critique of Proudhon. Rejecting Proudhon's Hegelian interpretation of the development of economic relations in terms of successive manifestations of "economic categories", Marx declared that:

Economic categories are only the theoretical expressions, the abstractions of the social relations of production. M. Proudhon, holding things upside down like a true philosopher, sees in actual relations nothing but the incarnation of these principles, of these categories. (SW p. 202)

This notion of economic conceptions as expressions or reflections of the mode of production receives its most powerful statement in the form of Marx's doctrine of commodity fetishism in capitalism and we should now take a close look at this remarkable doctrine.

3.1.1 Commodity Fetishism

A commodity, for Marx, is an article or thing with what he calls use-value or the capacity to satisfy human needs. Commodities have a use-value in virtue of their natural or physical properties. Marx also thinks that these properties are independent of the quantity of labour expended in the production of things with use-values. Thus, for example, the utility or use-value of coal or iron is not a function of the amount of labour expended in extracting them from the earth (SW p.421).

Commodities also have another feature distinct from and irreducible to their use-value. Marx calls this exchange-value or, in its money form, the price of the

commodity. And this is a quantitative relation, in contrast to the qualitative character of use-value: "Exchange-value presents itself as a quantitative relation, as the proportion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort" (SW p.422). But exchange-value is simply the "mode of expression" and the "phenomenal form" of something that inheres in the commodity. For example, if I exchange two apples for a banana, the equation "2 apples=1 banana" tells us that the exchange-values of two apples and one banana are equal. Equal in virtue of what? For Marx there is a factor distinct from the exchange-values of the apples and the banana and in virtue of which their exchange-values are equal. This common factor cannot be a natural or physical property of apples or bananas because "the exchange of commodities is evidently an act characterized by a total abstraction from use-value" (ibid., p.422).

Marx argues that this common factor consists in the non-physical property of being the product of labour, abstract human labour, abstract because in abstracting in the exchange of commodities from their respective use-values we also abstract from the specific character of the different kinds of labour "embodied" in those commodities. Thus we are left only with abstract labour as the factor common to all commodities. This abstract human labour, Marx says, constitutes the value of the commodities in exchange and the exchange-values of those commodities are equal in

virtue of this property of value common to them. As Marx concludes:

Therefore, the common substance that manifests itself in the exchange-value of commodities, whenever they are exchanged, is their value... exchange-value is the only form in which the value of commodities can manifest itself or be expressed. (SW p. 423)

Marx also says that this value has a "magnitude" and that it is measured in terms of the amount of labour "embodied" in it. This quantity of labour, in its turn, is reckoned in terms of the duration of labour expressed in hours, days and weeks. The labour time necessary to produce an article under normal conditions is the socially necessary labour (SW p.424). Value, thus, is the socially necessary labour embodied in a commodity.

We create a world of commodities only when we produce articles with a social use-value, use-value for others. Thus value, though it is the embodiment of abstract human labour, is a socially concrete phenomenon in that it has reality only in a social activity, exchange. Marx, therefore, declares that value has only a social reality:

...the value of commodities has a purely social reality, and they acquire this reality only insofar as they are expressions or embodiments of one identical social substance, viz., human labour...it follows that value can only manifest itself in the social relation of commodity to commodity...in exchange-value. (SW pp. 429-30)

Now fetishism, for Marx, is inherent in a mode of production which produces commodities. It is not merely a form of representation or conception of commodities. In this respect "fetishism" is different from inversion and

mystification in that, while inversion and mystification are forms of representing a social phenomenon that may not in itself be inverted or mystified, fetishism at the level of representation of social phenomena mirrors a reality that itself has a fetishistic character. Thus it is not that the subjects of a society based on commodity production merely have a fetishistic conception of commodities, one that conceives them as constituting a world that is independent and coercive of human activity, and as related to one another in virtue of their physical properties. Rather, those commodities themselves have a fetishistic character, the property of appearing to the producers as independent, coercive, and natural forces. Thus Marx speaks of the "fetishistic character which attaches to the products of labour so soon as they are produced in the form of commodities (and) inseparable from commodity production" (Cap.1 p.46).

Marx's analysis begins with the idea that in any method of production labour acquires a "social form" (Cap.1 p.44). In commodity production the product of labour has a "commodity form" and in this form the social character of labour is transfigured into an objective and natural property of the product (ibid., p.44). Consequently, the social relations between the producers, qua agents of labour, appear to them in the form of the exchange relations of the products, i.e., as relations of the exchange-values of the commodities. As Marx says "we are

concerned only with a definite social relation between human beings which, in their eyes, has here assumed the semblance of a relation between things" (ibid., p.45). Marx also draws a very illuminating analogy between commodity fetishism and religious fetishism:

To find an analogy, we must enter the nebulous world of religion. In that world, the products of the human mind become independent shapes endowed with lives of their own, and able to enter into relations with men and women. The products of the human hand do the same thing in the world of commodities. (ibid., p. 45)

Commodities, like the gods of religion, seem to stand over and against the producers because of the apparent severance of their exchange-values from social labour. Exchange-value appears to inhere in the commodity as its physical property. Therefore, the relation of commodities to one another appears as a function of their inherent physical property and independent of the social labour of the producers. Thus it is that the labour of the producers confronts them, in the form of commodities, as an alien and coercive force. It is the fact that the products of labour have value that is the source of commodity fetishism. As Marx put it:

The character of having value, when once impressed upon products, obtains fixity only by reason of their acting and reacting upon each other as quantities of value. These quantities vary continually, independently of the will, foresight, and action of the producers. To them, their own social action takes the form of the action of objects, which rule the producers instead of being ruled by them. (SW p. 438)

As Marx also remarked in the Grundrisse, "In

exchange-value, the social connection between persons is transformed into a social relation between things..." (GR p.157). Fetishism, thus, is a feature of commodity production in which the socially determined attributes of the products of labour, viz., exchange-values, are apparently transformed into their inherent natural or physical properties, and, as a consequence, the social relations between the producers appear to them as the exchange relations of their products.

Now economic conceptions, for Marx, as we saw earlier, "reflect" the mode of production. It follows that the economic conceptions of a society based on commodity production will reflect the fetishistic character of this form of production. This fetishistic character endows social and economic practices with the apparent fixity of "natural forms of social life", historically invariant and immutable. The economic conceptions of this society, therefore, will express the social relations of commodity production as natural, historically invariant, necessary and unalterable relations. As Marx says:

When economists say that present-day relations-the relations of bourgeois production-are natural, they imply that these are the relations in which wealth is created and productive forces developed in conformity with the laws of nature...(that) they are eternal laws which must always govern society. (SW p. 209)

Marx observes that the classical political economists as well their immediate predecessors, the Mercantilists and the Physiocrats, were subject to the

fetishistic influences of commodity production in that the former conceived of the features of capital, and the latter of the features of gold, silver and land rent, not as a function of social relations, but as properties endowed by nature. In Marx's words:

The mercantilists (the champions of the monetary system) regarded gold and silver, not simply as substances which, when functioning as money, represented a social relation of production, but as substances which were endowed by nature with peculiar social properties. Later economists, who look back on the mercantilists with contempt, are manifestly subject to the very same fetishistic illusion as soon as they come to contemplate capital. It is not so very long since the dispelling of the physiocratic illusion that land-rents are a growth of the soil, instead of being a product of social activity.

(Cap.1 pp. 57-58)

Marx does not even exempt the thought of Aristotle from "conditioning" by the mode of production of his society. He thinks that Aristotle was limited by the slave mode of production in his inability to form a conception of value as abstract human labour embodied in all commodities regardless of differences in their use-value. Aristotle could not form this conception because the mode of production of his epoch was based on slavery, on the inequality of the labour-powers of men. Aristotle accepted that different articles were actually equivalents in exchange, but something prevented him from seeing that they were equivalents because they had in common the same human labour that went into their making. Marx observes that the concept of abstract human labour, of all human labour as essentially identical in nature and equal in value can only

be prevalent in a society in which men relate to one another as owners of commodities, that is, in a society based on commodity production. As Marx puts it:

It was, however, impossible for Aristotle to discover, by the simple study of the form of value, that in the form of commodity values all labour (of whatever kind) finds expression as identical human labour, which counts as of equal worth in them all. Aristotle could not see this because Greek society was based on slave labour, and was therefore based upon the inequality of men and their labour powers. The riddle of the expression of value is solved when we know that all labour, insofar as it is generalised human labour, is of like kind and of equal worth; but this riddle can only be unriddled when the notion of human equality has acquired the fixity of a popular conviction. No such widespread popular conviction could arise until there was a society in which the commodity form had become the generalised form of the labour product, one in which the relation of man to man as owners of commodities had become the dominant type of social relation.

(Cap.1 p. 31)

Thus the mode of production limits the range of possible concepts available to the subjects of a society. As Marx's remark on the concept of human equality makes clear, the social and economic conceptions possible within a society are determined by the mode of production in that those conceptions must reflect its most general features. In McMurtry's terms, there obtains a relation of "mapping" between the specific ideological conceptions of a society and its mode of production such that the "content" of that mode is actually projected onto those conceptions (SMWV pp.165-66).

Marx reiterates that it is only in commodity production that the products of human labour acquire the

semblance of independent forces and social relations between producers appear as the social relations between their products. Therefore:

...all the mystery of the world of commodities, all the fetishistic charm, which enwraps as with a fog the labour products of a system of commodity production, is instantly dispelled when we turn to consider other methods of production.

(Cap.1 p. 50)

Thus in feudalism the social relations between the producers are transparent and do not appear as social relations between the products of labour. As Marx remarks:

...for the very reason that relations of personal dependence form the groundwork of society, it is not necessary that labour and the products of labour should assume fantastic shapes differing from their real ones. They enter into the social mechanism as services in kind and payments in kind...whatever view we take of the masks in which the different personalities strut upon the feudal stage, at any rate the social relations between individuals at work appear in their natural guise as personal relations, and are not dressed up as social relations between things, between the products of labour.

(Cap.1 p. 51)

It is because capitalist production is hooked to exchange-value and, as Marx said in the Grundrisse, exchange-value endows products with the semblance of autonomy from social labour, that fetishism is characteristic of the capitalist mode of commodity production. Fetishism pervades the very core of capitalist society, and if the conceptions of this society endow its economic activities and processes with a power independent and coercive of its human agents, this is a function of the nature of that economic reality and not simply an error in the representation of it. These conceptions are fetishistic in their representation of

socio-economic reality because that reality is inherently fetishistic. It is in this sense that the doctrine of fetishism iterates the conditioning of socio-economic conceptions by the mode of production in the specific context of capitalism.

Marx's concept of fetishism contrasts sharply with the concept of reification of Berger and Pulberg. Reification is, for them, primarily a mode of consciousness in which social phenomena are endowed with a "thing-like facticity" and men "forget" that institutions and roles are man-made. It is obvious that if it is a malaise of consciousness consisting in forgetfulness of the human origin of society, we only need to remind ourselves of that fact to be cured of reification.

For Marx, by contrast, fetishism stems from the very nature of commodity production. Since the mode of production conditions our "intellectual life", our modes of representation, the fetishistic character of commodity production will color or permeate the concepts of a society based on this form of production. Therefore, the critique of fetishistic representations of social reality is at the same time a critique of the mode of production whose nature is reflected by these representations. It will not suffice to simply remind ourselves that the relations between commodities are a function of the social relations of the producers. We must transform the mode of production which gives rise to appearances to the contrary. Further, Berger

and Pulberg, in conceiving of reification as an "anthropological necessity", or as inherent in human nature, seem to be reifying reification! Marx, on the contrary, affirms the historically contingent character of commodity production and hence, it would follow, of the historical contingency of fetishism. Fetishistic representations are grounded in transitory forms of production and not in some invariant attribute of human consciousness.

Does Marx's doctrine of fetishism really provide a basis for a concept of ideology? Abercrombie argues that there is an explanatory gap between the idea that commodity production is fetishistic, and the thesis that the forms of thought of any society based on commodity production would be fetishistic (CSK p.88). The former claim, he contends, does not support the latter. He thinks that we also need to explain how it is that those members of the society not engaged in production can think fetishistically. In addition he says that the explanatory value of the theory of fetishism in the context of belief-systems is limited since it tells us nothing at all about their content, i.e., about what specific beliefs will prevail in the society.

Abercrombie's question concerning the link between the theory of fetishism and the theory of ideology overlooks the implications of Marx's thesis in the Preface about the conditioning of the "intellectual life process" by the mode of production. It follows from this thesis that

the forms of thought of a society based on a fetishistic mode of production will generally be fetishistic. His demand for an explanation of how those not involved in production could be subject to fetishism misses the point. Marx is not making a claim about which group of people will think fetishistically. Rather, he is pointing to a structural mechanism that endows the products of the intellect with a fetishistic character in just the way it endows the products of the hand with that character.

Abercrombie's point about the limited explanatory scope of Marx's doctrine of fetishism with respect to beliefs again misses the fact that fetishism is a form of representation of the social object, underlying the dominant ideologies of a society based on commodity production, one which represents the social object as natural or endowed with "thing-like facticity". The doctrine does not, of course, imply anything about the specific content of such beliefs. But it is a strange requirement that a theory of ideology must predict what beliefs will actually exist in a society. A theory of ideology is not a scientific theory which can predict the details of beliefs given information about the society's mode of production. It is largely an explanation of why it is that a set of beliefs become dominant in a society at a given time. A theory of ideology must say something about the general features of the dominant ideas of a society with a certain mode of production. And this can only take

the form of specifying the ways in which those ideas might represent the social relations of the society in question, i.e., whether they invert, mystify, universalise, and fetishize those relations or not. The demand for anything less general than this, we suspect, rests on a misunderstanding of the nature of a theory of ideology.

3.2 Ideology And Truth

Marx's later concept of ideology, we hold, implies that, in a society based on commodity production, conceptions which fetishize mode-related social phenomena will be the dominant conceptions. We said that the fetishistic character of such conceptions is but a reflection of the fetishistic character of the society's mode of production. Someone could argue here that this means that there is nothing false about those fetishistic conceptions or theories because they only reflect the very nature of social reality, or, in other words, represent correctly the nature of a society based on commodity production. If social phenomena in a society based on commodity production are fetishistic, then we ought to regard fetishistic conceptions as true in that society. And since Marx views fetishistic conceptions as ideological, he cannot avoid the conclusion that ideological conceptions are true. A distinction between ideology and truth, therefore, cannot be made within the framework of his later concept.

This argument can be met by invoking the Marxian distinction between appearance and essence. When Marx said that commodity production is fetishistic he did not mean that the social relations of the producers are actually the exchange relations of commodities. He meant that the social relations of the producers appear as the exchange relations of commodities. And he was not claiming that exchange-value is a natural property of the commodity, but rather that it appears to inhere in the commodity unrelated to the social labour of the producers. Thus the doctrine of fetishism makes the claim that commodity production gives rise to fetishistic appearances. Social phenomena appear to the agents of commodity society as natural, independent and coercive of their actions. But in their essence or reality they are historically conditioned, transitory, and determined by the social actions of the agents of the society.

For Marx commodity production generates fetishistic appearances, appearances or "phenomenal forms" which were "spontaneously expressed" in the society's dominant forms of thought. His opposition of scientific analysis to ideology hinges on this fact. The rupture between appearance and essence characteristic of commodity production renders suspect not only the "intuitions" of the agents of this society, but also its dominant forms of thought. Therefore, we can only rely on a scientific analysis, a mode of analysis that uncovers the "essence" or

the "actual substrata" of commodity society. As Marx remarked:

...in their appearance things often represent themselves in inverted form. (ISS p. 286)

...all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincide. (SW p. 494)

The phenomenal forms show themselves spontaneously and directly as current forms of thought; the actual substrata must be discovered by scientific enquiry. (Cap.I p. 591)

This distinction between appearance and essence is a condition that must be met by any theory of capitalist society because this society, based on commodity production for exchange-value, embodies a rupture between its essence and the way it appears to its members. For Marx, as we saw, the distinction is not merely a "heuristic device", but inherent in commodity production. The ultimate source of it lies in the "commodity form" of the product of labour in which "...the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour...(and) the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour..." (SW p.436).

It is worthwhile noticing here that Cohen's rationale for the distinction between appearance and essence differs from Marx's own rationale. Cohen argues that this distinction is constitutive of all class societies. He points out that class domination is

inherently exploitative, but concealment of this exploitation is necessary for social stability. It is this structural requirement of class society, the logic of class domination, that generates the gulf between social reality and the way it appears to its members, their beliefs about it (KMTTH p.330). Marx's later theory identifies the source of the gulf in the mystifying commodity form of the product of labour. Since Marx also holds that the mode of production determines the class structure of a society, it is evident that his explanation by reference to the mode of production is more fundamental than Cohen's.

Ideological conceptions are thus reflections or expressions of the appearances of commodity production. We must distinguish here between conceptions which fetishize the social relations of commodity society, and those which reflect their appearances. An example of the former, in the context of capitalist society, would be a conception of profit, like the marginal productivity theory, which views profit in terms of the inherent productivity of capital. As Marx sarcastically remarked, in such conceptions "it becomes a property of money to generate value and yield interest, much as it is an attribute of pear trees to bear pears" (PEM p.40). Examples of the latter would be conceptions which view capitalist exchange relations as based on "equality" and "freedom". These conceptions, in virtue of the fact that they conform to the appearances of capitalist commodity society, will be the dominant

conceptions. Conceptions which unmask appearances by analysing the essence will be negatively selected. Marx's theory of capitalist society is an obvious example.

Marx's later concept, we hold, entails that such conceptions are false though they are "true" to appearances, because those appearances are inversions or distortions of reality. Thus the fetish conception of profit is at odds with the fact that profit, like rent and interest, is a function of a historically conditioned social relation, by transforming the "social, economic character impressed on things in the process of social production into a natural character stemming from the material nature of those things" (PEM p.41). And conceptions affirming the equality and freedom of the capitalist relations of exchange, in particular the exchange between the labourer and the capitalist, are at odds with the inherently exploitative character of capitalist relations. These conceptions reflect the appearances of what Marx calls the "wage-form" of the capitalist-worker exchange. It appears as though the worker is free to sell his labour for a definite sum of wages and that he is paid in proportion to his labour.

For Marx these appearances are at odds with the fact, uncovered by the analysis of the "hidden foci" of capitalist production, that this form of production is based on the separation of the worker from his means of subsistence. He is therefore forced to sell labour-power,

or his capacity to work, for a specified duration, to the capitalist who owns the means of production of the worker's subsistence, in order to survive. The "freedom" that the worker has here is simply the freedom of choice of his employer, not the freedom of choice to sell his labour-power. Thus the worker in reality is not free and conceptions of his condition which reflect the appearance of freedom are just false.

The reality of exploitation is again concealed by the appearance of the equality of exchange. Marx argues that the working day or the total time taken by the worker to apply his labour-power for the benefit of the capitalist could be divided into two parts: necessary labour-time and surplus labour-time. Marx points out that what the capitalist pays for is the necessary labour of the worker. Wages are only equal to the value produced during necessary labour-time. But surplus labour, the value produced during surplus labour-time, goes unpaid and constitutes the surplus value appropriated by the capitalist without compensation to the worker. As Marx put it:

Since the workman receives his wages after his work is performed...the value or price of his labour-power necessarily appears to him as the price or value of his labour itself...although.. value and price of labour are senseless terms. Secondly, although one part only of the workman's daily labour is paid while the other part is unpaid, and while that unpaid or surplus labour constitutes exactly the fund out of which surplus value or profit is formed, it seems as if the aggregate labour was paid labour. This false appearance distinguishes wage labour from other historical forms of labour. (PEM p. 102)

Therefore, these conceptions of the "freedom" and "equality" of capitalist exchange are also false because in reality the process is marked by coercion and exploitation. Thus Marx's analysis implies that ideological conceptions, conceptions which fetishize social phenomena, or reflect their apparent forms, are just false and hence his opposition of truth and ideology can be sustained with consistency.

There remains the consideration of the question of the truth or falsity of ideology within the framework of Marx's early theory. According to this theory, to reiterate, an ideological conception is a conception which is functional for the interests of a social class. And the dominant ideology of a society is always functional for the interests of its dominant class. What does this imply in regard to the truth-value of such conceptions? Our thesis is that the theory does not imply anything at all with respect to the truth-value of ideological conceptions! The theory, as we saw earlier, offers a functional account of ideology and no functional account of beliefs can imply anything with respect to their truth-value. We cannot infer from the fact that I is functional for the interests of a class C that it must be false or from the fact that I contradicts the interests of C that I must be true. The criteria of truth or falsity, adequacy or inadequacy, of a belief or theory are distinct from the criteria for determining whether that belief or theory actually serves

the interests of a class. Therefore, there is no logical relation between the function of a belief or theory and its truth or falsity.

Is there an empirical relation between them? Is it probable that a belief which serves the interests of a class will be false? Is it probable that a belief which contradicts the interests of a class will be true? An answer in the affirmative would have to posit some form of a causal relation between the function of a belief and its truth-value. What would conceivably count in favour of the existence of such a relation? Statistical data showing that beliefs which promoted the interests of a class were mostly false and those which contradicted such interests were mostly true? But what if we find some instances where a true belief or theory was functional for the interests of a class and a false one undermined those interests? Such evidence would certainly count against the thesis that ideas which correspond to class interests are necessarily false and ideas which contradict class interests are necessarily true.

Moreover even if we do have the sort of statistical data required, this would not be sufficient to establish a causal relation between the function of a belief with respect to the interests of a class and its truth-value. We need a satisfactory account of how the function of a belief with respect to the interests of a class affects its truth-value. How does the correspondence

of a belief to the interests of a class determine its truth or falsity?

Do we have here the kind of plausibility we found in the thesis that the function of a belief with respect to the interests of the dominant class determines its degree of social currency in a society? We were able to point to the mechanisms of negative and positive selection and their institutional bases by way of an explanation of the determination in question. What would be the mechanisms by which the function of a belief with respect to the interests of the dominant class determined its truth-value?

Perhaps a case could be made for this by invoking Marx's idea that inversion, mystification, and universalisation are the mechanisms by which ideologies have served the interests of classes. The argument then would be that since beliefs are functional for the interests of a class by means of these mechanisms, and these mechanisms distort the nature of social reality, those beliefs, therefore, must be false. Thus it is that beliefs which are functional for the interests of a class are necessarily false. The link between the function of a belief or theory and its truth-value is determined by the nature of the mode of representation that belief must employ to have that function. If, in order to legitimise class interests, a belief or doctrine had to employ a distorting mode of representation, then this would naturally indicate that the belief or doctrine was

incorrect or false.

We must now examine the two premises on which this claim rests. The first makes the claim that ideologies serve the interests of a class by inversion, mystification, or universalisation. That is, the ideology in question serves the interests of a class by inverting social relations and institutions or by explaining social hierarchies by reference to mystical or metaphysical entities and principles or by identifying the interests of the class with the interests of the society as a whole. We can certainly find examples of ideologies which do employ these mechanisms in serving the interests of a class, but it is not necessary that beliefs or theories have to employ these modes of representing social reality in order to serve the interests of a class.

Marx's theory of surplus value is an obvious example. The theory undoubtedly is functional for the interests of the proletariat, but Marx claimed that it was a scientific theory. So here we have an example of a theory which is scientific in that it does not employ distorting modes of representing social reality, and yet is functional for the interests of a class, the proletariat. Therefore, it does not follow from the fact that an ideology serves the interests of a class that it must employ inversion, mystification, or universalisation. The function of a theory or belief does not entail anything with respect to its mode of representation. It is a contingent fact about a

theory that it promotes the interests of a class by means of a mode of representation that distorts reality.

The second premiss asserts that these modes of representation distort reality. Now this is certainly true of inversion. It is by definition a false representation of reality. We may also regard mystification as a dubious form of representation if we have grounds for believing that no mystical entities or forces are operative in society. The case of universalisation is rather complex. This is because there are historical contexts in which the promotion of the interests of a class could serve the interests of the whole society. We believe this was the case with the interests of the bourgeoisie during the later stages of feudalism. Ideologies which universalised the interests of the bourgeoisie did so justifiably because the advancement of bourgeois interests led to the development of the productive forces of the society which was in the interests of all classes.

The context of late capitalism is another illustration. Marx's theory identifies the interests of the proletariat with the interests of humanity in that the emancipation of this class constitutes the emancipation of humanity from class society. Marx cannot consistently dismiss universalisation as an inherently dubious method and also regard the identification of the interests of the proletariat with the interests of humanity as justified. Thus though it is generally true that these modes of

representation distort reality, there are important exceptions.

The fact that a theory or belief can be functional for the interests of a class without employing a distorting mode of representation undermines the argument that ideologies are necessarily false in virtue of the fact that they necessarily employ a distorting mode of representation. We hold that nothing in Marx's early concept of ideology entails that ideologies are necessarily false. The truth or falsity of an ideological belief or theory, when the belief or theory is descriptive, is a contingent issue dependent on its mode of representation and the justifiability of that mode of representation. Needless to say, this holds true of the "ruling ideas" or the dominant ideologies as well. A Marxist who denies this and says that the dominant ideologies are always false will do well to ponder over the the case of Marxist theory in the Soviet Union. Does the fact that Marxist theory is the dominant ideology in that state entail that it is false? But more of this later.

We have been considering the argument that if a theory is functional for the interests of a class, then it must be false. Our conclusion also effectively undermines the charge of self-refutation made against Marx's theory. This charge is based on the argument that Marx's view entails that class ideologies are necessarily false and that because his theory serves the interests of the working

class it is itself a class ideology, and therefore false on its own terms. This argument breaks down because it is based on a supposition we have just undermined, that Marx's theory entails that class ideologies or theories which are functional for the interests of a class are necessarily false.

Perhaps it is response to this kind of an argument that some Marxists have resorted to an equally faulty argument. They have argued that the fact that Marx's theory serves the interests of the proletariat is what makes it true! They have argued that in capitalist society the standpoint of the proletariat is the true standpoint, and therefore that the truth of Marx's theory is a function of its proletarian standpoint. One can find this line of argument in Lukacs, Lenin, Gramsci, Althusser, Colletti and Adam Schaff (MTI pp.164-69).

According to the argument, the proletarian standpoint has a cognitive priority over the capitalist standpoint in that the former sheds light on the "essence" of capitalist society in virtue of the central role of the proletariat in capitalist production. Since the exploitation of the proletariat is the very basis of capitalist society, the standpoint of this class must reveal the real lineaments of that society (on the assumption that an exploited class can maximally comprehend exploitation?). Therefore, a theory such as Marx's which is based on the standpoint of the proletariat must have a

cognitive priority over theories based on the standpoint of the capitalist class. As Adam Schaff exhorted:

If you wish to attain objective truth...then
consciously adopt class and party positions
which are in accord with the interests of the
proletariat. (MTI p. 168)

This remark makes it clear that to adopt the proletarian point of view is to adopt a perspective on capitalist society constituted by working-class interests and conditions. Thus a theory which is functional for the interests of the working class would be one which adopted the standpoint of the proletariat. To infer that the theory is therefore true would be to infer that what is functional for the interests of the working class is true. Therefore Marx's theory is true simply because it is functional for the interests of the working class.

Now this is not how Marx himself regarded his theory. Though Marx wrote to Engels that he hoped his theory of capitalism would win a victory for the working class in the field of science, he never claimed that his theory was scientific because it would win a victory for the working class in the field of class struggle. Marx thought that his theory was scientific because it uncovered the appearances of capitalist society and revealed its essence and did not employ unscientific modes of representation like inversion and mystification. Thus he regarded his theory of surplus value as true because it was based on a scientific analysis and not because it was functional for the interests of the proletariat or adopted

the proletarian standpoint.

The "proletarian argument" for the truth of Marx's theory mistakenly ascribes to Marx the view that class interests determine truth and falsity. A theory functional for bourgeois interests must be false and a theory functional for the interests of the proletariat must be true. Nothing of this sort is entailed by Marx's theory and there are no good reasons for thinking that the view is sound. But what then was Marx's concept of truth? If the function of a belief did not determine its truth-value, what did?

The kernel of the answer lies in the distinction between appearance and essence. A theory is false if it corresponds to the appearances of a social phenomenon or if it distorts, by inversion, mystification, or universalisation, the essence or inner structure of a social phenomenon. Since Marx identifies essence with reality and conceives of truth as correspondence to reality, it follows that truth is for him correspondence to essence. Marx also identifies science with truth. He views the scientific method as the only method of arriving at truth or essence presumably because the scientific method does not employ inversion, mystification, and universalisation as modes of representation.

The method of ideology is unscientific because, by contrast, it typically inverts, mystifies, and universalizes social phenomena. Thus there is a profoundly

antithetical relation between ideology and science in Marx's later concept of ideology owing to the incompatibility of their respective methods of representation. Therefore, the idea of a "scientific ideology" would be an incoherent concept in terms of this conception.

Concluding Reflections

We now need to consider the relation between the early and later concepts of ideology. To recapitulate, according to the early concept, ideologies are the dominant conceptions of social affairs corresponding to the economic interests of the dominant class by means of modes of representation like inversion, mystification, and universalisation. We construed this correspondence relation in functional terms, i.e., in terms of the legitimation or justification of the reproduction of the dominant class's economic relations by the ideology in question. We also suggested that this implies that conceptions which contradict those economic relations will be selected out and have minimal social currency.

Our definition of the dominance of the "dominant ideas" was in terms of its maximal social currency or its degree of prevalence in the society. This means that the dominant ideas will be the ideas espoused by a vast majority of the society. As we pointed out earlier (p.36), for Marx this was a function of the ruling class's control over the "means of mental production" or the apparatuses of dissemination and education of the society. In virtue of its control over these apparatuses, the ruling class regulates the distribution or circulation of ideas by the apparatuses such that those ideas which provide justification of the reproduction of their economic

relations will have the widest distribution or circulation. We argued that this extent of circulation of those ideas produced by the apparatuses leads to their prevalence in the society only if those apparatuses are developed enough to guarantee access to them, in the sense of exposure to them, by a vast majority of the society. In short, we make the simple and plausible assumption that the more frequently and persuasively a set of doctrines are invoked, such as, for example, the doctrine of private property, explicitly or implicitly by the apparatuses to which the vast majority have access, the more the likelihood of their espousal by that majority.

There are, of course, difficulties here. One could demand a definition of "maximal social currency" or "espousal by a vast majority of society". How much currency is necessary for "maximal social currency"? How many members of a society constitute a "vast majority"? Similarly, in regard to the concept of "extent of circulation in the apparatuses of education and dissemination" one could press for a definition in precise quantitative terms. How many times must an idea be invoked in the apparatuses in question to qualify as an idea with a "great extent of circulation"?

While we feel that concepts which figure in an analysis of social phenomena are not amenable to precise quantitative definitions, some general indicators are available. For example, we would certainly say that if, in

a classroom of a hundred students, about seventy believed that the institution of private property must be preserved at all costs, the idea of private property was the "dominant idea" in that classroom. The case of currency in a society could be conceived on the analogy of the classroom. The notion of extent of circulation is certainly a problematic one. We now feel that something like an "impact factor" determines the extent of circulation of an idea. The "impact factor" is the manner in which an idea is presented to an audience. For example, a report on the front page of a newspaper has a greater "impact potential" than one on the corner of some page later on. The headlines obviously have maximal impact potential. Of course, there is need for further work on this point than is given here.

Our reservations about McMurtry's construal of correspondence hinged on the problem of explaining the dominance of certain conceptions of social affairs in a society. Indeed, we think that Marx was concerned with this very problem as evident in his reference to "ruling ideas" in the German Ideology. Therefore, the adequacy of any construal of correspondence must be judged in terms of its explanatory power with respect to the dominance of ideas. For McMurtry the superstructural phenomena of a society fall within the non-contradictory range of the requirements of its economic structure. In its application to the specific ideological formations of a society, the thesis entails that they fall within the same range. But do all

the conceptions of social affairs in a society fall within the range of non-contradiction to its economic structure? Since McMurtry holds that ideas which contradict the ruling-class interests will be selected out he has to answer in the negative, but this implies that the range of ideas which fall within the range of non-contradiction to ruling-class interests becomes too broad. Why do some of these ideas have wider circulation than others?

What this calls for is the acknowledgement of the phenomenon of "ruling ideas". The explanandum cannot be "all ideas" within the permissible range but only the "dominant ideas". McMurtry's thesis could now be modified and stated as follows: the dominant ideas of a society fall within the range of non-contradiction to the requirements of its economic structure. Our objection to this modified version is that non-contradiction to a society's economic structure is weak as a necessary condition of dominance. At a given epoch there will be numerous ideas which do not contradict the society's economic structure, but only a very few ideas are the ruling or dominant ones. This entails that a stronger condition must be satisfied for dominance and our claim is that functional optimality, i.e., justification of the reproduction of the economic structure, constitutes this condition for dominance. Marx's references to ideology as an "ideal expression" of the dominance of the ruling class evidently supports our emphasis on functional optimality.

For McMurtry a society's ideas about its social affairs fall into two mutually exclusive classes, those ideas which do not contradict its economic structure and those which contradict it and are consequently selected out. We have a different view, one that is not inconsistent with McMurtry's in certain respects, according to which a society's ideas fall into two categories: the dominant and the non-dominant. To the category of dominant ideas belong ideas which are functionally optimal for a society's economic structure. To the category of non-dominant ideas belong ideas which do not contradict the economic structure, or those which fall within its range of non-contradiction, and those ideas which contradict it and have restricted social currency. While we believe that it is a limitation of McMurtry's account that it accords no significant role to functional optimality, we also acknowledge that the positing of functional optimality as a necessary condition of dominance is not without its problems. The basic problem on this account is to explain how certain "dominant ideas" like theatre of the absurd and deconstruction are functionally optimal for the interests of the dominant class. We also need to address the issue of how some instances of suppression like pornography could be explained in terms of the idea of contradiction to the interests of the dominant class.

We explored the issue of the truth of ideologies within Marx's early concept and maintained that while most

ideologies employed distorting modes of representation and were therefore false, it was possible for a theory or doctrine to legitimise class interests by means of a non-distorting mode of representation. The early concept allows for the possibility that a theory could be ideological in the sense of corresponding to class interests and yet be correct in its representation of social affairs. In other words, the early concept allows for the possibility of scientific ideologies.

According to Marx's later concept ideologies are the dominant conceptions of mode-related social phenomena conforming to the appearances of a society's mode of production, appearances that do not coincide with the essence of those phenomena. Ideologies conform to appearances by reflecting and/or fetishizing them. Marx's opposition of science to ideology is based on his social-ontological distinction between essence and appearance. A scientific theory of society unmaskes appearances and reveals essence, but an ideological theory conforms to appearances and therefore conceals essence. We must acknowledge, however, that there are passages in the mature Marx's works which can be construed as allowing for the possibility of a working-class oriented scientific theory (SW p. 417; Cap. vol. 1 pp. lii-liii).

We suggested that this concept views ideologies as necessarily false because they conform to appearances which do not coincide with essence. The doctrine that the

exchange relations of the capitalist and the worker are free and just is ideological because it conforms to the appearances of the mode of production. These appearances are false in virtue of the fact that in its essence the exchange relation is coercive and exploitative. Therefore, the doctrine in question is necessarily false. A scientific theory of the capitalist mode of production, like Marx's, unmask these appearances and reveals the essence.

The idea that ideologies are functional for the economic interests of the dominant class is, interestingly enough, entailed by the later concept though it is characterized by its emphasis on the conformity of ideology to the appearances of the mode of production. These appearances are themselves functional for the economic interests of the dominant class. The appearance of freedom and justness of exchange between the capitalist and worker preserves and promotes the interests of the capitalist class. Therefore, ideology, in virtue of its conformity to this and other appearances of the capitalist mode of production, turns out to be functional for the interests of the capitalist class. Thus the two concepts cohere with one another in this respect.

The early and later concepts do not cohere in other important respects. For instance, the early concept entails that ideologies are possibly true, but the later concept with its view of ideologies as generally conforming to essence-distorting appearances entails that ideologies

are necessarily false. Further, the early concept allows for the possibility of a scientific theory corresponding to the interests of the dominant class. But the later concept entails that what reveals essence will contradict appearance, and, in virtue of the fact that appearance is functional for the interests of the dominant class in capitalist society, also contradict the interests of the dominant class. It follows that since a scientific theory of capitalist society will reveal essence, it will necessarily contradict the interests of the dominant class. Thus the later concept rules out the possibility of a scientific theory corresponding to the interests of the dominant class. We therefore conclude that Marx's theory of ideology is not completely consistent, though it is constituted of two internally consistent concepts.

This is not to deny that there are significant problems about them. For instance, we suggested that the GI theory conceives of functional optimality for the interests of the dominant class as a necessary, though not sufficient, condition of dominance. Thus although any dominant conception must be functional for the dominant class, it does not follow that functional optimality for the dominant class in itself entails dominance. An important sufficient condition for dominance, of any conception or theory that is functional for the dominant class, in capitalism, consists in what we call compatibility with the paradigm of rationality, i.e., rules

of inference and canons of verification, of the society. In the case of Catholicism in advanced capitalist society, there are important incompatibilities with the paradigm of rationality, viz., scientific canons. Therefore, Catholicism will not be dominant, even though it is functional for the dominance of the capitalist class, because it does not satisfy an important sufficient condition for dominance in advanced capitalist society.

We turn now to a different argument against the GI concept. This one appeals to what may be called the "overcorrespondence" of ideology to class interests, i.e., the idea that the same doctrine or theory may correspond to the interests of different classes or have different and mutually incompatible functions. It is this phenomenon that the Polish scholar Maria Ossowska is alluding to when she argues against the idea that there is some "necessary connection" between a given social theory or doctrine and the interests of a particular class (BM p.353).

Ossowska offers many interesting examples of the "overcorrespondence" of ideology to class interests. The doctrine that the development of society is determined by certain laws, she points out, was functional for the interests of the French bourgeoisie after the revolution, but has also served the interests of the proletariat in the nineteenth century. The doctrine of inherited characteristics may serve the interests of a revolutionary class bent on transforming the existing order and believes

that it alone can do the job because it is endowed with the necessary attributes. But the same doctrine was used in the nineteenth century to legitimize a hierarchic social order by laying down that the son of a manual worker ought to, in virtue of his inherited characteristics, pursue a manual occupation. Ossowska also points out that the doctrine of human rights, in our time, has been invoked by the representatives of the oppressed classes as much as by the representatives of the dominant classes. Social evolutionism has similarly been invoked by idealist thinkers as well as by the Nazis for their profoundly incompatible ends (BM pp.352-353).

Ossowska goes on to say that we need only to hold that there is some "concurrence" or "coincidence" between social doctrines and social conditions (ibid., p.353). But this is just to say that there are no significant connections, causal or functional, between social doctrines and social conditions. This is obviously inconsistent with her functional account of social doctrines like social nomism. What she actually means to say, perhaps, is that the functional relation of a social doctrine to a social class is a contingent one. This is exactly just our earlier idea of the function of a doctrine being a contingent property of it. This is the actual import of Ossowska's examples. Thus it is not an essential or necessary attribute of the doctrine that society develops according to certain laws that it is functional for the interests of

the post-revolutionary French bourgeoisie. It was a contingent property of that doctrine because it was functional for a different class at a later time.

The historical contingency of the very relation of an ideology to a class structure must be taken account of in order to avoid what we call an essentialist mistake about social doctrines: that the very significance or meaning of such doctrines is a function of their correspondence to the interests of a particular class in some epoch. Marxists commit this mistake when they dismiss contemporary liberalism as a "bourgeois doctrine". Marx may have been right, in the context of nineteenth century capitalist society, in regarding "liberal phrases" as mere idealistic expressions of bourgeois interests. But Marxists must show some awareness of liberalism's altered function in the context of advanced capitalist society. That it was functional for bourgeois interests in the nineteenth century does not define the "essence" of liberalism anymore than that it was functional for Stalin's interests defines the "essence" of Russian Marxism.

By way of a concluding remark, we would like to point out that a proponent of the "range interpretation" could see the argument against the essentialist mistake sketched above as detracting from the merit of an account which emphasises functional optimality. We agree that the range interpretation is consistent with the thesis about the historical contingency of relations between ideas and

ruling-class interests, but this is won at the expense of explanatory adequacy in the face of dominance.

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