

Problematizing Ideology and The Ideological Problematic : Althusserian Engagement with the Oxymoron

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ABSTRACT

Ideology conceptualised and perceived of in the larger context of a complex web of social and political intercourse in specific human condition is essential and axiomatic to Althusser's imagination of the concept. In Althusserian imagination, the concept enjoys a vibrantly active presence in the relationship that connects the economic base with cultural, intellectual and ideological superstructure. Manifestation of this phenomenon pronounces itself as an all pervasive element informed with omnipotent dynamism seeping through the institutional and structural order of the state. Objective embedded in this exercise is to engineer the said concept of the individual as *subject* through a process of ideological interpellation. In the pursuit of this endeavour, further attempts are invoked in order to define the conception of a *subject position* with reference to structural concepts. The logical extension of this exercise then encapsulates within itself the putative potentialities of action. Agencies of repression and constraint, in consequence, strive to attain their respective definitions through a convergence of political and psychological forces. To articulate it differently, suggestive is the idea that the chief objective which underlined Althusserian exercise was to subject to critico-analytical scrutiny the techniques (a combination of *Ideological State Apparatus* and *Repressive State Apparatus*) through a complicated interplay of which State exercises dominance and control over its subjects for the purpose of reproduction of Productive power. In consequence, by taking recourse to discussion of the relationship that work as connect between the State and the subjects, Althusser invoked an effort to define ideology as the supreme material power which stands in transcendence over traditional Marxist understanding that celebrated economy as the ultimate power of the capitalist society.

Key Words : Problematizing ideology, Oxymoron, Human condition

INTRODUCTION

Cogitation of ideology with reference to the matrix of social and political intercourse in a specific human condition is fundament to Althusser's imagination of the concept.¹ It is redolent that in Althusserian conception, the concept enjoys a vibrantly active presence in

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the relationship that connects the substructure and superstructure. It, in fact, manifests itself as an ubiquitous element informed with pervasive dynamism seeping through the institutional and structural mechanics of the state. It, further, engineers the concept of the individual as *subject*. In the pursuit of this objective, it also attempts to define the conception of a *subject position* with reference to structural concepts. In consequence, the putative potentialities of action and agencies of repression and constraint come to be defined by a convergence of political and psychological forces. In words different, the chief objective that underlined Althusserian exercise was to subject to critico-analytical scrutiny the techniques (a combination of *Ideological State Apparatus* and *Repressive State Apparatus*)² through the recourse of which State exercises dominance and control over its subjects for the purpose of reproduction of Productive power. In consequence, through a discussion of the relationship that operate as a connect between the State and the subjects, Althusser proposed to define ideology as the supreme material power which stands in transcendence over traditional Marxist understanding that celebrated economy as the ultimate power of the capitalist society.

Perceiving ideology : Refractions from the Althusserian Prism

The narrative of ideology in Althusserian theorisation, therefore, suffers from an absence of history as according to him the agency through which it transmits itself and consequently gets submerged back into tends to be invariably material and institutional forms of life. Thus, as follow-up to Antonio Gramsci, in Althusserian schemata, critical illustrations of the operative manifestation of ideology get communicated through the medium of theology. On a note of explanation, Althusser endeavours to draw our attention to the mechanisms/processes through the recourse of which human subject is “addressed/called” or “celebrated/hailed” or *interpellated* into the political domain. The analytical problematic for Althusser, though, is to maintain the criticality of focus on the instant of “calling”. This idea is of significant importance because it is in that moment the constitutive cum transformational process of the interpellated subject is set into motion wherein it is not only created but is also subsumed by the very act of acknowledgement of, as Althusser would like to suggest, “*It is I*”. This is indicative of the understanding that approached from this perception; one is perennially dealing with ideologies whose exposition take place through fluidities and not as a monolithic doctrine that may otherwise manifest in the sphere of family and social life, in the school and church as well as political parties, government and many other elements that inform the human condition. Thus as stated above a re-contextualisation of Marxist thought enables Althusser to liberate it from the limitations of doctrinal dogmas along with that of the subject matter. Also a re-contextualised expansive reading of Marx, help Althusser to develop a comprehension of the linkages between the positions of the subject to that of institutional apparatus. Comprehension of the mechanics of this relationship, further, help him conceptualise the processes through which the human subject may emancipate itself from the bounds that at the same time operate as both the source of sustenance as well as vexation of identity.

An elaborative exercise focussed at a comprehension of Althusserian cognisance in conjunction with Marx’s perception of human condition and social structure beckons us to acknowledge the assertion that “ideology is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group”.³ It is this conception of the concept

due to which, according to Althusser, 'Marx refrained from providing a theory of ideology in spite of many efforts beginning with *German Ideology* to that of *Capital*'.⁴ Ideology having been informed with an absence of history was also due to the fact that "any project of a theory of ideology *in general*, and not a theory of particular ideologies, which, whatever their form (religious, ethical, legal, political), always express class positions".⁵ This, in consequence, negates all possibilities of a theory of ideology in general as all efforts at generating "a theory of ideologies depends in the last resort on the history of social formations, and thus of the modes of production combined in social formations, and of the class struggles which develop in them".⁶ Dependence of every effort of a theorisation of ideology on the history of social formations leads Marx to, further, think of ideology as an 'imaginary construction'.⁷ The concept is presented by him "in a plainly positivist context."⁸ He, in fact, conceives of it "as a pure illusion, a pure dream, *i.e.*, as nothingness."⁹ "All its reality", has been posited by him as, "external to it".¹⁰ For Marx, therefore, ideology is "an imaginary assemblage, a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the 'day's residues' from the only full and positive reality, that of the concrete history of concrete material individuals materially producing their existence".¹¹ Approached from this perspective ideology, for Marx, "has no history in *The German Ideology*, since its history is outside it, where the only existing history is, the history of concrete individuals, etc".¹²

Althusser opines that an element of negativity is resident in the above proposition of Marx as it is incorporative of oppositional ideas. Ideology conceptualised as nothing but pure dream, even if manufactured by the instrumentalities of control and not being a consequence of the alienation produced by the division of labour, tends to be situated in the intellectual province of "negative determination".¹³ Moreover, ideology having no history is not tantamount to an absence of history in it. Althusser, rather, held the opinion that "ideologies" may "have a history of their own" which, however, "is determined in the last instance by the class struggle".¹⁴ Positivity of this opinion becomes manifest with the acknowledgement of the notion that the "peculiarity of ideology is that it is endowed with a structure and a functioning such as to make it a non-historical reality, *i.e.* an *omni-historical* reality, in the sense in which that structure and functioning are immutable, present in the same form throughout what we can call history,...*i.e.* the history of class societies".¹⁵

In Althusserian understanding, Marx's proposition that ideology is a 'representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' has twin elements associated with it. The first element, in this context, deals with the object that finds representation in the imaginary form of ideology whereas the second concerns itself with the materiality of ideology.¹⁶ Implicitly suggestive, then, becomes the idea that if correspondence to reality is alien to the realm of ideologies and they in their elemental constitution are nothing more than an illusion, there is nonetheless an admittance in this formulation of the proposition that ideologies "do make allusion to reality, and that they need only be 'interpreted' to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world".¹⁷ Interpretation of this suppositious transposition of ideology punctuated with the condition imposed by the hypothetical presupposition stated just before might lead us to the inference that in ideology 'men represent their real conditions of existence to themselves in an imaginary form'.¹⁸ This exposition, however, steer us to a further problematic informed with much pertinence that

“why do men ‘need’ this imaginary transposition of their real conditions of existence in order to ‘represent to themselves’ their real conditions of existence?”.¹⁹

According to Althusser, more than one approach has been invoked to seek an effective explanation for the interrogatory remark mentioned above. Elements of falsity and inexactitude, however, reside in both the approaches and they in turn, therefore, are informed with fallaciousness which renders them invalid in substantial measure. The first explanation whose intellectual antecedents have been traced back to eighteenth century rationalism perceives of the origin of this phenomenon in the ‘deceit and lies’ of ‘priests and despots’. It argues that “there is ... a cause for the imaginary transposition of the real conditions of existence: that cause is the existence of a small number of cynical men who base their domination and exploitation of the ‘people’ on a falsified representation of the world which they have imagined in order to enslave other minds by dominating their imaginations”.²⁰ This need of men to indulge in imaginary transposition of their real conditions of existence, therefore, to eighteenth century thought, constituted the axiomatic reason for the emergence of ideology. The second approach, associated with Marx but in effect taken over by him from Ludwig Feuerbach situates the origins of the “alienation in the imaginary of the representation of men’s real conditions of existence”.²¹ Marx’s understanding of the phenomenon stood in much difference from that of the eighteenth century explanation as it neither identified ‘priests and despots’ nor their “active imagination and the passive imagination of their victims”²² responsible for the emergence of the phenomenon. He rather believed that the actual “cause is the material alienation which reigns in the conditions of existence of men themselves”.²³ He was also in agreement with Feuerbachian idea which was suggestive of the opinion that “men make themselves an alienated representation of their conditions of existence”.²⁴ Moreover, these conditions of existence, according to him, are themselves alienating since they are informed and dominated by ‘alienated labour’ which otherwise constitute the essence of alienated society.²⁵ In words different, it is suggest that Marx, under the spell of Feuerbach, upheld the belief that the material alienation of the subject borne out of the alienating conditions was existence was the primal cause for the subjects to indulge in the transposition of reality in the form of ideology. Althusser, however, as stated above stood in much difference with this proposition.

In the Althusserian schemata, “all these interpretations...take literally the thesis which they presuppose, and on which they depend, *i.e.*, what is reflected in the imaginary representation of the world found in an ideology is the conditions of existence of men, *i.e.*, their real world”.²⁶ According to him, “it is not their (subjects) real conditions of existence, their real world, that ‘men’ ‘represent to themselves’ in ideology”.²⁷ Rather, in ideology “it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them (men)”.²⁸ In words different, it is to suggest that according to Althusserian cognition it is not the actual ‘real world’ that human subjects represent in ideology but rather an image of the imagination of ‘their relationship with this real world’ that in actuality finds representation in it. Moreover, this ‘relationship’ also forms the axiomatic constitutive element of “every ideological, *i.e.*, imaginary, representation of real world”.²⁹ Dominant and significative presence of this ‘element’ in ideological imaginations, further entail Althusser to read it as elemental ‘cause’ pregnant with a putative explanation for the “imaginary distortion of the ideological

representation of the real world”.³⁰ Thus, a statement can be invoked wherein a thesis can be advocated with the suggestion that imaginary nature of subject’s relationship with the ‘real’ conditions of existence is the actual causal factor for all the imaginary distortions observant in all ideology. This argument gets further credence when Althusser opines that “all ideology represents in its necessarily imaginary distortions not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them), but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of the individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live”.³¹ Althusserian engagement with the theme, however, does not come to an end at this point. He annexes a further question to the discussion. Thus, according to him the interrogatory remark, “why is the representation given to individuals of their (individual) relation to the social relations which govern their existence and their collective and individual life necessarily an imaginary relation”³² must replace the question of the ‘cause’ of the imaginary distortion of the real relations in ideology. He, further, opines that investigations must also be conducted into the nature of this imaginarity.³³ Analyses conducted in this manner with the question posited above then, according to him, ‘explodes’ the solutions hitherto provided for an intelligible cognition of the problem.³⁴

Moving with the premise that ‘ideas’ or ‘representations’, the constitutive elements of ideology do not have an ideal or spiritual existence but a material one, Althusser makes the submission that “an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices”³⁵ are, in effect, material.³⁶ Materiality, therefore, is the primal idea that needs to be emphasised upon while assessing the dynamics that inform the existence and operations of an ideology. Inherent materiality resident within ideological modes of thought and formations provides Althusser with the opportunity to further investigate the conditions that inform the ‘individuals’ resident within the domain of “ideology *i.e.* in a determinate representation of the world”³⁷. Note may be taken of the point that in Althusserian comprehension imaginary distortion of the determinate representation of the world is borne and is also dependent upon on its imaginary relation to its conditions of existence. In words different, it is to suggest that imaginary distortion attains the form of an existential reality due to the dependence of imaginary relation to the relations of production and to class relations. Ideology, thus, in this context is being read as equivalent to an imaginary relation to real relations. Imaginary relation is further considered to be endowed with a material existence.³⁸

The exercise of the ‘free choice’ of the subject in a supposed state of full consciousness in terms of participation “in certain regular practices which are those of the ideological apparatus on which ‘depend’ the ideas”³⁹ or adoption of certain behavioural pattern or still the invocation of a ‘practical attitude’ are all endeavours, according to Althusserian understanding, that, in effect, are indulgences which facilitate the transportation of the subject into an illusory domain. Ipso facto, however, it should be recognised that ideology as encapsulated in ideological representation is symptomatic of a forceful recognition of a conception or belief that “every ‘subject’ endowed with a consciousness and belief in the ‘ideas’ that his consciousness inspires in him and freely accepts, must ‘act according to his ideas’”.⁴⁰ He is, further, expected to inscribe “his own ideas as free subject in the actions of

his material practice”.⁴¹ Failure to do so, would render the subject be classified as ‘wicked’.⁴²

The question that we, now, need to resolve is that can the ‘subject’ be really wicked? Is ‘wickedness’ a residual element of the very constitution of the subject? Althusser would propose negative to this proposition. For him if the action of the subject stands in deviation of the intended function of his belief, it is, in that case, symptomatic of the existence of other ideas in the latter’s domain of cognitive universe. The latter, nonetheless, continues to remain a manifestation of the same idealist scheme in spite of the fact that it might manifest itself as ‘inconsistent’, cynical or perverse. However, being in effect an element of the same idealist scheme it operates much in conjunction and consonance with it. Thus, a mere appearance of the multiplicity of ideas, in effect, is not an indicator of the fact that there indeed is the availability of more than one opinion or choice. Even if it be accepted that there indeed exist more ideas than one, their relation to the same idealist scheme renders the choice bereft of much intelligible sense.

Discussion above leads us to make the submission that the structure of ideology of ideology is such that in spite of the embedded imaginary distortion, it does not fall short of extending recognition to the assertion that actions are the chief bearers of the ‘ideas’ of a human subject. If they are not, they nonetheless ought to be. To this formulation that is ideologies express themselves in reference to actions, Althusser, would suggest that the investigative focus of the exercise be shifted to the assertion that it is actions that are rather inserted into practices. Thus, materiality makes an inroad into the existence of the ideas of an individual’s (single subject) belief. In words different, individual subject’s “ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject”.⁴³ Existence and insertion of materiality into the action-practice combine leads us into a terrain that is marked by a disappearance of the notion that ideas have their existential location in the idealist or spiritual domain. It, further, urges us to invoke the proposition that ideas bearing the ideal or spiritual attestations have in their existence actions or practises regimented by rituals defined in the ‘last instance’ by an ideological apparatus inscribed in unmistakable terms. This would urge us to also read the actions of the subject as emanations borne out of the directional regime of the system. The order that determines this structure and the channelisation of command therein would entail it to operate by situating ideology in an ideological apparatus defined my materialism along with a prescription of material practices governed by a material ritual. It is in this setup wherein practices exist and have their operation in reference to material actions of a subject acting in all consciousness and in accordance to his belief.⁴⁴ The preceding discussion, thus, succeeds in displaying that the notion of *subject* has attained a critical importance in a discussion on the operation of ideology in an apparatus. Compared to the centrality of the notion of subject, other intellections such as consciousness, belief, and actions are relegated to an inconsiderable position. Criticality of the *subject* persuade Althusser to propose further theses which opine that all practices exist within and in reference to ideology and every ideology is by as well as for the subjects.⁴⁵

Interpellation by Ideology: Transformation of Individuals as Subjects

Interpellation by ideology of individuals as subjects, therefore, take us into an intellectualive

domain where an invocation can be made with the suggestion that beyond the realm of ‘by the subject and for the subjects’ there cannot be an existence of any ideology. To articulate it further it is to connote that to imagine the existence of ideology beyond the pale of concrete subjects would be to indulge in an exercise of intellectual mystification. Rather it is the category of the subject along with its functioning that provides the ideology with the possibility of a destination and objective. In words, different, it is the existence of the ideology defined in reference to the being of the category of the concrete subject that makes the former substantially sententious. In consequence to this formulation, Althusser would opine that the substratal constitutive element of all ideology is the category of the subject. Thus, “the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects”.⁴⁶ The interplay involved in this act of dual constitution further defines the primary operational trajectories of various ideologies. It is, therefore, significant that the operation of ideologies amidst the material forms of existence renders any other existential possibility as bereft of much sententiousness.

For Althusser, ‘obviousness of the subject’ without any manifest problematic is an ideological effect. In fact, it is the elementary ideological effect.⁴⁷ The idea of ‘obviousness’, however, coalesces within its ambit functions of ideological ‘recognition’ along with its converse ‘misrecognition’. Given ante existence of the subject, further, enables it to be a constant participant in the immutable practice of the rituals of ideological recognition. For the subject, this activity also becomes the source of endorsement, assurance and approval for it to be and operate as “concrete, individual, distinguishable and irreplaceable subjects”.⁴⁸ It is to be taken note of that the performance of the ritual of ideological recognition with reference to ‘obviousness’, ‘truth’ and ‘error’ functions in the rituals of the most elementary quotidian life.⁴⁹ For the subject, though, this recognition operates as source of validation for the crystallising consciousness of interminable exercise of ideological recognition. It, however, does not provide us with the details of the knowledge of the techniques through which this mechanism operates. Knowledge of this technique is though must for an attempt towards the cognition of both a scientific subject-less discourse on ideology as well as for the development of a discourse that shall have the potential to make a break with the ideology itself.

Operating on the premise that ‘concrete’ leads to recognition and abstraction to ‘thinkable thought’ resulting into the constitution of knowledge, Althusser, now, posits that “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” through a recourse to the “functioning of the category of the subject”.⁵⁰ Embedded in this suggestion is the proposition that a distinction be invoked between the categories of concrete individuals and concrete subjects.⁵¹ Functional and operational dimension of the ideology, according to Althusser, entails its performance in a specificity of way wherein it enables ideology to conduct the recruitment of subjects from the entirety of the mass that is constituted of the individuals. This process, in words different, can be defined as the transformation of the total mass of the individuals into subjects by a process that Althusser has identified as “interpellation” or “hailing” performed through or conducted as everyday practice.⁵² An element of interchangeability, therefore, comes to inform both the processes of the existence of ideology and hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects.⁵³

For Althusser, the ideological dispositive operates in a way wherein the occurrences supposedly located outside the pale of ideology should be read as being situated very much within the internal domain of the ideology itself. Contrarily, what seems to be positioned inside domain of ideology, in effect, occurs outside its folds. It is this operational aspect of the apparatus that enables those entities that are situated very much within its expansive fields to have the misconstrued notion of being outside its domain. The effect of this ostensible illusion is the “practical degeneration of ideological character of ideology by ideology”⁵⁴ itself. To put it differently, it is to suggest that ideology refrains from proclaiming itself as ideological. It, therefore, becomes imperative to propose that a location outside the pale of ideology becomes an absolute necessity in the domain of scientific knowledge to state that one is or was in ideology. It needs to be taken note of that interestingly the identification of the ‘other’ operating from within the ideology tends to be applicable for that ‘other’ only and never to the person suggesting so. This brings us to an oxymoron situation. The idea of an ‘outside’ domain is alien to ideology but it stands in equal measure as indubitable that ‘science and reality’ are situated very much outside of ideological domain.⁵⁵

The act of interpellation of individuals into subjects extends ideologies with an element of eternity. Rendition of individuals as subject, therefore, attains invariably perpetual and sempiternal status. Consequent to this, the status of individuals with reference to subjects, a perdurable conversion to which has already taken place, gets transformed into an ‘abstraction’. This proposition, however, brings into existence a paradox.

According to Althusser, the given subjectification of the individual even at a pre-natal stage is a plain reality for everyone. Taking recourse to Freudian insights, he endeavours to explain that the ideological ritual celebrated as a ‘happy ritual’ situated around the ‘birth’ of the individual extends an element of ‘abstraction’ to the latter with respect to their conversion into given-eternal subject-hood.⁵⁶ Thus, for him the “familial ideological configuration”⁵⁷ makes an individual even at the level of a child a subject or rather a constituent-subject of ideology. Having said so, Althusser now embarks upon a survey of the strategies invoked to put this process in implementation.

It needs to be taken note of that in the Althusserian schemata, operational features of every ideology is marked by a process that necessitates the “duplication of the Subject into subjects and of the Subject itself into a subject-Subject”.⁵⁸ The structural feature of all ideology premised upon the ‘interpellation of all individuals as subjects with reference to the Unique or an Absolute Subject’ is akin to being a mirror-edifice and its nature is essentially defined by it being primarily doubly specular. Thus, for a continual functioning of the ideology, this mirror-dualising process which is constitutive of the latter is an essential necessity. The absoluteness of this necessity becomes manifest when ideologies attempt to communicate to the interpellated Subject that its being has an intellectual perseity or actuality only with reference to the centred existence of the Absolute subject. The centred existence of the Absolute subject, in turn, operates with the objective to interpellate a sempiternity of individuals around it, intention of that being the development of a “mirror-connexion” through a recourse to which the subjection of the subjects to the Subject can be undertaken. In the Subject, it is intend to provide the subjects with an image of themselves on which they can contemplate both their present and future with a presumed certainty to visualise a concern that shall be of

effect to both the entities.⁵⁹ Transposition of this uncritical absolute faith in the Subject by the subjects is akin to the subsuming of the critical agency of the latter in a way that can be read as submission made to the idea of *fete accompli* albeit not with the element of despondency but an enthusiasm operating on a positive note. Pulchritudinous component, however, critically resident in the performance of this phenomenon is “the mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subjects’ recognition of each other, and finally the subject’s recognition of himself” with the given faith that “everything really is so, and that on condition that the subjects recognise what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be alright.”⁶⁰ The latent gaze for a call for discipline in this formulate agnate to a virtual annihilation of the critical existence of the subject. What, however, makes it distinctive is that this subsuming of the self is brought upon by itself being a product of the process of interpellation.

Operating within the domain of this matrix, the multitude of self-disciplining subject ‘work’ by themselves with the exception of a few termed as ‘bad subjects’. It is the necessity invoked by the idea of discipline of the latter that brings about an invocation of one of the many components of the repressive State apparatus.⁶¹ Intervention of and by the elements of repressive State apparatus does not, however, constitute the dominant ingredient of this narrative. It is rather the ‘self-disciplining’ process that defines its operational features and contours. Processes and practices that shall have the potential to enable ‘discipline’ become habitudes of ‘self-discipline’ and are iterated as axiomatic constituents of the rituals that govern the performance and practice of the Ideological State Apparatus. Thus, the Ideological State Apparatus becomes the embodiment where ‘self-disciplining’ subjects find the realisation of their selves in a concretised manner.⁶²

Let us now explore the operational dynamics of the ‘self-disciplining’ subject(s). The operative exercise of the subject through a method of self-reference lies in the domain of ambiguity. Interpreted ordinarily, the intellective meaning of the concept ‘subject’ would entail the following ideas: (1) a free subjectivity, a centre of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions; (2) a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission.⁶³ As per Althusserian interpretation, it is the latter meaning attached to the notion that provides us with a vantage point to gaze into this ambiguity. It is to because it is pregnant with the potential to provide us with a glimpse of the “reflection of the effect which produces it”.⁶⁴ The ‘effect’ in the present discussion has reference to the idea that the “individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, *i.e.* in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection, *i.e.* in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection ‘all by himself’. There are no subjects except by and for their subjection. That is why they ‘work by themselves’”.⁶⁵

Response of the subject encapsulated in the phrase “so be it!” should, therefore, not be read as a statement of despondency but is rather symptomatic of the subjugating effect that the apparatus of the State operating with exclusive reference to ideology aspires to achieve. The greater objective the State, if it be read as the instrument of control and regimentation is, however, to continuously reproduce and reintroduce ideological intervention in the ‘consciousness’ of the quotidian life of the individual-subjects. Also for an assured reproduction of the relations of production in reference to the processes of production and circulation, it

becomes an indispensable imperative that this response be imprinted “in the attitudes of the individual-subjects occupying the posts which the socio-technical division of labour assigns to them in production, exploitation, repression, ideolisation, scientific practice, etc.”⁶⁶ Thus, in actuality, in the nucleus of this entire process that is the “mechanism of the mirror recognition of the Subject and of the individuals interpellated as subjects” is hidden the dynamics that most often than not is a subject of much ignorance that is an assurance resident “in the very forms of recognition (ideology=misrecognition/ignorance) is indeed, in the last resort, the reproduction of the relations of production and of the relations deriving from them”.⁶⁷ To state it differently, in actuality the idea that primarily dominates the operative technique of this apparatus is to seek an uninterrupted continuity of the process that the instrument of the state with recourse to ideological intervention that seek to uphold.

Theoretically the processes through which the functioning of the Superstructure and its mode of intervention in the Infrastructure as discussed above seem to nearing a logical conclusion. However, it still continues to reside in the domain of elusive abstraction. It has been argued above that as an essential ingredient of this process the Ideological State Apparatus contribute in substantial measure to this reproduction. Althusser, in consequence, opines that the realisation of the reproduction of the relations of production occurs through the “processes in which the training of the workers is ‘completed’ that is the ‘work’ which the socio-technical division of labour assigns to them”.⁶⁸ Thus, the effect of different ideologies comes to be realised in the internal mechanism of these processes.

In a society defined by antagonistic classes, relations of exploitation are inherently embedded in the relations of production. Also for a class ridden system to be in a position of control and power it has to indulge in a continuous and ceaseless process of reduplication and reinvention of the techniques through which it wields authority and regulation. Sustenance of the ruling class is primarily drawn from the reproduction of the relations of production. To attain that objective, it cannot remain content with a mere operation of the ‘technical division’ of labour. In fact, according to Althusser, every ‘technical’ division or organisation of labour operate as a “form and mask of a social/class division and organisation of labour”.⁶⁹ In consequence to this formulation, it is deducible that every attempt at a reproduction of the relations of production, in effect, turns into a class enterprise informed with an entrenched class struggle between the ruling and the exploited classes.⁷⁰

Critical residence of the ideologies in the relations of production also renders them as sites inhabited with class struggle. Contrarily, it also makes them instruments that contribute in substantial measure to the class struggle that otherwise informs reproduction of the relations for production. Ideologies, hence, find their actualisation through the workings of institutions in relationship with their rituals and practices. To put it differently, suggestive is the idea that ideological objectives seek their realisation in the workings of the Ideological State Apparatus. Thus, perceived from an analytical vantage point, the analysis above reinforces the suggestion that state and its apparatuses become intellectual units of comprehension only when approached from the point of view of it being a mechanism of class struggle entrusted with the objective to ensure class oppression and an assurance for the continuation of the conditions responsible for exploitation and its reproduction. Emergent result of this context is the class struggle between the antagonistic classes. Elaborated further it shall amount to the suggestion that

any reference to the “class struggle of the ruling class” in effect shall mean the “resistance, revolt and class struggle of the ruled class”.⁷¹ Propositions analysed above lead us to draw the conclusion that, however, stands in much oppositional contradiction with the understanding and interpretation of the working of ideology that Arendt had made invocations to in her assessments of the ‘ideologically inspired regimes’. Ideology, in Arendt’s understanding was akin to a ‘motion in a state of permanent suspension’ as it is neither informed by or with any kind of struggle from within or without. Althusser, contrary to it, has demonstrated that the operations of ideology in reference to the Ideological State Apparatus are neither puerile nor static. On the contrary, it is much alive and informed with a ceaseless process of transformative action.

Transition/ conversion of the ideology of the ruling class into that of the dominant mode of thought in a social formation, it has been held, is not engineered by recourse to entities extraterrestrial to societal complex or by the completion of a process that enables a class to seize state power. It, however, attains the position of the ruling ideology by the virtue of the installation of Ideological State Apparatus in which it resides as deeply embedded. It is also in the workings of the latter that this ideology is actualised and seeks its further self realisation. The process is, however, not a smooth self-generated procedure but is rather fraught with bitter and continuous class struggle directed initially against the former ruling classes and their entrenched positions in the old and new Ideological State Apparatuses and later against the exploited classes.⁷²

Class struggles that inform the Ideological State Apparatuses are, in effect, only one dimension of this multi-dimensional process and have manifestations beyond the realm of the latter. The effect of the transition of an ideology into that of the ruling mode of thought through recourse to Ideological State Apparatuses traverses a long distance. In fact, much beyond the possibilities of intellective tangibility for it seeks its sustenance from sources situated at diverse lengths and complex locations. Operative working of ideologies in a social formation, thus, become sententious engagements only when perceived from the lens of class engagements/struggles. This process, however, is not limited to an interpretation of the techniques through which the ruling ideology finds its manifestation in the operative procedures of the Ideological State Apparatus. Neither does an analysis of the class struggles that is inherently resident within the latter help in having an epistemic grasp of the procedures that define the Ideological State Apparatus as a site of high stake and contestation. Given the limitations though, it is true in equal measure that Ideological State Apparatuses also form both the method and medium through which the actualisation of the ideology of the ruling class undergoes a process of crystallisation. In equal measure, it is to be acknowledged that it is through this very process that ideology of the ruling class embarks upon an epistemic assessment of the form and the putative possibilities of confrontation of the ideology of the subservient/ruled class for ideologies do not have their conception in the workings of the Ideological State Apparatuses but they emerge from the social classes locked in contestation of class struggle. In words different, ideologies are expressive statements of social classes and accordingly germinate amidst the conditions of existence, practices, experiences and struggle that exercise a defining influence upon the former.⁷³

REFERENCES

1. For a general engagement with the theme under discussion, see Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation) (January - April 1969) in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1971, pp. 127-186 (Translated from the French by Ben Brewster)
2. Ibid, pp. 140-148
3. Ibid, p.158
4. Ibid
5. Ibid, p.159
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
8. Ibid
9. Ibid
10. Ibid, p.161
11. Ibid, p.160
12. Ibid
13. Ibid
14. On an explanatory note, Althusser opines, “[f]or on the one hand, I think it is possible to hold that ideologies have a history of their own (although it is determined in the last instance by the class struggle); and on the other, I think it is possible to hold that ideology in general has no history, not in a negative sense (its history is external to it), but in an absolutely positive sense.”Ibid, p.161. In this context, emphasis may be added to the Althusserian proposition that ‘History of ideology in the last instance is determined by the class struggle’.
15. Ibid
16. Ibid, p.162
17. Ibid
18. Ibid, p.163
19. Ibid
20. Ibid
21. Ibid
22. Ibid
23. Ibid, p.164
24. Ibid
25. See Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” in Robert C. Tucker (Ed.) *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Second Edition, W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London, 1978, p.26-52. Also see Karl

Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, PrometheusBooks, New York, 1988

26. See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation) (January - April 1969) in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1971, p.164 (Translated from the French by Ben Brewster)
27. Ibid
28. Ibid
29. Ibid
30. Ibid
31. Ibid, p.164-165
32. Ibid, p.165
33. Ibid
34. Ibid
35. Ibid, p.166
36. In the context of a discussion on the ideological state apparatuses and their practices, Althusser suggests that each element of the latter is the realisation of an ideology *i.e.*, the unity of these different regional ideologies, religious, ethical, legal, political and aesthetic, etc. They also operate under an assurance provided to them by their subjugation to the rulingideology. See Ibid, pp.165-166.
37. Determinate representation of the world, here, would mean the representations dealing with the world of religion, ethics, etc. For further detail, see Ibid, p.166
38. Ibid, p.167
39. Ibid
40. Ibid
41. Ibid, p.168
42. Ibid
43. Ibid, p.169
44. Ibid, p.170
45. Ibid
46. Ibid, p.171
47. Ibid
48. Ibid, p.172
49. Ibid, p.172-173
50. Ibid, p.173
51. Althusser, however, cautions us that at this stage existence of the concrete subjects are dependent upon the support of concrete individuals. Ibid, p.174

52. Ibid
53. Ibid, p.174-176
54. Ibid, p.175
55. Ibid
56. Ibid, p.176
57. This has reference to 'ideological constraint and pre-appointment', rituals situated around 'birth' and of 'rearing' and then 'education' in the family, etc. For details, see Ibid.
58. Ibid, p.180
59. This has reference to the 'Theological idea of the Almighty'. See Ibid
60. Ibid, p.181. On an elaborative count, Althusser while enunciating this point further mentions in the footnote to this argument, "Hegel is (unknowingly) an admirable 'theoretician' of ideology insofar as he is a 'theoretician' of Universal Recognition who unfortunately ends up in the ideology of Absolute Knowledge. Feuerbach is an astonishing 'theoretician' of the mirror connexion, who unfortunately ends up in the ideology of the Human Essence. To find the material with which to construct a theory of the guarantee, we must turn to Spinoza.
61. Ibid
62. Althusser opines that this voluntary conformist behaviour of the subject manifests itself by the latter's recognition of the "existing state of affairs" with the added faith that "it really is true" and "it is so and not otherwise". The subjects' subservience to the ideas such as the "obedience of God, to their conscience, to the priest, ..., to the boss, to the engineer" further stand as operative testimonials of this disciplinary process. In other words, "their concrete, material behaviour is simply the inscription in life" of the performative need of the Ideological State Apparatus. For further details, see Ibid
63. Ibid, p.182
64. Ibid
65. Ibid
66. Ibid
67. Ibid, p.182-183
68. Socio-Technical division of labour, here, would have reference to the subjection of workers to the division of labour in the processes of "production, exploitation, repression, ideolisation, scientific practice, etc". For further reference, see Ibid, p.183
69. Ibid
70. Ibid, p.184
71. Ibid
72. Ibid, p.185
73. Ibid, p.185-186
