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IDEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND CINEMA FICTIONS

by

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Abstract

Ideological analyses of cinema fictions usually employ a methodology using the critical Marxist concept of discursive strategies that are used to spuriously account for realities. With the changes to the international strategic power balance and the use of overwhelming firepower in the pursuance of what is perceived to be the national interest, cinema fictions have begun to reflect this dangerous world. This thesis argues that a purely ideological analysis is inadequate to the task of interpreting contemporary political cinema texts, and it considers the use of Foucauldian concepts of power and power relations as supplementary to ideological analysis. The application to two cinema texts shows that the concepts used are not mutually exclusive, and Foucault’s thought is especially appropriate to these political cinema fictions. This is a novel approach as it has traditionally been thought that Foucault’s theory of discourse was developed as a counter to ideological analysis. But the research conducted here shows that Foucault’s criticism was aimed at the Marxist concept of ideology and as a consequence he suggested that ideology be treated as one element in a broader discourse of power relations. This is the approach that has been successfully adopted here.
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Introduction

The disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a process that culminated in 1991, brought about a unipolar world in which the only superpower, the United States, no longer feels constrained in using its overwhelming firepower against any country that it perceives as posing a challenge to its power and hegemony. It has also conspicuously used techniques of torture, it is argued here, to assert its power. This use of power has been reflected in Cinema fictions, especially in the genre of political films.

Traditionally, however, these narratives have usually been analysed through the symptomatic reading of the text which reveals its ideological grounding.¹ The changes that were introduced in film theory post-1968 were explicitly political, analysing film texts from a Marxist perspective.² Importantly, film theory incorporated concepts gleaned from theoretical analyses which ‘became assimilated by Anglo-American film culture, diffusion rather than ‘application’ in any strict sense … [being] the order of the day’.³ Despite the often valid criticisms of Marxist theory, some of the concepts incorporated into film theory remain extremely useful. But given the global changes in major power relations, a purely ideological analysis is no longer adequate to analyse film texts which depict the overwhelming use of force, and the violent resistance to it.

Michel Foucault’s analysis of power provides a critical methodology that can be used to access the power relations incorporated within the film text, and this is attempted here.

¹ For an example, see David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, Film Art: An Introduction, (McGraw-Hill, 2001), pp.387-391.
However, as is apparent from the literature survey, it is generally believed that Michel Foucault is critical of the concept of ideology and, consequently, there is a dearth of literature which incorporates Foucauldian concepts in ideological analyses.\(^4\) However, Foucault’s criticism is directed at the Marxist concept of ideology, and the economic determinism that characterises Marxist theory. Foucault argues that ideology should be viewed as one element in a broader discourse which is historically specific. Further, ideology should be investigated with regard to ‘the system of formation of its objects, its types of encunciation, its concepts, its theoretical choices. It is to treat it as one practice among others’.\(^5\) And the latter may include political and economic discursive practices.\(^6\)

This thesis is novel in that it uses both ideological and Foucauldian concepts, especially of power relations, the creation of subjectivity and reversals of power, to analyse two political film texts: *Syriana* (2005) and *The Battle of Algiers* (1965). Primarily because this is a novel approach, the political, economic, and cultural elements of each film text, in addition to ideological elements, are discussed at some length to elucidate not just the existence of these factors but their interplay. What emerges is a complex and more nuanced analysis than might have resulted from a purely ideological analysis.

The film texts analysed are especially appropriate here because they are concerned with asymmetric power relations within a local and an international context. Both texts depict explicit scenes of torture and the use of overwhelming force by an ‘alien’ power. However, *Syriana* is more contemporary especially in the context of the Gulf War, the continuing occupation of Iraq, the images of torture from Abu Ghraib, and also the threat to ‘liberate’

\(^4\) John Frow’s analysis is an exception and is discussed below.
\(^6\) Ibid.
Iran. Foucault is particularly relevant here with his emphasis on how power is inscribed on the body.

It is because Marxist concepts of ideology have been incorporated into film theory, and the contemporary criticism of their usefulness, that the thesis critically discusses the Marxist theory of ideology in detail before considering its relevance to film theory. Foucault’s methodologies of archaeology and genealogy, in addition to his concepts of power relations and power/knowledge are discussed in an attempt to elucidate Foucault’s thought, and to provide an alternative view of how ideology might be conceived; it also introduces the factor of power relations that is so dominant in the film texts. The application of these concepts to the film texts has shown that they are not mutually exclusive, and that it is possible to retain a critical concept of ideology and to apply it to a text that is also analysed in terms of power relations.

The thesis begins with a discussion of Foucault’s thought and his critical methodologies, followed by the Marxist theory of ideology, and the ideological analysis in film theory. Finally, the two film texts are analysed using a critical concept of ideology and Foucault’s concept of power relations in a broad discourse that includes political, economic and cultural elements.

Literature Survey

There is a voluminous literature on Foucault, but there does not appear to be a great deal of consensus on the utility of his concepts and his thought. Michèle Barrett’s *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* is extremely useful in that it focuses on the divergence
between Foucauldian and Marxist thought. It also provides an extended discussion on the varying concepts of ideology in Marxism. However, Barrett is misleading in suggesting that Foucault discounts the concept of ideology altogether in favour of his concept of discourse. She does however, caution against taking Foucault’s critics at face value and notes:

Garry Gutting has pointed out that various critiques (including that of Habermas) of Foucault’s supposed relativism are based on passages where ‘Foucault is not speaking in his own name’ but is giving a lengthy exposition of others.

It is this confusion in the literature that prompted a close reading of Foucault’s texts such as *The Archaeology of Knowledge, Power/Knowledge, The Order of Things, The History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish.* For secondary literature on Foucault, Gary Gutting’s *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* and (edited) *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* provide a nuanced and well argued analysis of Foucault’s thought. Paul Rabinow’s (edited) *The Foucault Reader* also provides a useful grounding in Foucault’s thought. Apart from Hubert Dreyfus’s and Paul Rabinow’s *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* which gives a very lucid analysis of Foucault’s thought, a general critical source is David Couzens Hoy (edited) *Foucault: A Critical Reader.* Supplemented by

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8 Ibid., p.144.
Chantal Mouffe and Judith Butler’s discussion of the problems regarding subjectivity and agency, this literature addresses some of the most problematic areas in Foucault’s work. R. J. Hollingdale’s *Nietzsche* and Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* provide an excellent introduction to Nietzsche’s thought. Hollingdale’s sympathetic view gives a useful entry into Nietzsche’s thought which Gutting then evaluates more critically.

Terry Eagleton’s *Ideology: An Introduction* and (edited) *Ideology* give an extended discussion of the various interpretations of ideology in Marxist thought. The latter, in which articles and excerpts from a range of thinkers that have developed Marxist thought is reprinted, is extremely useful in tracing the progression of this thought. Importantly, Eagleton’s critical concept of ideology comes closest to that incorporated into film theory. John Frow’s article which incorporates the Foucauldian concept of ideology is also to be found here. Eagleton’s work, and the reader, provide a necessary balance to Barrett’s more dismissive attitude to Marxist theory in general, and especially the concept of ideology in Marxist thought.

The work of Karl Marx (and Frederick Engels) such as *The German Ideology*, *The Communist Manifesto*, *Preface to A Critique of Political Economy*, and *Capital* are indispensible for providing an understanding of Marxist thought, and especially the concepts

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of ideology, alienation and reification.\textsuperscript{16} Read in conjunction with Eagleton and Barrett, this work has provided a firm grounding for a discussion of the Marxist theory of ideology.

As for film theory, Pam Cook’s (edited) \textit{The Cinema Book} provides an extended and critical discussion of film theory.\textsuperscript{17} However, John Caughie’s (edited) \textit{Theories of Authorship} focuses on \textit{auteur} theory and \textit{auteur}-structuralism and is important for presenting the thought of the contributors to \textit{Cahiers du Cinéma}\textsuperscript{18}. A discussion of the application of Foucauldian concepts to film theory is found in Patrick Fury’s \textit{New Developments in Film Theory}.\textsuperscript{19} The concepts involved in ideological analysis in film theory have been discussed in Robert Stam \textit{Film Theory: An Introduction}.\textsuperscript{20} The application of these concepts, for instance by Colin MacCabe, is found in Joanne Hollows, Peter Hutchings and Mark Jancovich, (editors), \textit{The Film Studies Reader} and discussed critically at some length in Pam Cook and Mieke Bernink, \textit{The Cinema Book}.\textsuperscript{21} Hamid Naficy also offers a critical insight into the Althusser’s concept of interpellation.\textsuperscript{22} The article by Jean-Luc Comolli and Paul Narboni shows the explicitly political nature of ideological analysis in film theory after May 1968.\textsuperscript{23} Roland Barthes’s engaging discussion of ideology as myth is reprinted in Susan Sontag, (edited) \textit{A Barthes}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{17} Pam Cook, (ed), \textit{The Cinema Book}, (London, BFI, 1992).
\item\textsuperscript{18} John Caughie, (ed), \textit{Theories of Authorship: A Reader}, (Routledge, 2001).
\item\textsuperscript{19} Patrick Fury, \textit{New Developments in Film Theory}, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000).
\item\textsuperscript{21} Joanne Hollows, Peter Hutchings and Mark Jancovich, (eds), \textit{The Film Studies Reader}, (London, Arnold Publishers, 2000), and also Pam Cook & Mieke Bernink, \textit{The Cinema Book}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, (London, BFI, 1999).
\item\textsuperscript{23} For an exceptionally insightful introduction to Iranian New Wave Cinema, see Hamid Dabashi, \textit{Close Up: Iranian Cinema, Past, Present and Future}, (Verso, 2001). Robert Stam defines the term interpellation as ‘that which evokes the social structures and practices which “hail” individuals, endowing them with a social identity and constituting them as subjects who unthinkingly accept their role within the system of production relations’. Robert Stam, op.cit., p.134.
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\end{footnotesize}
Barthes’s analysis of ‘language’ as a code has been very useful in understanding the ideological masking of conflict, especially in the film narrative about the Algerian insurrection.

The major texts that provide the foundation for a discussion of the elements within a broad discourse on American / C.I.A. involvement in oil-rich Middle Eastern countries include Trita Parsi’s frank discussion of the power relations between America, Israel, Iran and the Arab countries in the region. Parsi’s book is important because it shows that ideology is often used as a rhetorical tool to mask deeper political motivations based on perceived national interest; also, Parsi explains the reasons for Iran’s exclusion from the western international community as a pariah state.

Eugene Rosow’s excellent historical reading of the gangster genre shows the role of violence in American industrialisation and business relations, also in colonialism, which is reflected in cinema fictions. The history of the C.I.A., especially its very long standing policy of torture has been analysed by Karen Greenberg, Philippe Sands and Seymour Hersh. The film text is loosely based on Robert Baer’s See No Evil.

Finally, there are three major texts that underpin the discourse on the film text The Battle of Algiers. First, Frantz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth is largely based on his experiences in

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Although these are the major texts that were used, the reading done for this thesis was very broad, mainly due to the widening of the discourse as a result of applying Foucault’s thought. This is reflected in the bibliography.

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Michel Foucault: Discourse, power/knowledge and the subject

Michel Foucault’s mode of analysis and his concept of ‘discourse’ is generally seen as providing an alternative, especially for post-structuralist critiques, to the concept of ideology. Michèle Barrett asserts that ‘Foucault’s concepts of discourse and power ... were consistently and repeatedly elaborated as a critique of the concept of ideology. Frequently he moved straight to the issue of ideology when the general question of Marxism was raised.’ It must be stressed, however, that Foucault’s concern is with the Marxist concept of ideology, and rather than discard ideological perspectives altogether, Foucault argues that ideology needs to be considered as one element of a broad discourse.

Foucault’s concept of discourse is developed as part of his methodology of archaeology. This methodology is aimed at uncovering the implicit rules, perhaps ‘not even formulable by those using them’, that restrict the range of thought. As Garry Gutting observes, Foucault does not deny the ‘supreme ethical importance of individual consciousness’ but he thinks that the conceptual environment that individuals operate within is limited in a manner unrecognised by them. Foucault is also critical of the conventional goal-directed historical narrative told

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30 Michèle Barrett, op.cit., p.123. Michel Foucault’s concept of ideology is discussed in the following chapter.
31 Ibid., p.39.
32 Foucault has on occasion used the concept of ideology in his discussions. For example, discussing the sending of ‘non-proletarianised’ Frenchmen to the colonies, he notes: ‘And it was certainly in order to avoid the forming of an alliance between these ‘lesser whites’ and the colonised peoples ... that a rigid racist ideology was foisted on them: ‘Watch out, you’ll be living among cannibals’ ... [The] bourgeoisie erected an ideological barrier around those who went to prison ... (an ideology about crime, criminals, theft, the mob, degenerates, ‘animals’) which was in part linked with racism.’ But these references are part of a much larger discourse. Michel Foucault, ‘On Popular Justice: A Discussion with Maoists’, in Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, op.cit., p.17
34 Ibid., p.33.
from the perspective of personal experiences. Gutting notes that Foucault questions ‘the apparent continuity and purposiveness of history [that] may be due to the false assumption that human history is ... driven by the experiences and projects of the consciousnesses that live it. Archaeology introduces factors outside consciousness that may belie the continuity and direction ... we read into our lives.’ It is a structural, synchronic mode of analysis.

1.1 The unity of discourse

In considering discourses such as ‘medicine, economics, or grammar’ Foucault sought to discover what constituted the unity of the discourse. He found that instead of that unity being based on ‘their well-defined field of objects’, there were ‘series full of gaps, intertwined with one another, interplays of differences, distances, substitutions, transformations’. Nor was it based on a ‘normative type of statement’; he found heterogeneous formulations of levels and functions. He writes:

Hence the idea of describing these dispersions themselves; of discovering whether, between these elements, which are certainly not organised as a progressively deductive structure, nor as an enormous book that is being gradually and continuously written ... one cannot discern a regularity: an order in their successive appearance, correlations in their simultaneity, assignable positions in a common space, a reciprocal functioning, linked and hierarchized transformations. Such an analysis would ... describe systems of dispersion.

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36 Ibid., p.45.
37 Michele Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, op.cit., p.37.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
Foucault goes on to define such a system of dispersion as a *discursive formation* and the conditions to which the elements of this formation are subject he calls the *rules of formation*.41

1.2 The conditions of possibility

To describe the ‘moment of discourse in its sudden irruption’ Foucault relies on the notion of the ‘conditions of possibility’.42 For Kant, the conditions of possible experience formed the transcendental conditions *a priori*, and included the space-time axis and substances subject to causal laws.43 But these were universal laws. Foucault’s conditions of possibility are historically specific and vary over time. He writes:

[The] aim is to rediscover on what basis knowledge and theory became possible; within what space of order knowledge was constituted; on the basis of what historical *a priori* and in the element of what positivity, ideas could appear, sciences be established ... I am not concerned … to describe the progress of knowledge towards an objectivity in which today’s science can finally be recognised ... [I want to illuminate] the epistemological field, the *episteme* in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its positivity and ... manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but ... of its conditions of possibility; in this account what should appear are those configurations within the *space* of knowledge which have given rise to the diverse forms of empirical science.44

To examine how discursive unities are formed, Foucault looks at the formation of objects, concepts, enunciative modalities and the formation of strategies or theoretical options.

41 Ibid., p.38.
42 Ibid., p.25.
43 Garry Gutting, op.cit., p.36.
1.31 The formation of objects

Foucault considers the rules of formation of objects within the context of the nineteenth century discourse in psychopathology. He examines the ‘surfaces of their emergence’ to explain how conceptual codes and certain theoretical modes of analysis accord individual differences the status of disease, anomaly, alienation and so on.\(^{45}\) He writes:

> In these fields of initial differentiation, in the distances, the discontinuities, and the thresholds … within it, psychiatric discourse finds a way of limiting its domain, of defining what it is talking about, of giving it the status of an object – and so making it manifest, nameable, describable.\(^{46}\)

Objects are also formed by authorities of delimitation; in the nineteenth century, medicine was the principal authority that ‘delimited, designated, named, and established madness as an object’.\(^{47}\) Other authorities included penal law, religious authority, and literary and art criticism.\(^{48}\) Finally, there are the grids of specification, which are systems for classifying different kinds of madness. In the nineteenth century, these grids included ‘the soul, as a group of hierarchized, related, and more or less interpenetrable faculties; the body … linked … by networks of dependence and communication; the life and history of individuals, as a linear succession of phases … [and] the interplays of neuropsychological correlations as systems of reciprocal projections, and as a field of circular causality’.\(^{49}\) And it is the relations between these specific categories, Foucault argues, that bring about the formation of objects:

> The relation between planes of specification like penal categories and … planes of psychological characterisation …The relation between the authority of medical decision

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\(^{45}\) Michele Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, op.cit., p.41.

\(^{46}\) Ibid.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p.42.

\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Ibid.
and the authority of judicial decision … The relation between … the whole machinery of judicial information, and the filter formed by the medical questionnaire, clinical examinations, the search for antecedents and biographical accounts. … These are the relations that, operating in psychiatric discourse, have made possible the formation of a whole group of various objects.  

Further:

Psychiatric discourse is characterised not by privileged objects, but by the way in which it forms objects that are in fact highly dispersed. This formation is made possible by a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation and specification. … [A] discursive formation is defined … if one can show how any particular object of discourse finds in it its place and law of emergence; if one can show that it may give birth simultaneously or successively to mutually exclusive objects, without having to modify itself.  

Hence, very specific historical conditions are necessary for the appearance of an object of discourse: those necessary for it to exist in relation to other objects and to establish with them ‘resemblance, proximity, distance, difference, transformation’.  

The object exists within a complex group of relations between economic and social institutions and processes, behavioural patterns, and types of classification and characterisation.  

1.32 The formation of enunciative modalities

As noted above, medicine was the principal authority that established madness as an object. For Foucault the right to use this particular language is restricted and legitimised by society.
It is not simply that the doctor is assumed to have certain competences and knowledge, but his status is maintained by a number of legal and pedagogic institutions.

There are also the institutional sites from which the doctor makes his discourse, which give it legitimacy. These sites include the hospital, the surgery, the laboratory, and the library. Foucault notes that in the nineteenth century, all these sites gained in importance.\textsuperscript{54}

As to the subject, he can take position as the questioning, listening or observing subject, or occupy positions in information networks such as teaching and writing documents. Foucault argues:

\begin{quote}
If in clinical discourse, the doctor is in turn the sovereign, direct questioner, the observing eye, the touching finger, the organ that deciphers signs, the point … [where] descriptions are integrated … it is because a whole group of relations is involved. … Understood … as a renewal of the modalities of enunciation, clinical medicine must … [be regarded] as the establishment of a relation, in medical discourse, between a number of distinct elements, some of which concerned the status of doctors, others the institutional and technical site from which they spoke, others their position as subjects perceiving, observing, describing, teaching, etc.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

It is clinical discourse that establishes the relations between the various elements and if it describes a unity it is because it makes constant use of these relations.\textsuperscript{56} Further, the various enunciative modalities show the dispersion of the subject. For Foucault, ‘discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but … a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p.52.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p.53.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p.54.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and discontinuity with himself may be
determined.\textsuperscript{57} It is a ‘space of exteriority’ which harbours a network of distinct sites.\textsuperscript{58}

1.33 The formation of concepts

Concept formation occurs within an enunciative field in which statements are organised.\textsuperscript{59}
Statements can be organised as ‘enunciative series’ such as inferences or demonstrative
reasonings, as the ‘dependence of statements’ such as a hypothesis and its verification, with
various rhetorical schemata for combining statements, such as when descriptions and
deductions are linked together.\textsuperscript{60}

The enunciative field involves coexistence. It is a ‘field of presence’ in that it groups all
statements formed elsewhere relating to the discourse and acknowledged to be well-founded;
it is a field of concomitance and includes statements concerning different domains of objects,
and a field of memory which contains statements no longer discussed but with which
relations of filiation can be established.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p.55.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} The statement is an elementary unit of a discourse which Foucault describes as ‘a function of existence that
properly belongs to signs and on the basis of which one may then decide, through analysis or intuition, whether
or not they ‘make sense’, according to what rule they follow one another or are juxtaposed, of what they are a
sign, and what sort of act is carried out by their formulation’. Ibid., pp.80, 86 - 87. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul
Rabinow argue that Foucault is really concerned with those statements that contain truth claims. Hubert Dreyfus
\& Paul Rabinow, \textit{Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics}, op.cit., pp.47.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., pp. 56 - 57.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., pp.57 - 58.
Finally, ‘procedures of intervention’ may be applied to statements.  

62 These differ according to the type of discourse and appear, for instance, in techniques of rewriting, methods of transcribing, and modes of translating. These various elements either constitute rules of formal construction or rhetorical practice. However, what makes it possible to delimit a group of concepts is the way these elements link together. For example, the way the modes of development of the statements are linked to modes of criticism and commentary.  

63 For Foucault:

It is this group of relations that constitutes a system of conceptual formation. ... These schemata make it possible to describe not the laws of internal construction of concepts, not their progressive and individual genesis in the mind of man - but their anonymous dispersion through texts, books and oeuvres.  

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This analysis is at a pre-conceptual structural level, and it gives the rules which govern this field.

1.34 The formation of strategies

Foucault notes that discourses such as medicine or economics give rise to a certain type of grouping of concepts and objects, and certain kinds of enunciation which form themes or theories and which he calls ‘strategies’.  

65 Foucault tries to show how they come about. He first considers the ‘points of diffraction’ of discourse or where there is incompatibility. Here, there are two types of enunciation, ‘two points of equivalence’ in the same discursive

62 Ibid., p.59.
63 Ibid., p.60.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., p.64.
formation which cannot enter the same series of statements. Hence, they form an alternative.\textsuperscript{66} Or they may form discursive sub-groups.

However, not all possible alternatives emerge. The emergence of a discourse needs to be seen within the ‘economy of the discursive constellation’ to which it belongs’ where it plays a specific role.\textsuperscript{67} For example, it may represent the formal system of which other discourses are applications, or it may play the role of analogy. And there are relations of mutual delimitation between discourses with ‘each giving the other the distinctive marks of its singularity by the differentiation of its domain of application (as in the case of psychiatry and organic medicine which were virtually not distinguished from one another before the end of the eighteenth century, and which established from that moment a gap that has since characterised them)’.\textsuperscript{68}

The impact of these various relations is to determine which statements are permitted or excluded from certain discourses. The determination of the theoretical choices depends on the function of that discourse in a field of non-discursive practices, such as the role played by the analysis of wealth not only in the political and economic decisions of government but also in the practice of emergent capitalism.\textsuperscript{69} Foucault notes:

This authority also involves \textit{the rules and processes of appropriation} of discourse: for in our societies ... the property of discourse – in the sense of the right to speak, ability to understand ... [gain] access to the corpus of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decisions, institutions, or practices – is in fact confined (sometimes with the addition of legal sanctions) to a particular group of individuals; in the bourgeois societies ... since the sixteenth century, economic discourse has never been a common discourse (no more than medical or literary discourse though in a different way).\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p.65.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p.66. Emphasis in the original.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p.67.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., p.68.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
Finally, the determination of theoretical choices depends on ‘the possible position of desire in relation to discourse’, so that discourse may be ‘an element of symbolisation’ or ‘an instrument of derived satisfaction’.  

In sum, the unity of discourse that Foucault is dealing with comprises a dispersion of elements. And this dispersion can be described with regard to rules concerning the formation of concepts, objects, enunciative modalities and theoretical options. Foucault notes: ‘if there really is a unity, it does not lie in the visible, horizontal coherence of the elements formed; it resides well anterior to their formation, in the system that makes possible and governs that formation’. When one speaks of a system of formation, Foucault explains, one is not only referring to the juxtaposition or interaction of heterogeneous elements but the relations established between them by discursive practice. And the four levels of the archaeological methodology are integrated: there is a ‘vertical system of dependencies’ where only those statements and discursive strategies are possible which are authorised by anterior levels; and where, between the levels, there is a ‘whole hierarchy of relations’.  

If one compares this type of analysis with the Marxist base/superstructure economic determinist model, a major difference is the polymorphous nature of how the elements of a discursive formation come into being. With reference to causality, Foucault’s genealogical analysis, combined with his archaeological method, of power and discipline ‘is a historical
causal explanation that is material, multiple, and corporeal'.\textsuperscript{75} Foucault disagrees with the Marxist concept of power which is ‘conceived primarily in terms of the role it plays in the maintenance simultaneously of the relations of production and of class domination which the development and specific forms of the forces of production have rendered possible’.\textsuperscript{76} Rather, he describes power’s condition of possibility as ‘the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable. ... Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. … [Power] is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.’\textsuperscript{77} Because power is endemic in society, it is constitutive of everything that is produced in that social space.

1.3 Power / Knowledge

Foucault believes that in every society, ‘the production of discourse is ... controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ... gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality’.\textsuperscript{78} In western society, he argues, prohibition is a major form of exclusion: there are taboos on certain objects of speech, constraints on circumstances that allow certain kinds of speech, and only certain people are privileged to speak. Where these three elements intersect, they form a complex grid and its effects are most obvious in the subjects of politics and sexuality. Hence, discourse is not a neutral element, but a space where ‘sexuality and politics exercise in a

\textsuperscript{75} Gary Gutting, op.cit., p.47. Gutting rightly points out that ‘imprisonment constitutes delinquents as a new class of objects, characterised by the concepts distinctive of the criminal character; it distinguishes various modes of authority (judge, parole board, criminologist) and alternative lines of strategic action (different ways of using solitude and work in the treatment of prisoners).’ Ibid., p.45. Michel Foucault’s Discipline and Punish is discussed in some detail below.

\textsuperscript{76} Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, op.cit., pp.88 - 89.

\textsuperscript{77} Michel Foucault, The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality: 1, op.cit., pp.92 - 93.

privileged way some of their most formidable powers’. Discourse is itself ‘the power which
is to be seized’.  

Another principle of exclusion is division and rejection. For instance, Foucault argues that
since the Middle Ages, the madman’s discourse has not been considered to be of any value,
his testimony being worthless. Foucault notes:

It was through his words that his madness was recognised: they were the place where the
division between reason and madness was exercised, but they were never recorded or
listened to. ... You have ... to think of the whole framework of knowledge through which
we decipher that speech, and of the whole network of institutions which permit someone
– a doctor or a psychoanalyst – to listen to it, and which at the same time permit the
patient to bring along his poor words ... . [T]he division, far from being effaced, is
working differently ... through new institutions ... [The doctor] does this listening in the
context of the same division.  

A third system of exclusion is the opposition between true and false. This Foucault discusses
with regard to the ‘type of division which governs our will to know’. He argues that for the
Greek poets of the sixth century B.C., true discourse was that pronounced by men ‘who spoke
as of right’; these discourses were in the manner of those which dispensed justice or foretold
the future. A century later, truth resided in what the discourse actually said, the utterance,
and its ‘relation to the reference’. And it is this division from which our will to know in its
general form is probably derived. This will, Foucault observes, is reinforced by practices
such as pedagogy, and by books, publishing, libraries and laboratories, and is renewed by the
way in which knowledge is used.

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., p.53.
81 Ibid., pp.53 - 54.
82 Ibid., p.54. This is a division between true and false discourse.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 This form or division is not static, but constantly shifting.
Disciplines are yet another form of limitation; they recognise true and false propositions, but push ‘back a whole teratology of knowledge beyond its margins’:

[For example] what Mendel did was to constitute the hereditary trait as an absolutely new biological object ... which called for new conceptual instruments and ... theoretical foundations. Mendel spoke the truth but he was not ‘within the true’ of the biological discourse of his time ... [One] is in ‘the true’ only by obeying the rules of a discursive ‘policing’ which one has to reactivate in each of one’s discourses.

The discipline is a principle of control over the production of discourse. [It] fixes limits for discourse by the action of an identity which takes the form of a permanent re-actuation of the rules.86

In general, Foucault maintains, every society has a politics of truth. There are discourses it makes function as the true, mechanisms which can be used to differentiate between true and false statements, and means to sanction the true. However, the scientific intellectual occupies a special position because of his ‘threelfold specificity’: his social class, his conditions of work as an intellectual, and ‘the specificity of the politics of truth in our societies’.87 Foucault argues:

The intellectual can operate and struggle at the general level of that regime of truth ... . There is a battle “for truth” ... [B]y truth I mean not “the ensemble of truths to be discovered and accepted”, but, rather, “the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true,” it being understood also that it’s not a matter of a battle “on behalf” of the truth but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays. It is necessary to think of the political problems of intellectuals not in terms of “science” and “ideology” but in terms of “truth” and “power”.88

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88 Ibid., p.132.
Hence, for any assessment of ‘truth’ Foucault suggests the following propositions: that ‘truth’ be understood as a system for the production, regulation and circulation of statements; that it is in a circular relation to systems of power that produce and sustain it, the ‘regime of truth’; this regime is not superstructural ‘but was a condition of the formation and development of capitalism’; and the essential problem of the intellectual is ‘not changing people’s consciousnesses – or what’s in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth’.89 Foucault concludes: ‘The political question, to sum up, is not error, illusion, alienated consciousness, or ideology; it is truth itself. Hence, the importance of Nietzsche.’90 This also explains Foucault’s assertion that what matters is seeing how the effects of truth are produced within discourses ‘which in themselves are neither true nor false’.91

1.4 Power relations

Foucault’s concept of power relations is critical to an understanding of how power constitutes subjectivity. This concept is an explicitly political one: Foucault describes the body as immersed in a political field of power relations which ‘invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs’.92 In the economic field, the body invested with power relations is only useful if productive and subjugated.

The ‘political technology of the body’, can be read in general terms as the history of power relations. And this particular mode of subjection creates man as an object of knowledge within a scientific discourse. Foucault argues that the body can be subjected not only through

89 Ibid., pp.132 - 133.
90 Ibid., p.133.
violence or instruments of ideology, but also through a direct subtle, calculated and finely
tuned force of a physical order. He writes:

[There] may be a ‘knowledge’ of the body that is not exactly the science of its
functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this
knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of
the body.93

Importantly, this technology is diffuse, the methods of its employment disparate. Not
localised in any institution or state apparatus, it has proliferated throughout society. But the
state apparatus can manipulate it. What is manipulated is a micro-physics of power. The
body, invested with power relations, is manipulated as strategy. Hence, the ‘effects of
domination are attributed to … dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings’. 94

Foucault expounds:

[This] power is not exercised simply as an obligation or prohibition on those who ‘do not
have it’; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon
them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them. …
[These] relations go right down into the depths of society … they are not localised in the
relations between the state and its citizens or on the frontier between the classes …
[They] define innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each … [with] its
own risks of conflict, of struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of the power
relations. 95

Further, a power relation only exists with the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge.
The processes and struggles within power relations determine the forms and possible domains
of knowledge. Foucault suggests that one imagine a political ‘anatomy’ of the ‘body politic’
made of ‘material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication

94 Ibid.
95 Ibid., p.27.
routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge’.96

Indeed, Foucault argues that the history of the micro-physics of punitive, really disciplinary, power is the genealogy of the modern soul. The soul is not the ‘reactivated remnant of an ideology’ but a correlative of a transformative technology of power over the body:

[The soul is] produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished and ... on those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives. This is the historical reality of the soul, which … is born … out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. This … soul is not a substance; it is the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power. … The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body.97

These power relations that invest the body are most visible in the power to punish. Prior to the eighteenth century Enlightenment, the public torture of French criminals formed part of an entire economy of power. Since the judicial procedure took place in secret, the accused was not present during the deliberations. Hence, enormous emphasis was placed on the confession which validated the process and through which the offender affirmed his responsibility for the crime.

96 Ibid., p.28.
97 Ibid., pp.29-30.
The locus of this punishment was the body which published the crime to public acknowledgement. Execution then became ‘the moment of truth.’ This was also a political act in so far as it reaffirmed the power of the sovereign.

With the economic and demographic changes during the eighteenth century, an increase in wealth and property ownership, there emerged a concomitant need for more general security. This was a need for constant policing and the management of criminals. Punishment changed from public torture to imprisonment and discipline.

The body now became the intermediary for access to the mind or soul, and the objective changed from retribution to ‘docility’, ‘cure’ and ‘normalisation’. The nature of the subject also altered. He was no longer the enemy of the sovereign but a juridical subject with a right to life and liberty, both of which could be withdrawn. And there was a change in the object of punishment: there was not just the offence, but what caused it, i.e. a consideration of passions, inherited aberrations, and later, instincts embedded in the subconscious. The latter were susceptible to ‘scientific’ knowledge which, Foucault argues, provided ‘the mechanisms of legal punishment with a justifiable hold on the offences and on the individuals’.

In France, prisons proliferated so that by the 1830s one in every 600 Frenchmen was imprisoned. The control wrought over the prisoner, was accompanied by the development of individualistic knowledge. The prisoner arrived with a report on his crime, its circumstances, his interrogation and the results it produced. To this was added a record of

98 Ibid., p.43.
99 Ibid., p.18.
100 Ibid., p.116.
continuous surveillance of the prisoner, with reports to the senior administration, all in an attempt to transform his mind.

This knowledge was used to classify criminals not according to the crime, but according to their dispositions. And it was excavated on the basis that deep within the individual lay potential danger. It was thus that ‘the prison functioned as an apparatus of knowledge’. 101

The instruments used in prison were those of coercion, of constraint, the technology that of discipline. Exercises, in groups or in solitary, were done to specific instructions, repeatedly, with every gesture and movement meticulously timed. The aim was to transform the offender into an obedient subject with certain specific habits, and with orders and rules internalised and automated. Further, Foucault notes:

The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born …. What was being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. ...[D]iscipline produces subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. 102

In economic terms, what Marx termed the ‘social productive power of labour’ Foucault explains as the ‘concerted articulation of the elementary parts’ whose collective force was greater than the power of individual elements. 103 Here, the body is part of a multi-segmentary machine, and time is adjusted in such a way that it extracts the maximum quantity of force from each body, the forces then being combined for maximum effect.

101 Ibid., p.126.
103 Marx quoted in Foucault, ibid., p.163.
In political terms, Foucault argues that discipline was a means of preventing civil disorder.\textsuperscript{104}

He writes:

Historians of ideas usually attribute the dream of a perfect society to the philosophers and jurists of the eighteenth century; but there was also a military dream of society; its fundamental reference was not to the state of nature, but to the meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine, not to the primal social contract, but to permanent coercions, not to fundamental rights, but to indefinitely progressive forms of training, not to the general will but to automatic docility.\textsuperscript{105}

Disciplinary power functions as a calculated, permanent economy. Its success derives from the use of simple instruments, hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and their combination in the examination. Foucault notes:

The power in the hierarchized surveillance of the discipline is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery. And, although it is true that its pyramidal organisation gives it a 'head', it is the \textit{apparatus as a whole that produces 'power'} and distributes individuals in this permanent and continuous field ... Discipline makes possible the generation of relational power that sustains itself by its own mechanism and which ... substitutes the uninterrupted play of calculated gazes.\textsuperscript{106}

For Foucault, subjectivity is constituted through a combination of various discursive practices and non-discursive elements. In the western world, he argues for example, Christianity appropriated two instruments from the Hellenistic world: ‘self-examination and the guidance of conscience’ that had been used for self-mastery.\textsuperscript{107} But in Christianity, the ‘pastorship’ which used these instruments was aimed at opening the individual ‘entirely to its director’.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{104} Michel Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}, op.cit, p.168.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p.169.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., pp.176 - 177. Emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., p.70.
In this self-examining way, it was individualising. Pastorship was, therefore, instrumental in the creation of self-identity.\(^{109}\) Foucault showed also how relations between knowledge and power were important in constituting subjectivity.\(^{110}\) One such activity was that of examinations.

For Foucault examinations combine an observing hierarchy with a normalising judgement.\(^{111}\) The examination is a surveillance that ‘makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish’.\(^{112}\) Within it exists an entire domain of knowledge and power. And this is knowledge that is transformed into political investment. In explanation, Foucault gives the example of the ‘epistemological thaw’ of medicine at the end of the eighteenth century. Here, an essential condition was the transformation of the hospital as an ‘examining’ apparatus.

In the previous century, the physician was simply one of the authorities that worked in the hospital, visiting when necessary. But gradually, his visits became more frequent, until eventually he was on call all the time and resident at the hospital. Simultaneously, the patient became the object of perpetual examination. This had two consequences: the internal hierarchy changed with the physician greatly increasing in importance, and the hospital became ‘a place of training and of the correlation of knowledge; it represented a reversal therefore of the power relations and the constitution of a corpus of knowledge’.\(^{113}\) Here, the ‘well-disciplined’ hospital became the physical counterpart of the medical ‘discipline’ which now took its reference not from the tradition of author-authorities but from the patients or objects perpetually examined.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., p.71.
\(^{110}\) Ibid.
\(^{111}\) Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, op.cit, p.184.
\(^{112}\) Ibid.
\(^{113}\) Ibid., p.186. Prior to this there were other more important figures of power such as religious authorities.
What the examination introduced was a mechanism that linked the formation of a certain type of knowledge, to a certain form of the exercise of power. The effect of disciplinary power on the subject is to impose a compulsory visibility that assures the hold of power over it, that ‘maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection’. And it is the examination that holds the subjects in a mechanism of objectification. Further, the examination situates the objects of its surveillance in a ‘network of writing’, creating a system of documentary accumulation.

Foucault writes:

Hence the formation of a whole series of codes of disciplinary individuality that made it possible to transcribe, by means of homogenization, the individual features established by the examination: the physical code of signalling, the medical code of symptoms, the educational or military code of conduct or performance. These codes were still very crude, both in quality and quantity, but they marked the first stage in the ‘formalization’ of the individual within power relations.

Disciplinary writing also involved the categorisation and centralisation of data, and the determination of averages and the norm. The examination opened up two correlative possibilities that were of decisive importance in the epistemological thaw in the human sciences: the constitution of a describable, analysable individual connected to a corpus of knowledge, and the constitution of a comparative system that made it possible to accumulate measurements, descriptions, categorisations, and the distribution of individuals in populations. Foucault notes:

[One] should look into these procedures of writing and registering ... the mechanisms of examination ... the mechanisms of discipline, and of a new type of power over bodies. Is this the birth of the sciences of man? It is probably to be found in these ‘ignoble’

\[114\] Ibid., p.187.
\[115\] Ibid., p.189.
\[116\] Ibid., pp.189-190.
archives, where the modern play of coercion over bodies, gestures and behaviour has its beginning. 117

And these documentary techniques turn an individual into a ‘case’ which is both an object and constitutes a hold for a branch of knowledge and power. The case refers not to circumstances but is the person as he is measured, described and indeed individualised. He is also the individual that must be trained, corrected and normalised. What disciplinary methods achieved, Foucault argues, was to use description as a means of control and a method of domination.

A further example of the formation of subjectivity is the creation of ‘delinquents’. These were prisoners who formed part of the police observatory and helped them to manage illegal activities such as prostitution and the drugs trade. 118 The creation of this individual was based on auxiliary or biographical knowledge, separate from any crime committed – a process that transformed the offender into an individualized ‘delinquent’ who was judged from the point of view of psychology, social position and upbringing. 119 The role of the prison was to manage them. Foucault writes:

Now this process that constitutes delinquency as an object of knowledge is one with the political operation that dissociates illegalities and isolates delinquents from them. The prison is the hinge of these two mechanisms; it enables them to reinforce one another perpetually, to objectify the delinquency behind the offence, to solidify delinquency in the movement of illegalities. So successful has the prison been that, after a century and a half of ‘failures’, the prison still exists, producing the same results, and there is the greatest reluctance to dispense with it. 120

117 Ibid., p.191. Emphasis added.
118 Ibid., pp.278-279.
119 Ibid., pp.251-252.
120 Ibid., p.277.
Foucault also notes that controlled illegality functions as an agent for dominant groups, recouping enormous profits from supposedly illegal trades. Finally, disciplinary techniques spread from the prison into general society through the ‘carceral archipelago’, a penal colony set up at Mettray in 1840. But disciplinary techniques have also been used in schools, hospitals and the armed services. Their general impact has been to create a controlled, docile citizenry, and also to make the human sciences possible. ‘Knowable man (soul, individuality, consciousness, conduct, whatever it is called) is the object-effect of this analytical investment, of this domination-observation.’

It is this constructed, dispersed subjectivity that stands in opposition to the Hegelian / Marxist conception of a rational consciousness engaged in a dialectical progression towards a utopian society. This is not to argue that change is never possible. Power engenders its own resistance, and the power grid is constituted of asymmetric relationships that are fluid and allow the possibility of change. Foucault notes that points of resistance are ‘an irreducible opposite’ spread over time and space ‘at times mobilizing groups or individuals in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behaviour.’ Although revolutionary change possible, Foucault’s focus is more on the manner in which power operates at a local level and the resistance it inevitably engenders.

1.5 Foucault’s use of Nietzschean ideas

Foucault’s thought is distinctive in that it takes some of its inspiration from Nietzsche’s philosophy. However, it needs to be remembered, as Gutting has noted, that in terms of

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121 Ibid., pp.279-280.
122 Ibid., p.293.
123 Ibid., p.305.
124 Michel Foucault, The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality: 1, op.cit., p.96.
scholarship there are significant differences between the two. Foucault’s work is
carerised by careful scholarship and documentary detail, whereas Nietzsche work was the
result of ‘an erudite, amateur’s armchair speculations’. Further, Nietzsche’s reference to
psychological or racial causes, especially in his genealogical analysis, would not be expected
to find a resonance with Foucault.

The first area of influence concerns truth and Nietzsche’s claim that there is no absolute truth,
and that knowledge is perspectival. Nietzsche launched his challenge to Christian dogma by
contesting that God, who is Truth, is the everlasting unchanging reality, unchanging because
otherwise Christian dogma would be provisional. Nietzsche’s post-Darwinian refutation
relies on the assertion that everything evolves. ‘Alles ist geworden’ is one of his key phrases:

> Now, everything essential in the development of mankind took place in primeval times ...
> But the philosopher here sees "instincts" in man as he now is and assumes that these
> belong to the unalterable facts of mankind and ... could provide a key to the
> understanding of the world in general: the whole of teleology is constructed by speaking
> of the man of the last four millennia as of an eternal man towards whom all things in the
> world have had a natural relationship from the time he began. But everything has
> become: there are no eternal facts, just as there are no absolute truths.

Further, Nietzsche argues that nothing is ‘given’ except for desires and passions, and that
traditionally there has been confusion between passion and reason. Thinking is not an
independent faculty, but a relationship between these desires and passions. Also:

> In order that the concept of substance could originate – which is indispensable for logic
> although in the strictest sense nothing real corresponds to it – it was likewise necessary
> that for a long time one did not see nor perceive the changes in things ... No living

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125 Garry Gutting, op.cit., p.47.
126 R. J. Hollingdale, Nietzsche, op.cit., p.33.
129 Friedrich Nietzsche, Ibid., S36, p.66.
beings would have survived if the tendency to affirm rather than suspend judgment, to err and make up things rather than wait … had not been bred to the point where it became extraordinarily strong.\textsuperscript{130}

Nietzsche also calls into question the objective validity of the process of logic. Logic as such, he argues, has nothing to do with truth, and is wholly subjective. Referring to Aristotle’s ‘law of contradiction’ (which states that it is impossible for the same thing to belong and not belong to the same object) Nietzsche argues that this was a subjective law taken from experience; it did not express ‘necessity’ and hence was merely an expression of an incapacity:

In short, the question remains open: are the axioms of logic adequate to reality or are they a means and measure for us to create reality, the concept "reality," for ourselves? To affirm the former one would … have to have a previous knowledge of being – which is certainly not the case. The proposition therefore contains no criterion of truth, but an imperative concerning that which should count as true.\textsuperscript{131}

Reginald J. Hollingdale explains that Nietzsche’s argument is that logic is a necessary instrument for making sense of the chaos in nature. Indeed, since the world is constantly ‘becoming’ it is not knowable; what we can ‘know’ is a simulacra constructed by ourselves.\textsuperscript{132} Hence the interpretation of events is ‘a literal structuring and ordering of the world on the part of the individual; it is an ‘aktives Bestimmen’ and ‘Zurechtmachung’. Such an interpretative, perspectival process is necessary for the maintenance of life … ’\textsuperscript{133} For Nietzsche this applies to all knowledge, deductive and empirical.\textsuperscript{134} Since knowledge has a

\textsuperscript{131} Friedrich Nietzsche, \textit{The Will to Power: Attempt at a revaluation of all Values}, op.cit, S516.
\textsuperscript{132} R. J. Hollingdale, op.cit., p. 131.
\textsuperscript{134} ‘Physics too is only an interpretation and arrangement of the world … not an \textit{explanation} of the world’. Friedrich Nietzsche, \textit{Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future}, op.cit., S14, p.44.
purpose, there is no disinterested knowledge.\textsuperscript{135} For Foucault, as discussed above, statements are produced, sustained and circulated by regimes of truth. Hence, the appropriate question to ask is how effects of truth come about, and not whether a discourse is true or false.

The second area of influence relates to the methodology of genealogy. Again Gutting cautions that Foucault’s essay ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’ ‘summarizes Nietzsche’s view of genealogy but seldom comments in Foucault’s own voice about the validity of the view’; hence a convergence of views cannot be assumed.\textsuperscript{136} Foucault’s \textit{explication de texte} looks at the distinction between ‘origin’ and ‘beginning’, and shows that Nietzsche challenges the pursuit of origin, ‘\textit{ursprung}’, because it attempts to capture the purest essence of things which precede the world as we know it.\textsuperscript{137} But for the genealogist who ‘listens to history’ there is something different behind things: ‘no essence or … essence … [that is] fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms.’\textsuperscript{138} Indeed, ‘What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.’\textsuperscript{139} ‘\textit{Herkunft}’ however relates to descent: affiliations to race, kin or social class.\textsuperscript{140} What is identified here is ‘singular … subindividual marks that might … intersect ... to form a network that is difficult to unravel. Far from being a category of resemblance, this origin allows the sorting out of different traits’\textsuperscript{141} However, as Foucault proceeds with the explanation of genealogy, his voice does seem to merge with Nietzsche’s:

\textsuperscript{135} For a discussion of Nietzsche’s concept of perspectival knowledge, see Elliot L. Jurist, \textit{Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche: Philosophy, Culture and Agency}, (Boston, The MIT Press, 2002), p.37. Also @ http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=PRhWt8AgsX8C&pg=PA37&lpg=PA37&dq=nietzsche+knowledge+disint
\textsuperscript{136} Garry Gutting, op.cit., p.44.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., p.145.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
To follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents.142

Further, Foucault observes that descent attaches to the body: ‘The body is the inscribed surface of events … the locus of a dissociated Self … . Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body.’143 The significance of the body is absolutely central to Foucault’s work, especially his analysis of how power functions, and his intellectual debt to Nietzsche here is clear.

Finally, the power / knowledge nexus recalls Nietzsche’s concept of will to power. For Nietzsche, a living thing desired above all to ‘vent its strength’, and the emergence of events involves ‘overpowering, acquiring mastery and ... in turn, all overpowering and acquiring mastery involve a new interpretation’.144 This concept is also used to explain the source of systems of thought which claimed to express objective knowledge.145 Although Foucault did not take this concept on board as articulated by Nietzsche, Gutting argues that ‘he was clearly impressed by and adopted Nietzsche’s technique of looking for power behind the sciences, religions, and other cognitive authorities that present themselves as grounded in nothing more than the force of disinterested evidence and argument’.146 Hence, even where the application

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142 Ibid., pp.145 - 146.
143 Ibid., p.147-148.
145 Garry Gutting, op.cit., p.51
146 Ibid.
has differed, the Niezschean concepts Foucault uses are central to his thought and probably account to some degree for Foucault’s own uniqueness.

1.6 Foucault’s critics

Many of the criticisms made of Foucault’s work rest on the significant differences between Foucault’s thought, and that of, for example, traditional historians and sociologists. Gutting quotes Roy Porter, a leading historian on insanity, as asserting that in certain areas in eighteenth century England, the mad were looked after by society in general, and not confined. If they were, confinement took place in very small numbers even in the early nineteenth century.147 Gutting argues that Foucault’s work was distinguished by his focus on the epistemic mode, rather than what individual communities were doing. Gutting writes:

An episteme must, admittedly, be reflected in the factual beliefs and actions of those whose thought is constrained by it. But there is no simple correspondence between a general structure of thought and specific beliefs and actions. ... Similarly, confinement – whatever the details about its extent in different regions at different times – may represent a distinctive Classical way of thinking about madness. This is not to say that Foucault’s claim is unfalsifiable. But it needs to be tested as a general interpretative hypothesis; that is, evaluated by its fruitfulness in making overall sense of a large body of data and suggesting new lines of inquiry. It should not be judged as an empirical generalisation – like ‘all crows are black’ – that can be refuted by a single counter-example.148

Further, Barry Smart has argued that differences between Foucault’s work and traditional history have been ignored, and Foucault charged with ‘historical omission, distortion, and invention’.149 For example, with respect to *Madness and Civilisation* Foucault was accused of arguing that post-Enlightenment humanitarian values were worthless and that the

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148 Ibid., pp.40 - 41.
confinement of the mad was due to the ‘conspiracy’ of medical professionals.\textsuperscript{150} Smart argues that implicit here is the belief of the progressive historical development of humanity, with Foucault’s work placed in opposition to it. Yet Foucault’s work explicitly interrogates this notion of progress. And the idea of the conspiracy is to misunderstand Foucault completely. Smart writes:

\begin{quote}
[For Foucault] historical events are not conceived to be in the control or management of conscious sovereign subjects exercising repressive powers. Rather, the study of historical events necessitates consideration of a multiplicity of causes; human subjects are conceived to be formed in and through discourses and social practices which have complex histories; and power is conceptualised neither as principally repressive nor prohibitive but as positive and productive. So the charge that Foucault has developed a social control model of human relationships lacks substance.\textsuperscript{151}
\end{quote}

Another difficulty is where Foucault’s work is assimilated into traditional discourses of psychiatry, medicine, psychoanalysis, criminology and sociology. The problem here is the introduction of formerly subjugated knowledges with the result that attention is focused on descriptions of the birth of the asylum, the clinic or the prison, to the detriment of the critical import of Foucault’s work as a whole. For instance, \textit{Discipline and Punish} is not simply about methods of incarceration, but a ‘new technology of power, discipline and inter-related new forms of knowledge, the human sciences, through which human beings have been constituted as both subjects and objects’.\textsuperscript{152}

Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow’s criticism of Foucault’s archaeological method is based on two main observations: that the causal power attributed to rules governing the discursive

\textsuperscript{151} Barry Smart, op.cit., p.63.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., p.64.
system is ‘unintelligible’, making the power of social institutions ‘incomprehensible’; and insofar as archaeology is an end in itself, it forecloses the possibility of Foucault’s critical analysis coming to bear on his social concerns.\textsuperscript{153} Foucault was aware of the deficiencies of his archaeological method, and as Dreyfus and Rabinow observe, he used the concept of genealogy to ‘thematize the relationship between truth, theory and values and the social institutions and practices in which they emerge’.\textsuperscript{154} This led to a greater focus on power, the body and their relationship to the human sciences. The archaeological method was not abandoned but incorporated into a genealogical analysis, allowing a much richer analysis of the relations between discursive and non-discursive elements.

The most problematic aspect of Foucault’s thesis, however, has to do with political agency. If agency can be described as motivated action, then it is difficult to see how this comes about in a constituted subject. Anthony Giddens has observed:

Foucault’s history tends to have no subjects at all. It is history with the agency removed. The individuals who appear in Foucault’s analyses seem impotent to determine their own destinies. … The historian is a reflective being, aware of the influence of the writing of history upon the determination of the present. But this quality of self-understanding is seemingly not extended to historical agents themselves.\textsuperscript{155}

Charles Taylor, referring to Foucault’s thesis that power relations are intentional but non-subjective, argues:

\[\text{T}\\text{here are obviously lots of aspects of social life in which this reciprocal play of micro-practice and global structures, each producing (largely unintended) consequences for the other, is the right explanatory model. The problem arises … in the idea that there are}\]

\textsuperscript{153} Hubert Dreyfus & Paul Rabinow, op.cit., pp. xx – xxi.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., p.xxi.
pervasive strategies afoot which condition the battle in each micro-context, that “power” can “retreat” or “re-organise its forces”. These can only be combined via some account of how actions concatenate systematically. … But Foucault doesn’t even try.156

These criticisms have been countered by Chantal Mouffe who argues that a critique of an essential identity does not necessarily ‘lead to the rejection of any concept of identity whatsoever’. 157 She writes:

It is only when we discard the view of the subject as an agent both rational and transparent to itself, and discard as well the supposed unity and homogeneity of the ensemble of its positions, that we are in a position to theorize the multiplicity of relations of subordination. … We have rather to approach … [the social agent] as a plurality, dependent on the various subject positions through which it is constituted within various discursive formations. …To deny the existence of an a priori, necessary link between subject positions does not mean that there are not constant efforts to establish between them historical, contingent, and variable links. 158

Judith Butler has similarly argued that a constructed subjectivity is not synonymous with ‘doing away with the subject’. 159 Further, an agency can also be constructed and need not be a given. She writes:

We need … to ask, what possibilities of mobilization are produced on the basis of existing configurations of discourse and power? Where are the possibilities of reworking that very matrix of power by which we are constituted, of reconstituting the legacy of that constitution, and of working against each other those processes of regulation that can destabilize existing power regimes? 160

However, it may be argued that Foucault’s emphasis on the how may to some extent be tactical. In an interview with Pierre Boncenne in 1978, Foucault argued that one can only study the who of power in conjunction with the how of power:

158 Ibid.
159 Quoted in ibid., p.156.
160 Ibid., p.157.
I don’t believe that this question of “who exercises power?” can be resolved unless the other question “how does it happen?” is resolved at the same time. Of course we have to show who those in charge are, we know that we have to turn … to deputies, ministers, principal private secretaries … But … even if we reach the point of designating exactly … all those “decision-makers,” we will still not really know why and how the decision was made, how it came to be accepted by everybody, and how it is that it hurts a particular category of person … [Hence, the need to study] the strategies, the networks, the mechanisms, all those techniques by which a decision is accepted and by which that decision could not but be taken in the way it was.\textsuperscript{161}

To conclude, Foucault rejects the Marxist model of economic determinism and the power of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, in favour of a model which considers power to be constitutive of subjectivity and the objects of discourse. For Foucault, society consists of a grid of unequal power relations that are constantly in flux, and that can face reversals. But Foucault’s focus is on local-level analyses as opposed to the Hegelian view of the universal rational consciousness evolving into a perfect, class-free society.

\textsuperscript{161} Michel Foucault in Lawrence D. Kritzman, op.cit., pp.103 – 104.
Chapter Two

The Marxist Theory of Ideology

There is a substantial literature in the materialist tradition which offers varying, often contradictory, interpretations of the concept of ideology. Much of the disagreement arises from the inconsistent uses of the concept by Marx.162

2.1 There are at least six definitions to be found in Marx’s writing163. The first appears in *The German Ideology*, written by Marx and Engels in 1845-46. They write:

> Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc., - real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these … . Consciousness … [is] conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.164

This has largely been interpreted as an opposition between ideology and reality, being referred to as ‘false consciousness’. Briefly, ideology falsifies the material conditions and the true interests of the working class, for example, by a reversal. Terry Eagleton notes that *The German Ideology* asserts that ‘consciousness is … practical, and one of its practical uses is to distract men … from their oppression and exploitation by generating illusions and mystifications.’165 John Plamenatz writes that ‘Marx often called ideology “false consciousness”’, but as David McLellan and John McCarney have pointed out, the term was

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163 Michèle Barrett, op.cit, pp. 4 -14.
first used by Engels in 1893, after Marx’s death. Nevertheless, it has been interpreted as a
type of cognitive distortion at odds with reality.

Eagleton then goes on to discuss the ambiguity in this Marxist concept of ideology. If an
ideological notion may be ‘one which is somehow convenient for our rulers – one which
conceals or naturalises or otherwise legitimates an unjust form of power’, then the ambiguity
lies in whether it is an epistemological affair or a sociological matter, the latter concerned
with ‘the way certain ideas intersect with power’.

2.12 The second definition appears in the paragraph immediately following the one quoted
above:

[W]e do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated ... in
order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from the real, active men, and on the
basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological
reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are ...
sublimates of their material life-process ... Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest
of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the
semblance of independence. … Life is not determined by consciousness, but
consciousness by life.

Here Marx and Engels state the ‘materialist’ position on ideology, such that ideological
phenomena are determined by material conditions. But this and later emphasis on materialist
determination has been criticised by Raymond Williams who writes that the use of the terms
‘reflexes’, ‘echoes’, ‘phantoms’ and ‘sublimates’ is simplistic and in repetition has been
disastrous. … The emphasis on consciousness as inseparable from conscious existence, and

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166 Joseph McCarney, ‘Ideology and False Consciousness’ @ http://marxmyths.org/joseph-
necarney/article.html#foot-3. See also ‘Engels to Franz Mehring’, Abstract, July 14 1893, @
Barrett, op.cit., p.5.
167 Terry Eagleton, (ed), Ideology, op.cit, p.7
168 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, op.cit., p. 47.
… [that] as inseparable from material social processes, is in effect lost in the use of this deliberately degrading vocabulary’. 169 Further, the claim that Marx and Engels have not ‘set out from what men say’ and not relied on narrative history is, according to Williams, ‘an objective fantasy’. 170

Marx’s and Engels’s emphasis on the distinction between the ‘real’ and the ‘ideological’ underlay Jorge Larrain’s claim that Marx’s concept of ideology is ‘critical’, leading to the ‘epistemological’ definition of ideology, in contrast to that favoured by Joseph McCarney, for whom ideology is strictly a ‘descriptive’ term. 171 He argues that the critical view of ideology presupposes the distinction between knowledge and its opposite, but it was used by Marx and Engels also as an adjective and was later developed in a positive sense by writers such as Georg Lukács. 172 For McCarney, ideology is ‘thought which serves class interests’. 173 It has to be argued though, that for the concept to have any ‘teeth’, it needs to be employed in its critical sense, although that does not preclude its descriptive use.

2.13  *The German Ideology* presents a third definition of the concept:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is ... [also] its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control ... over the means of mental production, so ... the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are ... the ideal expression of the dominant material

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170 Ibid., p.180.
171 Quoted in Michèle Barrett, op.cit, p.7.
172 Ibid, pp.7- 8.
173 Quoted in ibid, p.8.
relationships … grasped as ideas; hence … the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance.  

There are two assertions here with respect to the relationship between social class and ideology. First, that the class which controls material production also controls the production of ideas. However, this is contentious as it does not account for popular consciousness and popular culture which cannot be assumed to collude in the formation of an ideology ‘in what is ultimately not in one’s interest’. Second, feminist literature has queried whether the control of language, the media, and institutions of publishing and criticism serve the interests of gender – men – rather than class or capital. As Michèle Barrett argues this raises the question of whether it is axiomatic that ideology is related to social class, as claimed by Marx, and requires one to ‘rethink what is meant by the term ruling class’. She further argues that Marx is arguing that ruling ideas, in certain periods, are essentially and not contingently connected to relations of production, ‘they are dominant material relationships grasped as ideas’. This is problematic in terms of a general theory of ideology: for example, it is possible to attribute nationalism or patriotism to a social group that cuts across class divisions, and so ideology here is not exclusive in terms of its class-bias.

For Eagleton, the ruling class – ruling ideas nexus suggests ‘a direct hook-up between consciousness and power, which goes far beyond any... insistence that ideas are socially conditioned’. He argues that this point, later developed by Marxists, shows that ‘ideas are weapons in the field of struggle – that an ‘ideological’ discourse ... means one which ... will

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174 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, op.cit., p.64. Related to this definition is Marx’s statement that some of the bourgeoisie appear as thinkers of the class, ‘its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood’. Ibid., p.65.
175 Michèle Barrett, op.cit, p.10.
176 Ibid., p.11.
177 Ibid., p.11.
178 See Bhikhu Parekh, quoted in ibid, p.12.
betray in its limits and emphases, its silences, gaps and internal contradictions, the imprint of real material conflicts. …[I]t also represents an attempt to mask the very conflicts from which it springs, either by denying that they exist, or by asserting their unimportance or inevitability. Ideologies are sets of discursive strategies for displacing, recasting or spuriously accounting for realities which prove embarrassing to a ruling power; and in so doing, they contribute to that power’s self-legitimation.’180 This is a very contemporary view of ideology that has been incorporated into film theory.

That ideologies are ‘universalising’ and mask conflict, stems at least partly from the description given by Marx and Engels of class-based revolution:

In now considering the course of history we detach the ideas of the ruling class from … itself and attribute them to an independent existence … we can say … that during the time that the aristocracy was dominant, the concepts of honour, loyalty, etc., were dominant, during the dominance of the bourgeoisie the concepts of freedom, equality, etc. … [Hence] increasingly abstract ideas hold sway … which increasingly take on the form of universality. For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled … to represent its interests as the common interest of all the members of society … expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones.181

A further feature of ideology is that dominant ideologies are unifying, lending coherence to groups and imposing a unity on society.182 N. Abercrombie, S. Hill and B.S. Turner, however, question this assumption of cohesion.183 In advanced capitalist societies, they argue, the dominant ideology is fissured and not necessarily incorporated into the

180 Ibid., pp.7 - 8.
181 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, op.cit., p.65.
consciousness of other subjected classes. Rather ‘consent’ and social cohesion is obtained through economic means.  

Although the concept of the ‘ruling class’ in advanced capitalist societies is not clear cut, as Robert Morris notes, Marx attributed the class structure in Britain expressly to the capitalist mode of production, i.e. to private ownership of the means of production and a money exchange economy. In eighteenth century Britain, class structure was dominated by the owners of capital, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat who sold their labour. Although other classes existed, Marx felt that the conflict between capital and labour was decisive in the distribution of wealth and power. For him, the economic relationship between the two major social classes was exploitative and linked to political domination. That said, the social classes were not homogeneous; there was conflict between landed and industrial capital amongst the bourgeoisie, and between skilled craftsmen and casual labour amongst the proletariat. But the capitalist class was unified in its battle against the proletariat who also came together to protect their interests, for instance, bargaining on the same side for wages.

As the industrial revolution progressed, the self-awareness of the middle and working classes grew with the growth of trades unions, political parties and pressure groups. The radical press

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184 Ibid.
185 R. J. Morris, Class and Class Consciousness in the Industrial Revolution 1780-1850 (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1979), p.22. But writing about the July revolution in France in 1830, Marx argued that the power behind the throne was composed of bankers, stock exchange brokers and large landed proprietors. Since the petty bourgeoisie and the peasants had no political power, the opposition to the finance aristocracy was provided by the industrial bourgeoisie. See Karl Marx, The Class Struggles in France, (composed 1850, published 1895), reprinted in Selected Writings, op.cit., pp.287-290.
187 R. J. Morris, op.cit., pp.23-24. For Marx the concept of class was a politically dynamic one. For instance, where a class was not aware of its condition of being exploited, Marx used the concept of ‘class in itself’ as opposed to ‘class for itself’. See ibid., p.25.
in Britain, for example, had a significant impact on the growth of working-class awareness and the efficiency of their organisations because it had a national audience.\textsuperscript{188}

But by the nineteenth century, the class structure became more complex. Growing numbers of shopkeepers and school teachers were not absorbed into any of the major classes. The growth of government agencies produced a powerful administrative class that did not own capital.\textsuperscript{189} Nevertheless, Morris concludes that Marx provides a valuable insight into social relationships during the industrial revolution.

2.14 The fourth definition of ideology is provided by the \textit{Preface to A Critique of Political Economy}, published in 1859:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society … on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life processes in general. … [A] distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.\textsuperscript{190}

This passage introduces three theses on ideology: the ‘base- superstructure’ argument, ideology as ‘struggle’ and the distinction between science / knowledge and ideology. For Marx, the economic foundation determines the legal and political superstructure and social

\textsuperscript{189} R. J. Morris, \textit{op.cit.}, p.25.
consciousness. Hence, in order to transforms social consciousness, it is necessary to transform the economic conditions and relations of production which create it.

However, in this model the relationship of ‘social consciousness’ to the superstructure remains ambiguous. Stuart Hall has argued that there are in fact possibly three levels in the base-superstructure model: the base of material production, the level of civil society and the state, and finally, the level of philosophy, religion, consciousness and so on.191

The refusal here to relate ideology to ‘society as the polity’ has led to severe criticism of this economic determinist position.192 Georg Lukács, for example, argues that the class consciousness of the proletariat is a transformative force. For Lukács, thought and reality are part of a dialectical process as in Hegelian analysis. He argues that Marx in his historical critique of economics reanalysed the ‘reified objectives of social and economic life into relations between men’.193 In so doing, he also does away with individual consciousness as a motivating factor since, ‘as Engels emphasises in a letter to Mehring, this consciousness is false. However, the dialectical method … requires us to investigate this ‘false consciousness’ concretely as an aspect of the historical totality and as a stage in the historical process.’194 Concrete analysis would involve ‘society as a whole’.195 Hence:

By relating consciousness to the whole of society it becomes possible to infer the thoughts and feelings which men would have in a particular situation if they were able to assess both it and the interests arising from it in their impact on immediate action and on the whole structure of society. … Now class consciousness consists … of the appropriate

191 Stuart Hall quoted in Michèle Barrett, op.cit, p.13.
192 Michèle Barrett, ibid.
194 Ibid., p.35.
195 Ibid.
and rational reactions ‘imputed’ (zugerechnet) to a typical position in the process of production. ... [T]he historically significant actions of the class as a whole are determined in the last resort by this consciousness and not by [individual] thought ... and these actions can be understood only by reference to this consciousness.196

Lukács then goes on to consider the ‘practical, historical function of class consciousness’.197 He argues that for a class to attain hegemony, its interests and consciousness must coincide and enable it to organise the whole of society in accordance with those interests. To his own question: ‘which class possesses this capacity and this consciousness at the decisive moment?’ he answers that it cannot be the bourgeoisie because it failed to ‘perfect its fundamental science, its own science of classes’.198 It is only the proletariat class that can achieve this transformation in the context of its struggle with the bourgeoisie.199 The fate of mankind, Lukács concludes, depends on the ‘ideological maturity of the proletariat, i.e. on its class consciousness’.200

Lukács’s thesis has been criticised because, amongst other things, it treats social class as Subject, equipped with a ‘cohesive form of consciousness’, yet it is doubtful that class consciousness is that unified.201 Further, it attributes too great an importance to ideology at the expense of other forms of power and manipulation, although Lukács concedes that ‘such a transfer of power can often only be brought about by the most ruthless use of force’.202

Finally, his assertion that ‘For the proletariat the truth is a weapon that brings victory’, locates truth in the consciousness of a ‘progressive’ class, making ‘truth’ contingent to the

196 Ibid., p.36.
197 Ibid. Emphasis in the original.
198 Ibid., pp.37- 38.
200 Ibid., p.48.
202 Georg Lukács, Class Consciousness, op.cit., p.37.
historical situation of a specific social class.\textsuperscript{203} In addition to the problems associated with the notion of ‘objective truth’, Lukács attributes a ‘universal, objective status to the subjectivity of the working class’.\textsuperscript{204}

Aside from the statement regarding the ‘ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out’, Marx does not elaborate on ideology as struggle. This concept is both discussed at length and transformed by Antonio Gramsci. Referring explicitly to the Marxist notion of ideology, Gramsci differentiates between ‘negative value judgement(s)’ where ‘a given political solution is “ideological” – i.e. that it is not sufficient to change the structure ... [and] it is asserted that it is useless, stupid, etc.’ and ‘historically organic ideologies … which are necessary to a given structure . . . . To the extent that ideologies are historically necessary they have validity which is “psychological”’; they “organise” human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle etc.’\textsuperscript{205}

Importantly, Gramsci develops the concept of hegemony, or the organisation of consent, in contrast to the class-based concept of ideology in classical Marxist analysis. He writes:

\begin{quote}
[We can] ... fix two major superstructural “levels”: ...“civil society” ... [and] “political society” or “the State”. These two levels correspond ... to the function of “hegemony” which the dominant group exercises throughout society and ... [also] to ... “direct domination” or command exercised through the State and “juridical” government. ... The intellectuals are the dominant group’s “deputies” exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government. These comprise:

1. The “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., p.46.  
\textsuperscript{204} Gareth Stedman-Jones quoted in Michèle Barrett, op.cit, p.25  
consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.

2. The apparatus of state coercive power which “legally” enforces discipline on those groups who do not “consent” either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and … [when] spontaneous consent has failed.206

The intellectuals, for Gramsci, perform a mediating function in the struggle between the classes. The working class, he argues, can develop organic intellectuals from within its own ranks. They would provide a link between the class and sections of the traditional intelligentsia. It is through conscious responsibility, aided by ideas and personnel from the advanced bourgeois intellectual strata, that the proletariat could advance towards hegemony.207

Gramsci’s notion of hegemony is wider than that of ideology: it includes the notion of ‘spontaneous consent’ and the coercive power of the State. It also differs from classical Marxist formulations in that the relationship between knowledge and ideology is ‘bi-directional’.208 Larrain argues that, for Gramsci, this is the case because intellectuals are created by classes, science develops from activity, and proletarian ideology can be a mix of ideological common sense and the scientific philosophy of praxis.209

As to the science / ideology divide in classical Marxist theory, Jacques Rancière argues that scientific theories are transmitted through discourses, traditions and institutions which constitute bourgeois ideology. ‘The dominant ideology is … the very space in which

206 Ibid., p.12.
207 Ibid., p.4.
208 Jorge Larrain quoted in Michèle Barrett, op.cit, p.38.
209 Ibid.
scientific knowledges are inscribed ... [where] they are articulated as elements of a social formation’s knowledge. It is in the forms of the dominant ideology that a scientific theory becomes an object of knowledge’. Further, he argues, the ideology / science couplet reintroduces the metaphysical tradition; discourse is divided between the true and the false, a world of Science and the Other and concludes that ‘If ideology is not grasped as a site of a struggle, it immediately slips into this place determined by the history of metaphysics: the place of the Other of Science.’

2.15 The fifth definition incorporates the concept of ‘alienation’ and presents ideology as a structural phenomenon. Since this concept is so central to Marx’s entire analysis of the workings of the capitalist economy, it is necessary to begin by briefly considering ‘alienation’ in Hegelian thought.

2.15a In the Philosophy of History, Hegel uses historical fact as his raw material in an attempt to demonstrate history as a rational process of development, and to reveal the significance and meaning of world history. He argues: ‘The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom.’

Beginning with the oriental world, Hegel claims that the civilisations of China and India were ‘stationary’, i.e. they did not develop. They lacked individual freedom and were ruled by despots. Persia was different in that the Zoroastrian State was based on a general principle, a

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211 Ibid., p.147.
213 Hegel, quoted in ibid, p.11.
Law (Deana) which applied to all and which was cognisant of the moral order of the universe.\textsuperscript{214} Although an inegalitarian society, change in Persia was possible. A rule based on spiritual or intellectual principles marked the beginning of the growth of the consciousness of freedom.

In the ancient Greece, by contrast, there was recognition of ‘free individuality’ but the principle was not fully developed.\textsuperscript{215} Slavery demonstrated that not all people were free. Further, Hegel claimed, the Greeks had no concept of individual conscience since they thought of themselves in terms of their community and city-state.\textsuperscript{216} They also sought guidance from the oracle; yet reason elevates people above chance events, and so genuine freedom requires critical thought and reflection. Socrates was revolutionary in that he taught that critical reflection and not custom was the final arbiter of right and wrong.\textsuperscript{217}

For Hegel, the Roman world \textit{appeared} as though it had reverted to the despotic oriental model, but history, though not smooth, is not regressive. The Roman political constitution and legal system held individual right as a fundamental principle. But this remained a legal form, since ‘concrete individuality’ was crushed with brute force.\textsuperscript{218} Christianity was a step forward since it recognised man as a spiritual being: Jesus, as both man and son of God, showed man had within ‘an infinite value and eternal destiny’, if he could rid himself of natural desires.\textsuperscript{219}

\textsuperscript{214} For an explanation of Zoroastrian principles see Ervad Masani, ‘The Zoroastrian Ideal Man’, @http://tenets.zoroastrianism.com/zidealman33.pdf.
\textsuperscript{215} Peter Singer, op.cit., p.13.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., p.14.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., p.15.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., p.16.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., p.17.
The most important event in the ‘Germanic world’ for Hegel was the Reformation. It proclaimed that everyone could recognise his own spiritual nature and achieve his salvation: ‘Man in his very nature is destined to be free.’ Since the Reformation, the role of history has been to transform the world so as to realise this individual freedom. But in order to receive universal assent, the world had to conform to rational standards. Hence, all social institutions including those relating to law, property, social morality, and government had to conform to principles of reason.

The French Revolution, argued Hegel, was also an attempt to achieve a rational basis for governance, but it failed because the bourgeoisie attempted to apply abstract principles without regard to the disposition of the people. Reason could not be applied in isolation of the existing community. The importance of the French Revolution, however, lay in the principles it passed on to other countries such as Germany. Hence, for Hegel, ‘the history of the world is nothing but the development of the idea of freedom’.

Importantly, the Reformation linked the idea of individual freedom with the development of an individual conscience. Hegel argues that self-consciousness cannot exist in isolation and needs a contrast. But since this external object, or another self-consciousness, stands in opposition to it, it develops a love-hate relationship with it. Hence, self-consciousness can only develop in a context of social interaction.

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221 Ibid.
222 Ibid., p.21.
223 Hegel quoted in ibid., p.22.
224 Ibid., p.59.
Further, self-consciousness ‘seeks to become pure’ in the sense of not being reliant on or attached to material objects, including its own body or that of another. 225 To prove this it engages in a life-and-death struggle with the other, but this is not really helpful as it needs the other to receive acknowledgement. Hence, it lets the other live, but establishes a master / slave relationship with it. This is the division between the ruler and the ruled. But the relationship is unstable, since the master thinks of the slave as a ‘thing’ and fails to both give and receive adequate acknowledgement. The difference with the slave is that he fashions material objects, making his ideas into something tangible, and through this process he becomes more aware of his consciousness. Thus, ‘even under the direction of a hostile mind, the slave discovers that he has a mind of his own’.226

It was this notion that Marx developed into the concept of ‘alienated labour’. For Marx, the worker puts the best of himself into that which he creates, thereby ‘objectifying’ or externalising himself. But he loses this objectified essence, to the owner of capital, and the object later comes to have an oppressive influence over him. This concept was a forerunner to the theory of surplus value which forms the basis of Marx’s critique of capitalist economies.227 Hegel had argued that this alienation would cease when the self-conscious being realised that the world was his creation and not external to him. Marx disagreed with Hegel that alienation was not real but simply appeared to be so. For Marx, the external world was real and indeed, a part of man’s nature.228

225 Ibid., p.60.
226 Ibid., p.61.
227 Ibid., pp.61- 62.
Marx’s concept of alienated labour, and the fifth definition of ideology, first appeared in the essay *On the Jewish Question* (1843-44) where he wrote:

Money is the universal, self-constituted value of all things. It has ... robbed the whole world, human as well as natural, of its own values. Money is the alienated essence of man’s work and being, this essence dominates him and he adores it.\(^{229}\)

In *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) (*Paris Manuscripts*), Marx wrote:

Using the very words of political economy we have demonstrated that the worker is degraded to the most miserable sort of commodity; that the misery of the worker is in inverse proportion to the power and size of his production; that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands, and thus a more terrible restoration of monopoly; and that finally the distinction between capitalist and landlord, and that between peasant and industrial worker disappears and the whole society must fall apart into two classes of the property owners and the propertyless workers.\(^{230}\)

Marx argued that alienated labour had four aspects to it: first, the worker was related to the product as to an alien object which opposed him. Second, the worker became alienated from himself in the very act of production – he did not view the work as part of his real life and became distanced from it. Third, man’s ‘species-life’ or social essence was taken away from him. And, finally, as a consequence, he became alienated from other men.\(^{231}\) The reason that this alienation took place was due to the commodification of objects.\(^{232}\)

Marx also argued that the wage contract involved exploitation but presented itself as equal exchange and competition obscured the fact that value is determined by labour-time.\(^{233}\) Quite distinct from his metaphor of the *camera obscura* and the related concept of cognitive

\(^{229}\) Karl Marx, *On the Jewish Question*, (1843-44), in Selected Writings, op.cit., p.60.
\(^{230}\) Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, (1844), in Selected Writings, op.cit., p.77.
distortion, Marx now argues that it is in the nature of capitalist society to present itself other than how it is; the distortion is structural, ‘an unavoidable effect of its routine operations’.\(^{234}\)

John Mepham concludes that the analysis of commodity fetishism is just one example of a general theory that ‘the origin of ideological illusions is in the phenomenal forms of reality itself’.\(^{235}\)

2.16 The final definition is pointed out by Stuart Hall who notes that in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), Louis Napoleon’s regime represents the interests of the small-holding peasantry. He writes: ‘Louis Napoleon … is the *conductor* of the power of this class to the political level. Capital settles for ‘postponement’. ‘Bonapartism’ is its name and form.’\(^{236}\) Here, the superstructure is not a simple reflection of the base. This position is clearly contradictory to the classical Marxist theory, but Barrett argues that in analysing the social totality from different perspectives, Marx has allowed for the contribution of thinkers from a wide intellectual spectrum.\(^{237}\)

As has been noted, these various definitions of ideology within Marxist theory have been criticised. However, one of the most severe criticisms has been from a post-Marxist perspective. For example, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe challenge ‘the ontological centrality of the working class’, the role of revolution in the transformation of society, and the idea of a homogeneous collective ‘that will render pointless the moment of politics’.\(^{238}\) They argue that ‘the plural, multifarious character of contemporary social struggles has finally dissolved ... that political imaginary. Peopled with ‘universal’ subjects and


\(^{235}\) John Mepham quoted in quoted in Michèle Barrett, op.cit, p.15.

\(^{236}\) Stuart Hall quoted in Michèle Barrett, op.cit, p.14.

\(^{237}\) Ibid.

conceptually built around History in the singular, it has postulated ‘society’ as an intelligible structure that could be intellectually mastered on the basis of certain class positions and reconstituted as a rational, transparent order, through the founding act of a political character. Today, the Left is witnessing the final act of the dissolution of that Jacobin imaginary.”

However, it may be argued that this criticism is too dismissive, if only because the range of concepts made available by Marxist theory can still be utilised productively. For instance, Eagleton has argued that ideology, apart from the debate on cognitive distortions, is also concerned with the functions, effects and motivations of discourse. Further, ‘What most theories of ideology assert is that for oppressed and exploited peoples to emancipate themselves, a knowledge of how the social system works, and how they stand within it, is essential to their project. … [Also, the] theory of ideology claims further that it is in the interests of the system in question to forestall… accurate knowledge of its workings’. Hence, the critical concept of ideology is a necessary tool in political analyses.

2.2 There have certainly been attempts to progress the theory of ideology within Marxist thought. Karl Mannheim, for instance, adapted ideological analysis to a sociological method. His aim was to examine the historical basis of the ‘world views’ of a whole society. For Mannheim, the function of ideology was to rationalise a partisan view.

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239 Ibid.
240 Terry Eagleton, (ed), Ideology, op.cit, p.17.
241 A definition of rationalisation is ‘a procedure whereby the subject attempts to present an explanation that is either logically consistent or ethically acceptable for attitudes, ideas, feelings, etc., whose true motives are not perceived’. J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, The Language of Psycho-Analysis, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (London, W. W. Norton & Company, 1980), p.375.
Mannheim examined the social conditions of the collective and the intellectual attributes of an historical epoch, ‘the correspondence between the situation to be known and the forms of knowledge’. He wrote:

As a result of the expansion of the ideological concept, a new mode of understanding has come into existence. … As soon as all parties are able to analyse ideas in ideological terms, all elements of meaning change qualitatively …. The problems of ‘false consciousness’ and of the nature of reality take on a different significance. This point of view forces us to recognise that our axioms, our ontology, and our epistemology have been profoundly transformed.

The tendency of development from the particular to the total is constantly being intensified. Instead of ... showing the adversary suffers from ... distortions on a psychological or experiential plane, the tendency now is to subject his total structure of consciousness ... to a thoroughgoing sociological analysis.

Mannheim attempted to show, through a sociological analysis, the relationship between an intellectual viewpoint and social conditions, and to investigate what constituted reliable knowledge through a historical-sociological procedure he termed relativism.

2.21 Jürgen Harbermas of the post-Marxist school of Critical Theory, also known as the Frankfurt School, has argued, on the other hand, that the nature of advanced capitalist society is so different to the system Marx analysed, that a critical theory can no longer be constructed exclusively along the lines of a critique of political economy. For Habermas, state intervention, bureaucracy, and technological development have eroded the sphere of public, democratic discourse. The increase in state intervention has been necessary to stabilise the business cycle, but what this means is that politics is not solely a phenomenon of the superstructure. Hence, ‘society and the state are no longer in the relationship that Marxian

243 Ibid., p.61.
244 Ibid., p.63.
theory has defined as the base and the superstructure’. And this calls for a new perspective on ideology ‘oriented ... to the social results ... of government action designed to compensate for the dysfunction of free exchange’. Elements of the policy based on this ideology include levels of performance and a guaranteed minimum level of welfare, aimed at a stable income and secure employment.

For Harbermas government intervention is negative, directed at risk avoidance, and democratic discussion and decision-making are eliminated; consequently, ‘the new politics of state interventionism requires a depoliticisation of the mass of the population’. This raises the question: ‘how will the depoliticisation of the masses be made plausible to them? Marcuse would ... answer: by having technology and science also take on the role of an ideology.’

Habermas goes on to explain that since the end of the nineteenth century, there has been a ‘scientization of technology’. With large-scale industrial research linking the military sector to civilian production, science and technology have become a leading productive force. Habermas writes:

It is true that social interests still determine the direction, functions and pace of technical progress. But these interests define the social system so much as a whole that they coincide with the interest in maintaining the system. ... The quasi-autonomous progress of science and technology then appears as an independent variable on which ... economic growth depends. Thus arises a perspective in which the development of the social system seems to be determined by the logic of scientific-technological progress ... [and] propaganda can refer to the role of technology and science in order to explain and legitimate why in modern societies the process of democratic decision-making about

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246 Ibid.
247 Ibid., p.192.
248 Ibid.
249 Ibid., p.193.
250 Ibid.
251 Ibid.
practical problems loses its function and ‘must’ be replaced by plebiscitary decisions about alternative sets of leaders of administrative personnel. ...What ... [is] important is that ... [this thesis] can also become a background ideology that penetrates into the consciousness of the depoliticized mass of the population, where it can take on legitimating power.252

Habermas goes on to argue that because technological consciousness does not utilise a frame of reference in ordinary language, the new ideology violates a fundamental condition of cultural existence: the socialisation and individuation consequent to communication in ordinary language.253 Hence, the new ideology needs to be analysed beyond the level of particular class interest, to take into account the interests of mankind ‘engaged in the process of self-constitution’. 254

2.22 Louis Althusser’s structuralist model presents ideology as the ‘imaginary’ relation to lived conditions of existence. Ideology functions at an unconscious level, is embodied in material ‘apparatuses’ and constitutes subjects through the process of interpellation. Althusser begins his thesis by arguing that ideology is an indispensable and organic part of every social group, but it is ‘profoundly unconscious’.255 Ideology impinges on men through structures and not via their consciousness. These structures ‘are perceived – accepted – suffered cultural objects and they act functionally on men via a process that escapes them. Men ‘live’ their ideologies … as their ‘world’ itself.’256

Elucidating these structures, Althusser explains that the ‘superstructure’ is divided into two levels: ‘the politico-legal (law and the State) and ideology (the different ideologies, religious,
ethical, legal, political, etc.). These two levels correspond to the (repressive) State Apparatus (SA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). The SA includes the government, army, police, and law courts, while the ISAs include schools, churches, the family, trades unions, and the arts, amongst other social and cultural institutions. Althusser argues that the SA operates predominantly by violence, and the ISAs predominantly by ideology. Also, the diverse ISAs are unified by this ideology ‘beneath the ruling ideology, which is the ideology of ‘the ruling class’.

Further, Althusser maintains that ‘to my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses’. It is thus, that ISAs are the site of class struggle. However, the class struggle is ‘rooted elsewhere than in ideology, in the infrastructure, in the relations of production, which are relations of exploitation and constitute the base for class relations’. In explaining the function of ISAs, Althusser notes that relations of production are reproduced first by the processes of production and circulation, but also by ideological relations which form part of these processes.

Given this structuralist model, ideology for Althusser is ‘omni-historical’ in that its ‘structure and functioning are immutable, present in the same form throughout … history’. Here, he cites Freud, arguing that ideology is eternal in the same way that for Freud, the unconscious is eternal: ‘If eternal means, not transcendent to all (temporal) history, but omnipresent, trans-
historical and therefore immutable in form throughout the extent of history, I shall adopt Freud's expression word for word, and write ideology is eternal, exactly like the unconscious.  

He then asserts that ‘Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.’ He explains that, for example, religious and political ideologies are ‘world outlooks’ which are largely imaginary. That said, they make allusions to reality and need to be ‘interpreted’ to find the reality behind the representation. However, ideologies also exist in ISAs and its practices. A person who ‘act(s) according to his ideas’ inscribes his ideas in his material practice.

Althusser now arrives at his central thesis: ‘Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects’. He asserts that ideology is only possible in the context of the category of the subject and its functioning: ‘ideology has the function of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects’. The subject, he says, is a ‘primary ‘obviousness’’ that one cannot fail to recognise and this is an ideological effect. At work here is the ideological recognition function, another being the function of misrecognition. Individuals are ‘always already subjects’ and constantly

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p.162. The word ‘imaginary’ is borrowed from Lacan as Paul Hirst notes. He explains that the imaginary modality is necessary since the conditions of existence cannot be given in experience as there is a lack of correspondence between the experiences of an interpellated subject and what might be true social relations, or real conditions of existence. See Paul Hirst, ‘Problems and Advances in the Theory of Ideology’ reprinted in Terry Eagleton, (ed), Ideology, op.cit., pp.119 – 120. See also Dino Felluga, ‘Modules on Althusser: On Ideology’, @http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/ Marxism/modules/althusserideologymainframe.html.}\]
\[\text{Louis Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy, op.cit., p.162.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p.168.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p.170.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p.171.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p.172.}\]
practice the ritual of ideological recognition. And although one is aware of this recognition, the mechanism is opaque.

Further, ideology ‘hails’ or interpellates individuals as concrete subjects through the functioning of the category of subject. It ‘recruits’ subjects among individuals or transforms the latter into subjects. However, as ideology is eternal, ‘individuals have always already been subjects’ even before birth.

The thrust of Althusser’s thesis is to challenge the idea that ideology is falsity. For him, ideas are inscribed in social practices and expressed in objective social forms; importantly, ideology constitutes individuals. However, there are several points of criticism regarding Althusser’s thesis. First, Eagleton argues that it is unclear how a subject recognises himself if he is not already a subject; if he is, what does interpellation achieve? Second, it is difficult to visualise an ‘always already subject’ before birth as it implies a ‘centred’ individual. Further, Eagleton suggests, Althusser has misread Lacan: his imaginary subject corresponds with the ego, but for Lacan the ego is constituted in the imaginary as a unified entity, whereas the subject ‘as a whole’ is the split, lacking, desiring effect of the unconscious. The consequence is that Althusser’s subject is more stable ‘since the buttoned-down ego is standing in for the dishevelled unconscious’. The political impact, Eagleton significantly argues, is to reduce the ‘potentially rebellious clamour’ of the subject, ignoring the possibility of it obtaining a place in the social order ‘only ambiguously and precariously’. This also has implications for the governing ideological signifiers with which the subject identifies.

272 Ibid.
273 Ibid., p.173.
274 Ibid., p.176.
276 Ibid.
277 Ibid.
Here again, if the power that subjects individuals is stable, centred and unchanging, the
‘chances of opposing it would seem remote’. 278

A criticism offered by Barrett is that Althusser has failed to reconcile his two perspectives on
ideology: the first as an aspect of the reproduction of class relations in capitalism, the second
as the interpellation of subjects which has led to a continuing divide between those who see
ideology as a function in the reproduction of capitalism, and those who think of it in terms of
the creation of subjectivity. 279

2.23 John Frow’s model of ideology incorporates central Foucauldian concepts into the
general outlines of Marxist theory. 280 For Frow, ideology is a ‘mobile, disunified field in
which discourse and power configure in different ways’. 281 He asserts that the concept of
ideology must not be considered in terms of ‘truth’ or ‘falsity’ but in terms of the production
of categories and entities in the field of discourse. He rejects the economic determinism in the
classical Marxist model, suggests that the category of subject should be seen as not the origin
but the effect of utterance, and calls for the examination of the ‘multiple and variable limits
within which relations of power and knowledge are produced’. 282 However, he incorporates
Gramsci’s notion of the hegemonic practice of the ruling class. He writes:

[The] political force of the concept of ideology must be retained. But ... the ideological ...
should be regarded as a state of discourse or of semiotic systems in relation to the class
struggle. ... Given that all discourse is informed by power, is constituted as discourse in
relation to unequal patterns of power, then political judgments can be made in terms of
particular historically specific appropriations of discourse by dominant social forces.
…[T]his involves two distinct theses: first, that of the productivity of power; second, that

278 Ibid.
279 Michèle Barrett, op.cit, p.97.
281 Ibid. 
282 Ibid.
of the inequality of powers. … Every use of discourse is ... a judgment about its relation to dominant forms of power and either an assent or a resistance to this relation.283

Frow goes on to argue that since power is ‘always asymmetrically split’ ideology refers to ‘a particular political functionalisation of speech’, and in his Formal Method in Discourse Analysis, presents an essentially linguistic analysis.284 Nevertheless, given the criticism with regard to notions of agency in Foucault’s analysis, Frow offers interesting insights into how ‘resistance’ may function. Frow’s concept of ideology concerns the ‘differential, and differentially effective, investment of discourse by power, and in particular ruling-class power’.285 At stake, he argues, is the consolidation of class power and ‘the reproduction of the conditions for the extraction of surplus value’, and these conditions are ‘always a combination of economic structures, the juridical and political relations buttressing them, judicial and military force or its potential, and the ‘consent’ of the working classes’.286

Hegemonic strategies establish a non-stable balance between contradictory forces in a ‘fragile and difficult process of containment’.287

Ideology and resistance are ‘uses of discourse’, and resistance may fracture ‘the ideological from within’ or turn it for counter-hegemonic purposes by the use of force.288 However, the conditions of possibility are given by the structure of discourse and ‘take the form of

283 Ibid., p.296.
284 Ibid. See also John Frow, ‘Formal Method in Discourse Analysis’ @ http://www.phillwebb.net/history/TwentiethCentury/Continental/(Post)Structuralisms/StructuralistMarxism/Frow/Frow.htm
286 Ibid.
287 Ibid.
288 Ibid., p.298.
enunciative acts and judgments about the status of those acts’.\footnote{Ibid.} Hence Frow circumvents the problem of agency by substituting a social class.

2.24 Michel Foucault’s understanding of the concept of ideology is, however, post-Marxist. He contests the notion of ideology in Marxist theory largely on the grounds of the science / ideology distinction, the centred, unified individual agent and class subject, and the linear economic determinism of the classical model. Foucault argues that in Marxism ideology stands ‘in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth’.\footnote{Michel Foucault, ‘Truth and Power’, in Colin Gordon, op.cit., p.118.} The problem, he suggests, is not to distinguish between scientificty / truth and distortion but to see ‘historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false’.\footnote{Ibid.}

Further, the concept refers ‘to something of the order of the subject’ i.e it rests on a humanist understanding of a unified, individual subject and it ‘stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant’.\footnote{Ibid.}

Foucault’s concept of ideology is linked to his thesis on discursive practices. He notes:

The question of ideology that is asked of science is not the question of situations or practices that it reflects more or less consciously; nor is it the question of the possible use or misuse to which it could be put; it is the question of its existence as a discursive practice and of its functioning among other practices.\footnote{Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, op.cit., p.185.}

Further,
It can be said that political economy has a role in capitalist society ... it serves the interests of the bourgeois class ... it was made by and for that class, and ... bears the mark of its origins even in its concepts and logical architecture; but any more precise description of the relations between the epistemological structure of political economy and its ideological function must take into account the analysis of the discursive formation that gave rise to it and a group of objects, concepts, and theoretical choices that it had to develop and systematize; and one must then show how the discursive practice that gave rise to such a positivity functioned among other practices that might have been of a discursive, but also of a political or economic, order.²⁹⁴

Foucault goes on to argue that scienticity does not necessarily exclude ideology, and the latter is not synonymous with distortion or error. Although ‘theoretical contradictions, lacunae, defects may indicate the ideological functioning of science’ the analysis must take into account ‘relations between the rules of formation and the structures of scienticity’.²⁹⁵ Clarifying the ideological content of a discourse does not rid the discourse of it since it is a constituent element of that discourse, and the aim of analysis should be to investigate ideology with regard to ‘the system of formation of its objects, its types of encunciation, its concepts, its theoretical choices. It is to treat it as one practice among others’.²⁹⁶

Foucault’s concept of power was developed in opposition to the Marxist concept of power as the instrument of a dominant class which controlled the means of production. Foucault asks:

¿Is power always in a subordinate position relative to the economy? Is it always in the service of, and ultimately answerable to, the economy? ... Is it destined to realise, consolidate, maintain and reproduce the relations appropriate to the economy and essential to its functioning? ... ¿Is it ... something that one possesses, acquires, cedes through force or contract, that one alienates or recovers, that circulates, that voids this or that region? Or, on the contrary, do we need to employ varying tools in its analysis – even

²⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.185 -186.
²⁹⁵ Ibid., p.186.
²⁹⁶ Ibid., p.186.
... when we allow that ... the relations of power do indeed remain profoundly enmeshed in ... economic relations and participate with them in a common circuit?\textsuperscript{297}

For Foucault power is something that is exercised not possessed, nor is it attached to agents but is incorporated in an entire network of relations; power also functions in a productive capacity in that it constitutes subjects. In contrast to Marxist theory, a productive body here is one that is subjected, and since power is co-extensive with the social body, there are no ‘free individuals’ on whom power descends.\textsuperscript{298}

To conclude, the difficulty with applying much of Marxist theory may lie in the fact that modern social, political and cultural life has little in common with that of the nineteenth century. As Habermas especially has shown, the ‘scientization of technology’ and government intervention in the business cycle makes it difficult to utilise the Marxist model of base and superstructure. Further, post-modernist thought offers more complex analyses of questions of causality and determination, the science / ideology distinction, the production of knowledge and ‘truth’, and the concept of subjectivity. Nevertheless, as Eagleton has argued, the notion of ideas as ‘weapons in the field of struggle’ and the concept of ideology as ‘discursive strategies for displacing, recasting or spuriously accounting for realities’ is clearly still useful and is used in disciplines such as film theory.\textsuperscript{299}

But a purely ideological analysis can be inadequate where significant aspects of a text concern extreme power differentials and the impact this has on people’s lives. Here, Foucault’s thesis of a power matrix of unequal distributions is extremely useful as it shows the constraints, at a local level, that affect actions. Also, any analysis incorporating

\textsuperscript{297} Ibid.’ p.89.
\textsuperscript{298} Michèlé Barrett, op.cit, p.136.
\textsuperscript{299} Terry Eagleton, (ed), Ideology, op.cit., pp.7 - 8.
Foucault’s proposition that ideology be analysed as one discursive practice among others, will focus on the play between a variety of structures, practices, economic, social, and political relationships in historical context, all revealing perhaps a more detailed and nuanced analysis of the text.\textsuperscript{300} Hence, there is some merit in combining all these elements in an ideological analysis especially in a modern context.

Ideological Analysis in Film Theory

Ideological analysis in film theory developed in response to the events in France in May 1968 which politicised the theory largely from a Marxist perspective. However, this development was also in response to the dissatisfaction with *auteur* theory.  

3.1 Classic *auteur* theory originated in a critical methodology which developed from a case constructed by François Truffaut for ‘*la politique des auteurs*’ – ‘an approach through authors’ or ‘a strategy of authors’ – in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, January 1954. Truffaut’s article was passionate and polemical, arguing against French film criticism which esteemed a ‘quality’ cinema, both literary and concerned with social themes, and the political criticism of the French Left, which did not regard individual contributions to film production as significant.

Truffaut proposed instead a *cinéma d’auteurs*, a cinema of personal expression. Doniol-Valcroze identified Truffaut’s 1954 article as the ‘real point of departure’ in French film criticism. Thereafter, the critical methodology employed was *la politique des auteurs*.

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301 A very brief overview of classic *auteur* theory and post-*auteur* structuralism is presented here, with mention of other modes of analysis, to provide a context for the development of ideological analysis in film theory.


304 John Caughie, op.cit., p.35.
La politique des auteurs was constructed for American Hollywood cinema. The young French Cahiers critics selected directors such as John Ford, Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, and Orson Welles as great auteurs inside the Hollywood studio system. One of the spurs to the development of this critical methodology was that, after World War II, an entire backlog of American films was shown in France. The impact on the French audience and critics was enormous. Pam Cook writes:

Against [the] background of contradictory historical circumstances, the European intellectual tradition which saw the artist as a voice of dissent in society took on a polemical force in film criticism. … The politique was signalled by Alexandre Astruc’s 1948 article … calling for a new language of cinema in which the individual artist could express his thoughts, using the camera to write a world-view, a philosophy of life.

In calling for this new language of cinema, Astruc wrote:

[The] cinema is quite simply becoming a means of expression … [It] is gradually becoming a language. By language I mean a form in which … an artist can express his thoughts … or translate his obsessions exactly as he does in the contemporary essay or novel. … I would like to call this new age of cinema the age of the caméra stylo.

La politique des auteurs was not a theory of cinema but a critical methodology. Its theoretical base was not defined. Edward Buscombe notes: “[Even] by this late date (1964) the questions of what an auteur is, and why the cinema should be discussed largely in terms of individual artists, [were] only answered by implication.” The polemical, passionate
articles in *Cahiers*, where critics disagreed (especially with editor André Bazin), revealed their assumptions, some theoretical criteria, and a very subjective analysis.311

The notion of unity and coherence produced by the personality of the author was central to *auterism*. Andrew Sarris wrote:

> The *auteur* critic … looks at film as a whole, a director as a whole. The parts, however entertainingly individual, must cohere meaningfully.312

An important aspect of classical *auterism* was the emphasis on *mise en scène*, described as ‘the ‘style’ in which the filmmaker expresses his personal concerns.’313 This emphasis created the *auteur* as the primary source of meaning, one who put forward a ‘coherent world-view … and manifested a unique individual style’.314

In 1960 Fereydoun Hoveyda discussed *Party Girl* (1958). His emphasis on *mise en scène*, on form over content, is made explicit (albeit in a humorous attachment to his own views):

> The subject of *Party Girl* … is idiotic. So what? … [Some ] critics keep harping back to how necessary it is not to neglect the importance of the screenplay, of the acting, of the production system. While they are about it, why not take into account as well the influence of the celestial bodies? … [*Party Girl*] remind(s) us that what constitutes the essence of cinema is … *mise en scène*. It is through this that everything on the screen is expressed, transforming as if by magic, a screenplay … imposed on the director, into something which is truly the film of an *auteur*. … It is not by examining immediate significance that we can come into contact with the *best films*, but by looking at the personal style of each author.315

311 Pam Cook notes “Bazin argued for a sociological approach to film which would take into account the historical moment of production. …[The younger critics were interested] in the possibility of manipulating the language of cinema to express the director’s personal concerns.” Pam Cook, op.cit., pp.119 - 120.
313 Pam Cook, op.cit., p.126.
314 Ibid., p.120.
315 Fereydoun Hoveyda, ‘La réponse de Nicholas Ray’, *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no.107, May 1960, reprinted in John Caughie, op.cit., pp.42-43. Emphasis added. Jacques Rivette, commenting on the work of Nicholas Ray, Richard Brooks, Anthony Mann and Robert Aldrich, wrote: “Violence is their prime virtue … a virile anger which comes from the heart, and lies less in the scenario … than in the tone of the narrative and the very technique of the *mise en scène*. … [It has] no other purpose than to make the accumulated debris of habit jump
Jacques Rivette wrote:

A cinéaste who has made great films in the past may make mistakes, but [these will likely be] ... more impressive than the successes of a ‘manufacturer’.

André Bazin disagreed. He argued:

I have tried to show how mediocre auteurs can ... make admirable films ... This does not mean that one has to deny the role of the auteur, but simply to give him back the presupposition without which the noun auteur remains but a halting concept. Auteur yes, but what of?

This was an especially prescient view. As auteur criticism developed into the auteur theory, and then auteur-structuralism, it eventually gave way in emphasis, to semiology, narrative structural criticism, genre criticism and feminist film theory which utilised concepts of psychoanalysis. The concept of authorship was not dispensed with, but balanced out by other critical methodologies.

Andrew Sarris introduced la politique des auteurs to America, but as a ‘theory’. Among the important elements of this ‘theory’ were the technical competence of the director, his ‘distinguishable personality’, and the interior meaning of the film ‘extrapolated from the tension between a director’s personality and his material’.

... [The] frequent resort to a technique which is discontinuous, halting ... is a form of that ‘superior madness’ which Cocteau speaks about, born out of the need for an immediate expression which accounts for and shares in the primary emotion of the auteur.” See Extract from Jacques Rivette, ‘Notes sur une révolution’, Cahiers du Cinéma, no.54, Christmas 1955, ibid., p.41.


Andrew Sarris, , ‘Notes on the auteur theory in 1962’, Film Culture, no.27, Winter 1962 - 63 reprinted in Joanne Hollows, Peter Hutchings and Mark Jancovich, (eds), The Film Studies Reader, op.cit., p.68.

Andrew Sarris, ibid., pp.68 - 69.
3.12 Dissatisfaction with Sarris’s theory led to a search for greater objectivity. Nowell-Smith writes:

The purpose of criticism [in auteur-structuralism is] … to uncover behind the superficial contrasts of subject and treatment a structural hard core of basic and often recondite motifs. The pattern formed by these motifs, which may be stylistic or thematic, is what gives an author’s work its particular structures, both defining it internally and distinguishing one body of work from another.\textsuperscript{320}

In Britain, the debate on auterism was conducted largely in \textit{Movie} magazine where it began to evolve into auteur-structuralism. \textit{Movie} critics accepted the dominant concept in \textit{la politique}, that the director was the main source of meaning, deduced from the \textit{mise en scène}.\textsuperscript{321} But there were differences, apart from \textit{Movie}’s less polemical style. Cook explains:

The \textit{Movie} critics’ approach to \textit{auteur} analysis … depended on a form of deductive criticism which \textit{a posteriori} reconstructed the \textit{auteur} by abstracting personal themes and styles from the films themselves. This reconstructed \textit{auteur} … bore no necessary resemblance to the actual person who directed the films, although … it always shared the same name. It was a construction built by the critic … \textit{Movie}’s \textit{auteur} analysis was different from the more romantic auterist approach which celebrates the presence of a visionary artist at the centre of the work.\textsuperscript{322}

The critical writing in \textit{Movie} was placed within the F.R. Leavis tradition.\textsuperscript{323} Distinctive here was the emphasis on the text at hand, without resort to an external theory.\textsuperscript{324} Leavis argued

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\begin{enumerate}
\item[322] Pam Cook, op.cit., p.153.
\item[323] John Caughie, op.cit., p.49.
\item[324] See ‘FR Leavis’ at \url{http://www.authortrek.com/f_r_leavis_page.html}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
that an author’s personality emerged ‘from an implicit relationship between the text and author … rather than being uttered as an explicit discourse’.

In a discussion between Jim Hillier, V.F. Perkins (and others) in Movie, Hillier asked Perkins:

H: Is the auteur a critical construct?
P: Yes … [but it] doesn’t make it a fabrication.
H: Isn’t the distinction important? With Hawks … there’s … [the] impulse to appeal to the actuality of the man … .
P: Do you feel that you know about the actuality of the man? … I find Hawks as a personality a baffling commodity to speculate upon … .

In 1969, Peter Wollen presented a theoretical basis for auteur-structuralism. He alluded to Vladimir Propp’s analysis. He then continued:

[There] is a danger as Lévi-Strauss has pointed out, that by simply noting and mapping resemblances, all the texts … will be … impoverished. … Structural criticism … must also comprehend a system of differences and oppositions.

In Ford’s films, Wollen identified ‘relevant pairs of opposites’ [antimonies]: ‘garden versus wilderness, plough-share versus sabre, settler versus nomad … [etc]’. However, Wollen

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325 John Caughie, op.cit., p.49.
327 Propp claimed an underlying ‘archi-tale’ of which all Russian fairy tales were variations. For a discussion of Propp’s analysis, see Pam Cook, op.cit., pp.234 - 236.
328 For a discussion of Claude Lévi-Strauss’ anthropological study and its application to film theory, see Pam Cook, op.cit., pp.232 - 234. Cook draws attention to an important point in Lévi-Strauss’ hypothesis, which Brian Henderson also uses to critique Wollen, that ‘myths have no single creative source: this is indeed what allows him to consider myth as a collective cultural phenomenon’. Ibid., p.233.
330 Ibid, p.139.
was criticised for his reliance on Lévi-Strauss as ‘myths have no origins, no centres, no
subjects and no authors’, whereas bodies of work ascribed to auteurs do.\textsuperscript{331}

In 1972, Wollen further revised the auteur-structuralist theory. He wrote:

> What [it] argues is that any film … is a network of different statements, crossing and
> contradicting each other, elaborated into a final ‘coherent’ version. Like a dream, the film
> the spectator sees is … the film façade … which hides … the process which remains
> latent in the film’s unconsciousness … [By] a process of comparison with other films, it
> is possible to decipher, \textit{not a coherent message or world-view}, but a structure which
> underlies the film and shapes it, gives it a certain pattern of energy cathexis. … This
> structure is associated with a single director … because it is through … his
> preoccupations that an \textit{unconscious, unintended} meaning can be deduced in the film …
> [Auteur-structuralism] consists of tracing a structure within a work, which can then \textit{post-
> factum} be assigned to … [a director] on empirical grounds.\textsuperscript{332}

It was thus that structures such as ‘Hawks’ and ‘Hitchcock’ were associated with the directors
Hawks and Hitchcock.\textsuperscript{333}

3.2 The 1970s also saw the development of a critique based on semiology.\textsuperscript{334} Semiotic
analysis investigates how meanings are produced and negotiated.\textsuperscript{335} Here, an important
contribution was made by Roland Barthes. Barthes distinguishes between a ‘work’ and a
‘text’. The former he defines as ‘the phenomenal surface of the object’ such as a book.\textsuperscript{336} A
text, by contrast, is a ‘methodological field of energy, an ongoing production absorbing writer
and reader together’.\textsuperscript{337} In \textit{The Death of the Author} Barthes writes:

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\textsuperscript{331} Brian Henderson, ‘Critique of cine-structuralism’, (part 1), \textit{Film Quarterly}, vol.27, no.1, Fall 1973, reprinted
in John Caughie, op.cit., pp.175 -177.
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid., pp.144 -147. Emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{334} Ideological analysis was part of the structuralist mode of analysis, which we return to below. For semiotic
analysis in film, see Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne, & Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, \textit{New Vocabularies in Film
\textsuperscript{335} Patrick Fury, op.cit., p.47.
\textsuperscript{336} Robert Stam, Robert Burgoyne, & Sandy Flitterman-Lewis , op.cit., p.191.
\textsuperscript{337} Ibid., p.192.
We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single “theological meaning (the “message” of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. 338

Barthes also argues that the meaning in a text cannot be attributed to the ‘scriptor’:

Succeeding the Author, the scriptor no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt: life never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred. …

In the multiplicity of writing everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered; the structure can be followed, “run” … at every point, every level, but there is nothing beneath … [W]riting ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it, carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning. In precisely this way literature … [or writing] by refusing to assign a “secret,” an ultimate meaning, to the text … liberates what may be called an antitheological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary, since to refuse to fix meanings is … to refuse God and his hypostases – reason, science, law. 339

Barthes concludes that the reader ‘is the space’ where the multiplicity of quotations that make up writing are inscribed, where the unity of the text lies and hence where meaning is constructed. 340

Jacques Derrida also argues that meaning is not fixed and introduces the concept of ‘différance’. Derrida writes:

Fostering the belief that writing … can ally itself to power … suggests that writing can come [arriver] to power … It excludes … the identification of writing as power or the recognition of power from the onset of writing. It auxiliarizes and hence

339 Ibid.
340 Ibid.
aims to conceal the fact that writing and power never work separately, however complex the laws, the system, or the links of their collusion may be. …

Writing does not come to power. It is there beforehand, it partakes of it and is made of it. … Hence, *struggles for powers set various writings up against one another* [*les luttes pour les pouvoirs opposent des écriture*].

New writing tries to co-opt or overwrite what came before, but is not wholly successful. For Derrida, ‘cultures are palimpsests of official and counter-hegemonic graffiti’. Hence, meaning cannot be fixed, and to denote this Derrida coined the word ‘différance’, a combination of ‘difference’ and ‘deferral’, otherness and a lack of fixed meaning.

The incorporation of these concepts into film theory, led to the focus on spectatorship, and on how spectators make sense of films. The notion of intertextuality, or the interweaving of texts, was also incorporated to show the complexity of the film text. Julia Kristeva further developed this concept, and introduced the term ‘transposition’ which ‘specifies that the new passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic … If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems … one then understands that its ‘place’ of enunciation and its denoted ‘object’ are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of

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343 Ibid.

being tabulated.' Hence, a film is not a single, homogeneous, object formulated on the screen, but is formulated in the complex activity of watching it. Patrick Fury explains that ‘every film operates within a field of transpositions’ which includes ‘cinema’, but also ‘culture’ ‘history’ ‘ideology’ and the like. For Kristeva, transposition is ‘the signifying process’s ability to pass from one system to another, to exchange and permutate them’, but the process also occurs through spectating.

3.21 Concepts developed by Michel Foucault were also used to consider the interplay between film and the spectator. Foucault’s concept of the unities of discourse was used to work out, for example, if a case study by Freud about a schizophrenic and the film Silence of the Lambs (1991) could be grouped together in a discourse on madness. The problem with the unity of discourse here arises because the experience of film is wider than the film text. Further, Foucault’s discussion about the privileging of certain statements, the enunciative function, and the relation between knowledge and power has also been applied to cinematic discourse. For instance, statements produced by external enunciative functions and their transposition into cinematic discourse has been examined to see the effects this has on cinema; also the relationship between cinematic power and ‘truth’ as it operates across film, the constitution of the subject through discourse, what is permitted to be represented, and

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345 Julia Kristeva quoted in Patrick Fury, op.cit., p.54. Kristeva also distinguished between the ‘symbolic’ and the ‘semiotic’. The former is the sphere of representation, whereas the latter designates meaning associated with unconscious drives, the workings of the body, and with rhythms and sounds. The semiotic plays a subversive role vis-à-vis the symbolic most evident for example, in poetry. The ‘thetic’, on the other hand, ‘is the rupture which both constitutes the symbolic … and designates the semiotic … as the resurgence of that which the symbolic denies’. For these definitions see Bronwen Martin & Felizitas Ringham, Key Terms in Semiotics, (London & New York, 2006), p.176, and Gerardine Meaney, (Un)like Subjects: women, theory, fiction, (London & New York, Routledge, 1993), p.80. In film, the thetic refers to the threshold of language and the demarcation between the sémiotique and the symbolic. See Patrick Fury, op.cit., p.56

346 Ibid., p.55.

347 Ibid.

348 Julia Kristeva quoted in ibid.

349 Patrick Fury, op.cit., p.63.
what constitutes ‘truth’ and ‘meaning’ have all been discussed within a Foucauldian perspective.  

An interesting application of Foucault’s work has to do with the body as spectacle, and the inscription of power on bodies. Fury argues that there is always an assertion of power over the filmed body. But the body is not rendered powerless as a consequence. For Fury, the spectacle is an interplay between the ‘tortured’ and ‘cultured’ body and the ‘polymorphic sites of bodily resistance’.  

Foucault’s thought has also been utilised in critical studies of subjectivity. Quoting Foucault, E. Deidre Pribram notes that sexuality is treated as the correlation of knowledge, a type of normativity and a way of relating to oneself. Here knowledge is created in a field of study with its own concepts and theories, normativity is imposed by rules that differentiate between what is permissible and what is not, the normal from the pathological, and so on. The subject recognises himself, in relation to others, as a sexual subject.  

For Pribram, then, ‘the function of systems of discourse and relations of power is precisely to constitute subjectivity’, and govern individuals and guide their conduct. She writes:  

In the process of naming someone as mad, as object of study, or as Other, what is assembled are interpretations or judgements, not facts; what is constructed are meanings, not “truths”.  

350 Ibid., pp.67 - 68.  
351 Ibid., p.83.  
353 Ibid.  
354 Ibid., p.154.
The consequence of the application of Foucault’s work has resulted, Pribram argues, in a ‘more complex notion of representation as a reflection and site for cultural struggles over meaning formation … as place where meaning production occurs and also where structures of production can be viewed’. 355

However, Pribram is cognisant of the difficulties of applying Foucault’s work and she queries ‘What precisely causes discourses to alter historically? How do various, multiple discourses construct specific subjects and in what proportions or relations of impact? What are the mechanisms by which change and agency operate?’ 356 It may be argued here that Foucault has demonstrated, for example in *Discipline and Punish*, how multiple discourses construct subjectivity, especially through the process of examination and the system of documentary accumulation. Although a complex methodology, it could conceivably be applied to the construction of specific subjects.

3.3 The ideological model of analysis

As noted above, post-1968 film theory became politicised from a Marxist perspective, and it began to consider the ideological role of cinema. 357 Very influential here were concepts developed by Louis Althusser. The conception of ideology as embedded in material institutions, which interpellates individuals into subject positions, was seen to include cinema. For Nick Lacey, cinema was thus ‘complicit in creating bourgeois reality’. 358

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355 Ibid.
357 Also examined were the social determinants of the film industry and the strategies needed to analyse film politically. See Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction*, op.cit., p.133. In Britain much of this theorising appeared in *Screen* magazine and came to be referred to as *Screen* theory. See Nick Lacey, *Introduction to Film*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.162.
358 Ibid.
Althusser also developed the notion of ‘symptomatic reading’. Analysing Marx’s reading of Adam Smith, he noted:

[It] divulges the undivulged event in the text it reads, and in the same movement relates it to a different text, present as a necessary absent in the first’. 359

A symptomatic reading of a text reveals ‘its breaking points, its lapses and silences, its ‘structuring absences’ and ‘constitutive lacks’.’ 360

Pierre Macherey was also concerned with ‘what is absent in the work’. 361 Macherey suggested that a text worked to resolve contradiction. The critic’s job was to ‘re-trace, through a reading of gaps and silences, the contradictions which the text is there to resolve’. 362 He wrote:

[The] work exists above all by its determinate absences, by what it does not say … [It] is not a question of hunting [meaning] down with interpretations. It is not in the work but by its side: on its margins …

The critical question [is]: In what relation to that which is other than itself, is the work produced?

[The] work is articulated in relation to the reality from the ground of which it emerges … in which men … live, that … is their ideology. The work is made on the ground of this ideology, that tacit and original language …

The order which it professes is … the fictive resolution of ideological conflicts … The distance which separates the work from the ideology which it transforms is re-discovered in … the work: it is fissured. 363

361 John Caughie in John Caughie, (ed), op.cit., p.191. Macherey worked within the Althusserian tradition, and made his contribution to literary criticism.
362 Ibid.
Screen theory in the 1970s utilised a combination of Althusser’s concept of ISAs and psychoanalytic theory to describe the functioning of the cinematic apparatus and interpellation of the spectator, or the creation of the spectator by the spectacle.\(^{364}\) Amongst the contributors to *Screen* were Colin MacCabe, Stephen Heath and Laura Mulvey.

Colin MacCabe’s influential concept of the ‘classic realist text’ was framed in the Althusserian context. For MacCabe, the classic realist text was a device for interpellating individuals into subject positions. This was the ‘authoritative ‘speech’’ of the photographic image.\(^{365}\) He analysed the classic realist text in which the metadiscourse presented ideology as ‘truth’:

The unquestioned nature of the narrative discourse entails that the only problem that reality poses is to … look and see what Things there are. The relationship between the reading subject and the real is placed as one of pure specularity. The real is not articulated – it is.

[The] classic realist text (a heavily ‘closed’ discourse) cannot deal with the real in its contradictions and … it fixes the subject in a point of view from which everything becomes obvious.

[But] the dominant discourse can be subverted … These moments [of subversion] are those elements which escape the control of the dominant discourse …\(^{366}\)

[There are also] strategies of subversion. Instead of a dominant discourse

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\(^{365}\) Pam Cook & Mieke Bernink, op.cit., p.333.

\(^{366}\) Roland Barthes expressed a similar idea when he wrote: “The blanks and looseness of the analysis will be like footprints marking the escape of the text; for if the text is subject to some form, this form is not unitary, architectonic, finite: it is the fragment, the shards, the broken obliterated network – all the movements and inflections of the vast ‘dissolve’ which permits both overlapping and loss of messages. … The code is a perspective of quotations, a mirage of structures … [The] units which have resulted from it … are so many fragments of something that has always been already read, seen, done, experienced; the code is the wake of that already.” Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, translated by Richard Miller, (New York, Hill and Wang, 1974), p.20.
which is transgressed at various crucial moments, we can find a systematic refusal of any such dominant discourse.  

MacCabe’s argument that the classic realist text ‘cannot deal with the real in its contradictions’ and works towards a resolution, is similar to Brian Winston’s ‘problem-moment’ structure. Referring to Paul Rothe’s documentary The Face of Britain (1935), he writes: “The slums are … a ‘problem-moment’ … that will pass thanks to the electricity … industry.” He argues that this structure was a precursor to the concept of ‘balance’ in TV documentaries. Thus, “‘Balance’ and the ‘problem-moment’ structure work to cripple the possibility of meaningful social analysis and comment within a realist text.”

MacCabe’s analysis can also be related to that of the classic narrative by John Hill. He argues that ‘there is a presumption built into the very structure of conventional narrative that ‘problems’ can be … resolved’. He then links this to an ‘ideology of affirmation’. Further, the narrative ‘invariably centres on personal, psychological causes’. One consequence is that causality is seen to derive from ‘individual’, not group/social action. All this ‘helps to confirm the ideology of containment characteristic of the narrative drive towards resolution’. The social problem film, by individualising causality, does not ‘really deal with social

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367 As an example he refers to the films of Roberto Rossellini. Colin MacCabe, ‘Realism and the cinema: notes on some Brechtian theses’, Screen, vol.15, no.2, 1974, reprinted in Joanne Hollows, Peter Hutchings and Mark Jancovich, (eds), The Film Studies Reader, op.cit., pp.203-204. These strategies of subversion found a resonance in the theatre of Bertolt Brecht in which actors ‘alienated’ the audience. Richard Schechner writes: “Brecht called this Verfremdungseffekt … It is best to think of the V-effect as a way to drive a wedge between the actor, the character and the staging … so that each is able to bounce off … and comment upon the others.” Richard Schechner, op.cit., pp.152-153. John Willet further explains this distanciation as aimed at showing ‘everything in a fresh and unfamiliar light, so that the spectator is brought to look critically even at what he has so far taken for granted. … ‘Verfremdung’, in fact, is not simply the breaking of illusion … It is a matter of detachment, of reorientation …’ John Willet, The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, (New York, New Directions, 1960), quoted in Richard Schechner, op.cit., p.153.

problems in their social aspect at all … The social problem is … a problem for society, rather than of it.\textsuperscript{369}

Criticism of MacCabe’s analysis was based on the difficulty of a single subject position, and the argument that the ‘viewing subject’ was a meaningless abstraction that bore no relation to actual audiences.\textsuperscript{370} In answer to this it was argued that there were two types of spectator: the empirical one whose interpretation of the film will be influenced by biography, class origins and other variables, and the abstract notion of the ‘subject-position’ which is ‘the way in which a film solicits, demands even, a certain closely circumscribed reading from a viewer by means of its own formal operations’.\textsuperscript{371} This argument allowed the interpretation of the film text from a number of perspectives, without denying that the text imposes limits on the room to manoeuvre.

Althusser’s concept of interpellation was criticised by Hamid Naficy, amongst others, who argued:

Such a formulation posits interpellation as a monolithic, universal, unilinear process, discouraging escape and resistance. But … viewed from the [subjects’] point of view … especially in their varying social contexts … the authority-subject relation is often subverted. Similarly, on a social scale, there are cracks, ruptures, inconsistencies, and contradictions not only among various ISAs but also within individual ISAs, which make resistance to and subversion of unilinear interpellation possible. … As a result, in addition to ‘hailing’ there is much ‘haggling’ in cinematic spectatorship.\textsuperscript{372}

\textsuperscript{369} John Hill, ‘Narrative and realism’, quoted in Joanne Hollows, Peter Hutchings and Mark Jancovich, (eds), The Film Studies Reader, op.cit., pp.206-208. In this context, Humphrey Jennings’ Diary for Timothy (1945) includes the following sentence in the voice-over towards the end of the film: “Will you make the world a different place? Free from greed and power?”
\textsuperscript{370} Pam Cook & Mieke Bernink, op.cit., p.333.
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{372} Hamid Naficy, ‘Theorising ‘Third World’ film spectatorship: The case of Iran and Iranian Cinema’, in Anthony R. Guneratne and Wimal Dissanayake, (eds), Rethinking Third Cinema, op.cit., pp.186-187. Naficy makes the important point, that ISAs do not have a uniform impact even within a given society. Thus, although it is likely that Naficy, being an Iranian living in America, can see the inconsistencies/shortcomings of American ideology because the cultural interface creates a ‘rupture’ allowing him to be critical, even within one
The post-68 articles in *Cahiers du Cinéma* were similarly concerned with cinema as an ideological system. In 1969, Jean-Luc Comolli and Paul Narboni wrote:

*Every* film is political, in as much as it is determined by the ideology which produces it. … The cinema is all the more [so] … because … its very manufacture mobilises powerful economic forces …

[The] tools and techniques of film-making are part of ‘reality’ themselves, and furthermore ‘reality’ is nothing but an expression of the prevailing ideology.373

[The] film-maker’s task is to show up the cinema’s so-called ‘depiction of reality’… [so as to] sever the connection between … cinema and its ideological function.374

Comolli and Narboni went on to present seven categories of film with varying relationships between a film and the dominant ideology; of these, category (e) was the most important.375

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373 Jean-Louis Baudry suggested that the spectator was interpellated into a bourgeois view by the very use of the camera. He wrote: “[The] camera lens was designed to produce the same ideological effect as the system of perspective in Renaissance painting. It organised the world in relation to the spectator’s vision, and so established the spectator as the centre of the world.” It gave the spectator an omniscient view. Further, using Jacques Lacan’s concept of the ‘mirror phase’, he argued, “At the beginning of each shot, the spectator enjoys a secure imaginary relationship to the film, feeling bound up with the illusion of privileged control over and unmediated access to its fictional world.” Although, when an edit occurs this ‘privileged control’ is undermined, it is restored by the next shot. This explanation utilised the psychoanalytical concept of ‘suture’. Pam Cook writes: “Bluntly, ‘suture’ is a psychoanalytically underpinned name for continuity editing [which] … was seen as positioning the subject and imposing upon him … a single voice of truth.” Pam Cook and Mieke Bernink, (eds), *The Cinema Book*, op.cit., p.334. See also Jean-Louis Baudry, ‘Ideological effects of the basic cinematographic apparatus’, *Film Quarterly*, vol.28, no.2, Winter 1974-1975, quoted in Nick Lacey, op.cit., pp.175 -176.

It was the most productive of interpretative analyses. Of this category Comolli and Narboni write:

The films we are talking about throw up obstacles in the way of the ideology … An internal criticism is taking place which cracks the film apart at the seams. … [I]f one looks beyond its apparent formal coherence, one can see that it is riddled with cracks: it is splitting under an internal tension which is simply not there in an ideologically innocuous film. The ideology … is presented by the film.376

This analysis allowed for a re-evaluation of Hollywood cinema and had a significant impact on the theoretical work of Screen.377

Responding to the suggestion film should sever its ties with the dominant ideology, Peter Wollen introduced the notion of ‘Counter-cinema’, exemplified by Jean-Luc Godard’s cinema. Counter-cinema was distinguished by narrative intransitivity or the disruption in the flow of the narrative, estrangement and distanciation, and ‘aperture’ which was narrative opening instead of closure, among other characteristics.378

Finally, Barthes’s discussion of ideology as myth, especially in visual form, has been useful in considering ideological cinema texts. For Barthes, myth is a second-order semiological system which incorporates language.379 Hence, the signifier and the signified combine to form the sign, which then becomes the signifier in the myth. There it combines with the concept to produce signification.380 Barthes gives the example of a picture in Paris-Match of

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376 Jean-Luc Comolli and Paul Narboni. Ibid. The authors cited the films of John Ford, Carl Dreyer and Roberto Rossellini as examples of category (e) films.
377 Pam Cook and Mieke Bernink, op.cit., p.288. See also Annette Kuhn, op.cit.
380 Ibid., p.100.
a black soldier saluting to the French flag. This description is the ‘meaning’ of the picture, but its signification is quite different. Barthes writes:

But I can see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors.381

This transformation is possible because when the sign becomes the signifier in the second order, where it is termed the ‘form’, it loses its history, becoming ‘empty’ or somewhat abstract. Barthes writes:

When it becomes form, the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains. There is here a paradoxical permutation in the reading operations, an abnormal regression from meaning to form, from the linguistic sign to the mythological signifier. If one encloses quia ego nominor leo in a purely linguistic system, the clause finds again there a fullness … a history, I am an animal, a lion, I live in a certain country … . But as a form of the myth, the clause hardly retains anything of this long story. The meaning contained a whole system of values: a history, a geography, a morality, a zoology, a literature. The form has put all this richness at a distance: its newly acquired penury calls for a signification to fill it.382

The second order concept is the motivation which causes the myth to be uttered, and the signification is the myth itself.383 Barthes argues that the myth does not hide anything; rather, its ‘function is to distort’.384 The distortion occurs because the Negro, for example, is ‘deprived of his history’.385 Further, myth is depoliticised speech which offers a natural justification, ‘making contingency appear eternal’.386 He continues:

381 Ibid., pp.101 - 102.
382 Ibid., p.103.
383 Ibid., pp.104 - 107. In the case of the picture in Paris-Match, the concept is French imperiality.
384 Ibid., p.107.
385 Ibid., 108.
386 Ibid., p.131.
Now this process is exactly that of bourgeois ideology. If our society is objectively the privileged field of mythical significations, it is because formally myth is the most appropriate instrument for the ideological inversion which defines this society: at all levels of human communication, myth operates the inversion of *anti-physis* into *pseudo-physis*.\(^{387}\)

Barthes’s conception of ideology appears to be quite similar to Eagleton’s notion that ‘ideas are weapons in the field of struggle ... [and] ideologies are sets of discursive strategies for displacing, recasting or spuriously accounting for realities which prove embarrassing to a ruling power; and in so doing, they contribute to that power’s self-legitimation.’\(^{388}\)

This concept of ideology is still current and can be used in a symptomatic reading of films.\(^{389}\) Nevertheless, as argued above, it is necessary when thinking about ideology to also think in terms of localised conflicts and power relations, because the power grid in which individuals are subjected accounts for much of how ideological and power relations operate. Also, it widens the scope of the analysis to include elements that cannot strictly be explained by ideology, where ideology is essentially one element in the discourse. For instance statesmen may proclaim a certain official ideology, but make important decisions in stark contrast to it, never admitting it publicly. And perceptions of ideology and people as monolithic blocs could shatter on closer inspection to reveal a much more complex situation, where actions and beliefs are not always synchronised. Here again, a wider analysis would help explain why this is so in any particular context.

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\(^{387}\) Ibid. Pseudo-Physis has been defined as false Nature, as art can be, and anti-Physis as something that alienates from nature. See Roland Barthes, *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard, (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1972), p.75, @ http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ae35PV8kaD8C&pg=PA75&lpg.


\(^{389}\) However, as Bordwell and Thompson have shown in their analysis of the musical *Meet Me in St Louis* (1944), explicit, referential and implicit meanings are also ideologically based. This is because the codes and conventions used in film texts are themselves culturally defined. As such, they help viewer identification and engagement with the film. See David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, (McGraw-Hill, 2001), pp.387-391.
Finally, the changes in the international political and security environment from a bipolar to a unipolar world, where the use of excessive force forms a part of the conduct of foreign relations, necessitates an examination of the question of power, how it affects people’s bodies and their lives, and how it has been depicted in cinema texts. Foucauldian concepts of power relations are incorporated in the analysis of the film texts which follow, in addition to a symptomatic reading to reveal the ideological discourse.
Chapter Four

The Film Text

Syriana (2005)

Written and directed by Stephen Gaghan

The main story line of this multiple-narrative film text concerns the life of a CIA operative and his missions in Iran and Saudi Arabia, but the power relations, in addition to ideological, cultural and economic factors, need to be seen in the context of relations between the U.S., Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia. U.S. – Iranian relations are to a large extent a consequence of Israel’s relation with the two countries. The film coming so soon after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a war meant to ‘liberate’ Iraq, also has very strong parallels with it. Further, the complexity of America’s ‘national interest’ as it is interwoven with the oil industry and the power of large multinational oil companies is also under scrutiny.

The necessity of viewing ideology as just one element in a discourse, here about U.S. intervention in the political and economic affairs of other countries, is demonstrated by an examination of the interplay of ideology with political, economic and cultural elements. As is shown in the discussion of the relations between Israel and Iran for instance, and Iran and the U.S., when ideology has conflicted with the perceived national interest at any given time, pragmatic policy has often taken precedence. This is not to assert that ideology is unimportant either in defining national characteristics and value systems, or as a motivating influence in the relations between states, but rather that its use is often rhetorical and the relevant actions are better explained in terms of hard political choices.
4.1 Iran, Israel and the United States of America

The American view of Iran as a threat to world peace only came about at Israel’s instigation after the defeat of Iraq in 1991. Prior to that, Israel’s relations with Iran under the Shah were determined by David Ben-Gurion’s ‘doctrine of the periphery’ which underlay Israel’s ties with non-Arab countries and peoples in the region. This policy was necessary to counter anti-Israeli sentiments in the region.

Iran’s strained relations with the Arabs created an overlap in security interests which made positive Iranian-Israeli relations expedient. In 1951 the Mossadeq government granted Israel de facto recognition. As Trita Parsi notes:

It was the balance of power that paved the way for the Iranian-Israeli entente, not the non-Arab make up of the two countries. They were threatened by the same group of countries.

Iran and Israel co-operated over the Eilat – Ashkelon oil pipeline and Israel trained Iranian paratroopers, pilots, and its intelligence agency SAVAK in ‘torture and investigative techniques’.

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391 Its ties, for example, with Iran, Turkey, Ethiopia, and the Kurds and Lebanese Christians. Ibid., pp.22 - 23.
392 Edward Said has explained the perception of Israel by the majority of Muslims and Arabs: ‘Between them [Israel and the United States] … have bombed and invaded several Islamic countries (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Iraq), they have (in Israel’s case) occupied Arab-Islamic territory in four countries, and in the United States’ case are seen in the United Nations as openly supporting the military occupation of these territories; to the overwhelming majority of Muslims and Arabs, Israel is therefore an arrogant regional nuclear power, contemptuous of its neighbours, heedless in the number and frequency of its bombings, killings … dispossessions, and dislocations, especially … [of] Palestinians … ’ Edward Said, Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World, (London, Vintage 1997), p.xxi.
393 Trita Parsi, op.cit., p.21. However, de jure relations were not established, so there were no open diplomatic relations, and a non-descript building housed the Israeli mission. Ibid., pp.26 - 27.
394 Ibid., p.29.
395 Connecting the Gulf of Aqaba to the Mediterranean, the pipeline helped Iran avoid complete reliance on the Suez Canal for its exports, but also enabled the sale of Iranian oil to Israel. Iran and Israel also collaborated on
With the British withdrawal from the Suez Canal in 1969 and Iran’s economic development and increasing revenues from oil in the 1970s, the Shah lobbied America to allow Iran the role of a regional power.\textsuperscript{396}

Menachem Begin, who came to power in May 1977, wanted Israel to play a dominant hegemonic role in the region, his posture ‘characterised by grandiose expansionist goals’.\textsuperscript{397} Parsi argues that the underlying ideological element here was that peace with the Arabs was ‘impossible’, so Israel’s dominance would have to be exerted by force.\textsuperscript{398}

In Iran, disaffection with the Shah’s policies and economic problems hastened the Revolution. As the Islamic Revolution took hold of Iran, the Shah left the country on 16 January 1979, with Khomeini arriving in Iran in February.\textsuperscript{399} Iran’s unofficial links with Israel were now severed.

In keeping with Iran’s strategic interests, Khomeini wanted to maintain relations with America. He concluded a deal with Ronald Reagan for the release of American hostages after


\textsuperscript{397} Dr Ilan Peleg, quoted in Trita Parsi, op.cit., p.70.

\textsuperscript{398} Trita Parsi, ibid, pp.70, 92.

\textsuperscript{399} See ‘Iranian Revolution 1979’ @ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7856172.stm.
the American election, so as to grant political kudos for the release to the Reagan
administration.\footnote{This was claimed by the Islamic Republic’s first president Bani Sadr. See House of Representatives, ‘Creating a task force to investigate certain allegations concerning the holding of Americans as hostages by Iran in 1980’, @ http://www.aiipowmia.com/other/iranhstgcrss80a.html.} But American – Iranian relations did not improve.

Throughout this period, Israel tried hard to normalise its relations with Iran, since:

Iran – in spite of its ideology, its harsh rhetoric, and its vocal support of the Palestinian issue – was seen as a nonthreat. ... \[T\]o Israel, Iran continued to be a partner in balancing the Iraqi threat.\footnote{Trita Parsi, op.cit., p.92.}

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan prompted the re-establishment of Iranian-Israeli relations.\footnote{See ‘Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan’ @ http://www.economicexpert.com/a/Soviet:invasion:of:Afghanistan.html.} Israel returned U.S. manufactured tanks refurbished for the former regime, and sold Iran military spare-parts.\footnote{Trita Parsi, op.cit., pp.94 - 95.} Khomeini allowed Iranian Jews to leave Iran. Hence, ideological matters were shelved in favour of the national interest.

The 1980 Iran-Iraq war continued to promote this shift away from ideology to pragmatic policy. Parsi notes: ‘[Iran] took its rhetorical excesses against Israel to even higher levels to cover up its Israeli dealings’.\footnote{Trita Parsi, op.cit., p.92.} Yet it made it clear to Israel that it would not get involved at a practical level in the Palestinian conflict.\footnote{Ibid., p.100.}

In 1991, the Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union changed the power relations in the Middle East. Israel’s relationship with the U.S. was based on its role as a bulwark against
Soviet expansion in the Middle East. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, this strategic role disappeared. And with Iraq’s defeat, Israel came to focus on Iran as a major threat.

In 1992 Yitzhak Rabin came to power. Parsi explains the new regime’s different perspective:

Israel was convinced that Iran ... would seek to impose its own order in the Middle East – particularly if it came to terms with America. ... In this new rivalry for the future of the region, Labour viewed every Iranian gain as a loss for Israel.

The Labour Party flooded Israeli newspapers with the claim that Iran was ‘Israel’s greatest strategic threat’. It launched an American and European campaign to create the perception of Iran as a ‘threat to the world’. Unwilling to turn the issue into an Islamic-Israeli conflict, Israel presented the Iranian threat as one to the western world, attempting ‘to push the U.S. and other western powers into a confrontation with Iran’. And for Shimon Peres, Iran was an existential threat to Israel. Parsi writes:

“You have to recognise that we Israelis need an existential threat. It is part of the way we view the world. If we can find more than one, that would be preferable, but we will settle for one,” an Israeli expert explained to me.

The powerful Jewish lobby group, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), drafted and circulated a 74-page document in Washington, arguing that Iran was a threat to

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406 See Trita Parsi, op.cit., pp.139 - 149.
408 Trita Parsi, op.cit., p.159.
409 Ibid., p.161.
410 Ibid., p.162.
411 Israel Shahak quoted in ibid. In 1990 Shahak was president of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights.
412 Quoted in Ibid.
413 Ibid., p.167.
the western world. The view took hold. In October 1994 U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher claimed:

Iran is the world’s most significant sponsor of terrorism ... The evidence is overwhelming: Iran is intent on projecting terror and extremism across the Middle East and beyond.  

On 6th March 1995, Iran awarded an American company Conoco the rights to develop two oilfields in Iran. Parsi writes:

Pressured by Congress, AIPAC, and the Israelis, President Clinton swiftly scrapped the deal by issuing two executive orders that effectively prohibited all trade with Iran.

The decision was announced on April 30 by Clinton in a speech before the World Jewish Congress. ... Immediately, speculation in the U.S. media began on “where U.S. foreign policy ends and Israeli interest begins”.  

AIPAC then revised a bill introduced by Senator Alfonso D’Amato, which became law in August 1996. Known as the Iran Libya Sanctions Act (I.L.S.A.) it targeted companies investing $40 million or more, threatening them with various penalties.  

On 5th November 2002, the Times quoted Ariel Sharon as stating that Iran was the ‘centre of world terror’ and after the Iraq invasion, he would be pushing for Iran to be ‘at the top of the ‘to do’ list’.  

414 Ibid., p.184.
415 Quoted in ibid., p.185.
418 Ibid., p.188.
4.2 Ideological perspectives

4.21 Iran

As Naficy has argued, Islamic ideology in Iran is contested by various groups. Keddie notes that Iran has ‘one of the world’s outstanding poetic traditions, often of great difficulty and subtlety, so that the phenomenon described [of unlettered men and women reciting poetry] is the equivalent of English peasant(s) ... [reciting] very lengthy passages of Shakespeare, Milton and John Donne’. 421

The Pahlavi dynasty was extremely nationalist, but secular and modernist. This is evidenced in an interview given by the Shabanou to Paris Match:

In 1928 young girls obtained, for the first time, the right to go and study abroad. In 1935, the Shah rendered the veil optional. … In 1938, the first women were admitted to University. In 1944, education became obligatory for boys and girls, and 1963 marked a true revolution in Iran: the Iranian woman had, henceforth, the right to vote and be elected. 422

The ideology Khomeini introduced was based on his own interpretation of Islam. Its central elements were: a return to traditional mores, a populist concept of justice, the institution of the Velayat-e faqih (Guardianship of the jurisprudent), and political and economic independence. 423

420 The Times quoted in Fayazman, op.cit.
421 This tradition originates in pre-Pahlavi culture. Nikki Keddie, op.cit., p.172.
The impact on the Iranian film industry, for example, was severe. In 1982, the government banned films that ‘encourage(d) wickedness, corruption and prostitution’.\(^{424}\) Films had to be referred to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (M.C.I.G.) which reviewed the synopsis, evaluated the screenplay, issued a production permit, reviewed the completed film, and finally, issued an exhibition permit.\(^{425}\)

However, despite censorship, Iranian New Wave cinema engaged the dominant ideology and subverted it. For example, the censorship rules are most prohibitive for women. Under these rules, if women appear at all, they have to be dressed in the *chador* and play subdued roles. One of the strictures is that women may not remove their head scarves to reveal their locks. In 2002, Abbas Kiarostami directed the film *10*, about the lives of Tehrani women. In the film, one of the women removes her head scarf. With this stroke, Kiarostami raises the question: ‘What if there aren’t any (locks)?’ The actress has shaved off her hair. What the spectator sees is the image of a woman stripped of all labels.\(^{426}\) Another aspect of his films is described by Laura Mulvey who writes that a defining characteristic of Kiarostami’s cinema is the exploration of ‘the narrow line between illusion and reality. …To ask the spectator to think – and think about the limits and possibilities of cinematic representation – is to create a form of questioning and interrogative spectatorship that must be at odds with the certainties of any dominant ideological conviction – in the case of Iran, religion. Uncertainty is built into

\(^{424}\) Ibid., p.36.

\(^{425}\) Ibid., p.39. In the 1980s, music, theatre, cinema, as well as the press and publishing were brought under the M.C.I.G. See Richard Tapper, op.cit., p.6. From March 1989, screenplays no longer had to be vetted. In 1997, President Khatami gave public support to a film that had been banned, Davud Mirbaqeri’s *The Snowman* (1994) with its theme of transvestism. It was shown to great popular acclaim. See Hamid Naficy, in Richard Tapper, op.cit., pp.55-56. However, in 2005, frustrated by the increasing censorship (it is not clear exactly what this entailed) the great New Wave director Mohsen Makhmalbaf announced he would no longer be making films in Iran. See Channel 4 documentary *Cinema Iran 2005* directed by Mark Cousins.

\(^{426}\) This is not Roger Rabbit’s girlfriend Jessica, who is a man’s idea of what a woman should look like. There is nothing to suggest that she is a Muslim or an Iranian. She is simply a woman. This is Kiarostami’s ‘prior’ moment. It is also interrogative spectatorship at its most potent. Kiarostami’s masterful cinema was acknowledged by *Cahiers du Cinéma* on whose front cover he appeared in July-August 1995 (no.493) with the caption ‘Kiarostami le magnifique’.  

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Kiarostami’s cinema, and this is what differentiates it so definitely from the cinema of say, Majid Majidi, which is ultimately a cinema of faith and certainty.\textsuperscript{427}

At the level of government, with the total suppression of opposition politics, the majles split into the right-wing and ‘Islamic Left’. In 2002, the resigning Isfahani Friday prayers leader, Ayatollah Jalal ed-Din Taheri, launched a scathing attack on the government. He criticised the ‘despair, unemployment, inflation and high prices…the hellish gap between poverty and wealth…a sick economy, bureaucratic corruption…embezzlement, bribery and addiction’. He also criticised ‘society’s dregs and fascists who consist of a concoction of ignorance and madness, whose umbilical cords are attached to centres of power’.\textsuperscript{428}

As for Iranian Jews, in 1979 there were 80,000 in Iran. Under the Pahlavi dynasty and after the Revolution, they continued to have religious freedom, and follow their own religious codes in marriage and family law.\textsuperscript{429} Many preserve their Iranian culture, such as celebrating the New Year at the Spring Equinox on 21\textsuperscript{st} March; they also continue to be bilingual.\textsuperscript{430} Hence, there is a broad ideological spectrum in Islamic Iran and various groups resist the dominant ideology. The Islamic Revolution has demonstrated how there can be major power reversals, but the power grid is fluid with tensions and subversions at local levels.

\textsuperscript{427} Laura Mulvey in Richard Tapper, op.cit., p.260.
\textsuperscript{429} There are 40 Synagogues in Iran, many with Hebrew schools, Jewish hospitals, cemeteries and a large library in Tehran. Trita Parsi, op.cit., p.7, and F.N. 5, p.285. 200,000 Iranian Jews and their descendents live in Israel, including prominent politicians such as former Israeli president Moshe Katsav and Deputy Prime Minister (former Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces (I.D.F.) and Defence Minister) Shaul Mofaz. Ibid., p.8.
\textsuperscript{430} Trita Parsi relates a story of being seated on a bus next to an Iranian Jew in Tel Aviv, when the Jew rose to offer bread to his brethren. Parsi suggests that perhaps because he was very dark skinned, no one on the bus would share bread with him. On returning to his seat, he said to Parsi in the Persian language, ‘Farhang nadaran’ (they are uncultured). Ibid., p.10.
An important, possibly all-encompassing, feature of Israeli ideology is the idea that Israel always faces an existential threat, as discussed above. However, there is a spectrum of political opinion in Israel. The *Talmud*-quoting clerics, for instance, promote settlements on the West Bank and profess extremely right-wing views:

Gush Emunim rabbis have continually reiterated that Jews who killed Arabs should not be punished ... Rabbi Ariel stated, 'A Jew who killed a non-Jew is exempt from human judgement and has not violated the [religious] prohibition of murder'. ... The significance here is most striking when the broad support, both direct and indirect, for Gush Emunim is considered. About one-half of Israel's Jewish population supports Gush Emunim.  

Further, the Jewish illegal trade in human organs, most recently reported in Turkey, South Africa, Brazil, the Ukraine and the U.S., has been sanctioned by religious law.

At the other end of the spectrum are organisations such as B’Tselem, the Israeli Human Rights group, which does a lot of reporting in the press, especially in newspapers such as *Ha'aretz* for which Amira Haas writes, and various ‘peaceniks’ such as Matityahu Peled.

However, the belief that Israel *cannot* make peace with its neighbours has justified an extreme use of violence. Israel has used depleted uranium weapons in the 1973 Arab-Israeli

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432 Rabbi Yitzhak Ginzburg, for instance, head of an Israeli *Od Yosef Hai* (Rabbinical College) maintained that ‘a Jew is entitled to extract the liver from a goy [non-Jew] if he needs it, for the life of a Jew is more valuable than the life of a goy, likewise the life of a goy is more valuable than the life of an animal’. A Jewish lawyer argued that the trade was like any other commercial activity: ‘organs are just commodity [sic], and so they can be bought and sold like any commodity in an open market’. Israel Shamir, ‘The Return of the Body Snatchers’, undated, @ [http://www.israelishamir.net/English/Body_Snatchers.htm](http://www.israelishamir.net/English/Body_Snatchers.htm).

war, in the Occupied Territories and the Lebanon. On 16 January 2009 Queen Rania of Jordan, herself a Palestinian, described the bombing and the siege of Gaza as ‘hell on earth’. Allied to the American superpower, Israel does not recognise the need to limit its own power nor does it recognise the human rights of non-Jews in the region.

4.23 America

American ideology is based on the idea of American ‘exceptionalism’. The main features of this exceptionalism are: ‘liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire’. But violence is also an intrinsic part of this ideology. American historian Richard Maxwell Brown argues that violence ‘has accompanied virtually every stage and aspect of our national experience … [and is] part of our unacknowledged (underground) value structure’.

American historian Richard Hofstadter notes the ‘extraordinary frequency [of violence], its sheer commonplaceness in our history, its persistence into very recent and contemporary times, and its rather abrupt contrast with our pretensions to singular national virtue’.

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435 See Queen Rania, ‘Hell on Earth’ 16 January 2009, @ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJTmhOzyEGw.
440 Richard Hofstadter quoted in ibid.
In film studies, Eugene Rosow explains that the ‘evolution of the gangster genre [is] a continuing documentary in which the images and sounds of American history, from the turn of the century on, are dramatised in individual films’.  

Rosow argues that the Robber Barons who dominated the era of industrialisation in the late 1800s, including Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jim Fisk, Jay Gould, Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan were the icons of American society. And they were violent men. For instance, Rockefeller used terror tactics to gain control of the oil industry. Vanderbilt fought armed battles with the Erie Ring (Jay Gould, Daniel Drew and Jim Fisk) for control of the railroads. Chancey Depew told the 1876 Hepburn Congressional Committee that this was simply the way business was done in New York.

Further, corrupt politicians were used to accumulate wealth. Bankers formed trusts which lent money to the government. This power allowed bankers and industrialists to operate outside the law, and banking came to be seen as a ‘legitimate racket’. Rosow concludes that gang violence, syndicate formation, and political corruption have consequently been the enduring themes and iconography of gangster films.

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442 The owner of a rival refinery told the Hepburn Congressional Committee in 1876: ‘There was pressure brought to bear upon [us]… that unless we went into the South Improvement Company, we were virtually killed off as refiners; that if we did not sell out we should be crushed out. … We sold at a sacrifice, we were obliged to.’ Ibid., p.14.
443 Chancey Depew was at various times an attorney for Cornelius Vanderbilt, president of the New York Central Railroad System, and finally a United States Senator from New York. Ibid., p.16. In Brian De Palma’s The Untouchables (1987), Al Capone/Robert De Niro makes the same point to reporters.
444 In the late nineteenth century, the Senate was known as ‘the Millionaires’ Club’ and the ‘House of Representatives was like an auction room where more valuable considerations were disposed of under the Speaker’s hammer, than in any other place on earth’. Ibid., p.17.
445 Ibid., p.18. Eventually banks came to be used for money laundering.
446 Ibid.
In foreign policy, American violence has been endemic; with the demise of the Soviet Union, this violence has been used without restraint.\footnote{Mark Bromley has argued that during the Cold War American power was restrained not least because it hoped that the Soviet Union would follow suit. But in the post-Cold War ‘unipolar world’ there has been a growing belief that there is nothing any other country could offer that would justify the United States sacrificing any element of its force ‘flexibility’. Mark Bromley, ‘Implications of US Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and Missile Defence’, 16 February 2002 at \url{http://basicint.org/nuclear/NMD/MBpresentation-0.202.htm}.} In 1931 General Smedley Butler said:

I was a racketeer for capitalism. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers between 1909 [and] 1912. I helped make Mexico … safe for American oil interests in 1916. … I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenue in. I helped in the rape of half-a-dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. … I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate a racket in three cities. The Marines operated on three continents.\footnote{Speech to the American Legion Convention, Connecticut, 21 August 1931. Quoted in Eugene Rosow, op. cit., pp.178-179.}

In the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Americans used napalm-type incendiaries and white phosphorous in civilian areas, especially in Fallujah.\footnote{Andrew Buncombe and Solomon Hughes, ‘The Fog of War: White Phosphorous, Fallujah and some burning questions’, 15 November 2005 \url{http://www.commondreams.org/headlines05/1115-03.htm}.} Also used were depleted uranium ammunition and Directed Energy Weapons (DEW). A Belgian doctor noted:

A bus containing civilians … was fired upon on 1 April 2003 in A1 Sqifal, near Hilla, from an American checkpoint. According to reports from Dr. Saad El-Fadoui … “the bodies were all carbonized, terribly mutilated, torn into pieces”. In and around the bus he saw heads, brains and intestines. According to witnesses … [there was no] explosion and no traces of shrapnel were found on the bodies.\footnote{This is a suspected first use of DEW in Iraq. United Nations Economic and Social Council, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Fifty Fifth Session, ‘Human Rights and Weapons of Mass Destruction’, a working paper submitted by Y. K. J. Yeung Sik Yuen, 2 June 2003. \url{http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:iEuk1tuB1c8J:www.unhchr.ch/Huridoca/Huridoca.nsf/0/96d5d50bc297}.}

In December 2002, the Bush Administration announced its strategy of pre-emptive strikes and the use of ‘covert force’.\footnote{Mike Allen and Barton Gellman, ‘Preemptive Strikes Part of U.S. Strategic Doctrine: “All Options” Open for Countering Unconventional Arms’ The \textit{Washington Post}, 11 December 2002, \url{http://www.commondreams.org/headlines02/1211-02.htm}.} It envisaged the use of conventional, biological, chemical,
radiological or nuclear weapons on any hostile target. The 20-year defence strategy, reported in 2006, explicitly linked U.S. security to what America perceives to be its national economic interest. China was singled out as having the greatest potential to challenge U.S. power, and the new strategy envisaged ‘a new Air Force long-range strike force, as well as building undersea warfare capabilities’.

The logic of the war with Iraq has repeatedly been explained in economic terms. After Iraq converted its oil sales from dollars to euros in 2000, William Clark wrote:

[Installing] a pro-U.S. government in Baghdad along with multiple U.S. military bases ... [is] partly designed to thwart further momentum within OPEC towards a “petroeuro”.

In 2006 Mike Whitney explained the threat of a euro-based Iranian bourse:

The dollar is underwritten by a national debt that exceeds $8 trillion ... and trade deficits that surpass $600 billion per year. That means the greenback is ... utterly worthless. The only thing that keeps the dollar afloat is that oil is traded exclusively in greenbacks ... . If Iran ... [can] smash that monopoly by trading in petro-euros then the world’s central banks will dump the greenback overnight, sending ... the US economy into a downward spiral.

Writing about his experiences as a former C.I.A. agent, Robert Baer recalls how in 1995 the U.S. waited until the very last minute, not only to deny assistance to an Iraqi General who had arranged to carry out a coup simultaneously with an attack by the Kurds, but sent its

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452 Included here were countries ‘close to acquiring’ weapons of mass destruction. Ibid. Speaking to his Sedgefield constituents on 5 March 2004, Tony Blair suggested that international law be changed so as to allow pre-emptive strikes because the western world faced a new type of war which ‘forces us to act even when so many comforts seem unaffected, and the threat so far off, if not illusory.’ See ‘Full Text: Tony Blair’s speech @ http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2004/mar/05/iraq.iraq.


message in a way that stopped any action against Iraqi national forces. The distinction Baer makes is between ‘regime change’ and full-scale invasion. The clear implication is that the invasion was a means to get control of Iraqi oilfields, and to maintain a forceful presence in the region.

4.3 American oil interests and national political executives

The power of the American oil lobby stems, in large measure, from the revolving door between big business and politics. The clearest example of this is the career of the former U.S. vice president Dick Cheney. In 1995 Cheney was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Halliburton Company, the oil-field services corporation. In 2000, his stocks and options in the company were worth $40 million. In 2007 Kellogg Brown-Root (KBR) was the single largest contractor in Iraq, providing logistic support to U.S. troops, and employing 14,000 Americans. Halliburton’s contracts in Iraq were worth $6 billion in 2004. Other members of the Bush administration with former ties to the oil and gas industry were National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice who sat on the board of ChevronTexaco and Commerce Secretary Donald Evans, former CEO of the natural gas company Tom Brown Inc. With Rice on the board, ChevronTexaco joined a Russian, Kazakhstani, and Omani consortium, with American ExxonMobil, to construct a pipeline carrying oil from the Tengiz

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458 Ibid.
oil field in Kazakhstan to the Russian port of Novorossiisk. So grateful was ChevronTexaco for the privilege that it named a tanker after Rice.462

Cheney was also one of the founders of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) which lobbied hard for invading Iraq. It was a motivating force behind the drafting and adoption of the 1998 Iraqi Liberation Act.463 Another important member of PNAC was chairman Bruce Jackson, former vice president of weapons manufacturer Lockheed-Martin.464

4.4 The C.I.A.

The Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) is seen by patriotic Americans as consisting of people who ‘unselfishly risk their lives continuously to shelter us from all the organized evils of the world’. 465 Left-wing governments, especially in Latin America, have been seen as a threat to the American way of life and the C.I.A. has been active in ‘regime change’.466 Despite the methods used by the C.I.A and the School of the Americas, the national perception is that the C.I.A is indispensable to American security. 467 In June 2009 the

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464 William Rivers Pitt, op.cit.
Obama administration unveiled plans to start recruitment to intelligence agencies in colleges and universities.\(^{468}\) However, the C.I.A. has been involved in the torture of suspects, developing its techniques from the 1950s onwards; more recently it has been involved in ‘extraordinary rendition’.\(^{469}\)

The pictures from Abu Ghraib confirmed that American power is inscribed on the body.\(^{470}\) Unlike the Hegelian concept that history always progresses, Foucault argues that history is not linear, there are gaps and reversals and, it might be argued, regression. Writing about public torture in France prior to the eighteenth century, Foucault notes that the spectacle of torture symbolised ‘imbalance and excess’; the aim was ‘an emphatic affirmation of power and of its intrinsic superiority’. Further, this was a superiority not only ‘of ... [law], but that of the physical strength of the sovereign beating down on the body of his adversary and mastering it ... [the] prince ... seizes upon the body of the condemned man and displays it marked, broken. ... The public execution did not re-establish justice; it reactivated power.’\(^{471}\)


\(^{470}\) This torture resembles similar practices in Latin America to the degree that it has been regarded as a consistent aspect of U.S. policy. See Andrew McLeod, ‘Victim of Latin American Torture Claims Abu Ghraib Abuse was Official US Policy’, The Sunday Herald (Scotland) 12 December 2004. See also Seymour Hersh, ‘Torture at Abu Ghraib: American soldiers brutalized Iraqis. How far up does the responsibility go?’, The New Yorker, 10 May 2004, @ http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/10/040510fa_fact and Seymour Hersh, Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib, (London, HarperCollins, 2004). Also see the Appendix.

\(^{471}\) Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, op.cit., pp.48 - 49.
In a recent interview Dr. Steven Reisner discussed the ‘experimentation on prisoners’. He said:

The Bush administration argued that if it doesn’t cause organ failure or death or prolonged psychological harm, it’s not torture, and therefore health professionals were present at every moment during these torture sessions to ostensibly validate that the prisoner wasn’t about to die or have organ failure. ... [T]he Office of Medical Services of the CIA ... decided to ... gather data ... to better assess how you implement waterboarding in the future. ... [They wanted] data on the amount of water that was issued, how frequently the sessions were, whether there was ... a nasal seal ... etc. So, gathering of data in order to improve the functioning of a technique ... [comes] very close to, if not crossing the line, of experimentation on prisoners.

Professor Mark Danner has argued that the American people have decided to ‘live with torture’. He writes:

We have an immense amount of material ...describing in great detail how the decisions were made to use torture. We have the Red Cross report ... which describes these techniques in great detail, how they were used, what sequence they were used in. We have the Justice Department and CIA document describing how they were used. All this stuff is out there.

And we like to think what prevents action is lack of information, but in fact it’s not information, it’s politics. And politics ... have determined that we, in effect, as a society, decided not only to torture, but to live with torture. That has been our decision up to now. And I think we tend to console ourselves that this is a continuing scandal, and there’s a controversy about it. But in fact, though we talk about it a lot, the decisions on the part of the government have been made and, in a real sense, unchallenged.

472 Quoted in Amy Goodman & Juan Gonzales, ‘Physicians for Human Rights: Doctors’ Role in CIA Waterboarding “May Amount to Human Experimentation”, Democracynow, 3 September 2009 @ http://www.democracynow.org/2009/9/3/physicians_for_human_rights_doctors_role. Dr. Steven Reisner is a professor of psychology at Columbia University and an advisor to Physicians for Human Rights. He was discussing evidence that the torture of prisoners was used to ‘help the CIA assess and refine the use of waterboarding and other techniques’. He also explained why prisoners were forced to wear diapers: ‘Diapering is for humiliation. You put a diaper on the detainee, and ... they combine that with a purely liquid diet, so that the detainee was likely to lose control of his bowels and experience this terrible regressive humiliation. The aim of all of these techniques primarily was psychological regression.’

473 Ibid.

474 Mark Danner in ““Stripping Bare the Body: Politics, Violence, War”: Groundbreaking Journalist Mark Danner on Haiti, the Balkans, Iraq and Torture”, 14 October 2009, @ http://www.democracynow.org/2009/10/14/stripping_bare_the_body_politics_violence
Further, since most prisoners at Guantanamo Bay were innocent it is clear that America’s war ‘on terror’ has no relevance to actual security issues.\(^ {475}\) Rather it is a strategy to demonstrate American power and hegemony, and to control the resources of the Islamic world.\(^ {476}\) The bombing of Iraq ‘into the stone age’, the destruction of antiquities that had been protected for millennia, the murder of thousands of Iraqi academics, the establishment of 14 military bases in Iraq and the control of Iraq’s oil are acts that are witness to the attempt to assert physical control in the Middle East.\(^ {477}\) Here, the humiliation and murder of Iraqis is simply a strategy of power.

\(^{475}\) They included a 13 year old boy and a man of 90 years. Lawrence B. Wilkerson, former chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, ‘Some truths about Guantanamo Bay’, 17 March 2009, @ http://www.thewashingtonnote.com/archives/2009/03/some_truths_abo/.


In its attempt to infiltrate and manipulate the power nexus in other countries, the C.I.A. has used local agents. As a C.I.A. recruitment officer explained to Baer:

Agents are almost always foreigners. Being foreigners, they go places were Americans, our case officers, can’t go, like inside their governments or their countries’ secret scientific establishments. At the case officers’ direction, the agents steal secrets, plans documents, computer tapes, or whatever: In other words – let me be blunt about it – agents are traitors.478

The Americans also have a physical presence in the Middle East through the establishment of military bases, notably in Saudi Arabia.479 The U.S. has installed a Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence infrastructure, and built military cities.480 Sheila Ryan notes:

By 1976, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was overseeing nearly $20 billion of military construction in Saudi Arabia, including three entire “military cities” ... Operation Desert Shield would have been virtually inconceivable without [it] ... . 481

Discussing the first Gulf War, Lawrence Korb explained:

What the Saudis allowed the United States to do ... was to set up a de facto infrastructure by purchasing airfields ... modern ports ... a lot of American equipment – theoretically to support their forces ... In many cases it was almost better than NATO... [T]he Saudis ... were buying off-the-shelf from us and replicating an American military facility. So, when we showed up, it was just like being at home. Everything fit. Everything worked.482

481 Sheila Ryan, op.cit., p.98.
482 Lawrence Korb was the Director of National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. The latter is an American foreign policy think tank. Lawrence Korb was Council Vice President from 1998 to 2002. See Center for American Progress, ‘Lawrence Korb’, @ http://www.americanprogress.org/experts/KorbLawrence.html. Lawrence Korb quoted in Rory O’Connor, ‘The
By 1992 the cost of this, the ‘largest armament system that the world has ever seen’, was estimated at $156 billion.\footnote{Scott Armstrong quoted in Richard Valeriani, op.cit.} The advantage for the Americans was that it helped to offset the cost of importing Saudi oil.\footnote{Dick Cheney had told Rory O’Connor, ‘We simply had to have access to Saudi Arabia. Unless we could get access for our forces to Saudi Arabia, there was very little we could do about Saddam Hussein in Kuwait.’ Quoted in ibid.} In security terms, the American interest lies in protecting the status quo and securing its own position in the Middle East. It also protects the House of Saud from tensions within the country, and the threat posed by religious groups.\footnote{Scott Armstrong quoted in Richard Valeriani, op.cit.}

4.5 The Taliban

Where support of the Taliban has been necessary from a foreign policy perspective, Saudi Arabia has joined the U.S. in supporting this extreme Sunni Wahhabi group.\footnote{Zbigniew Brzezinski, when asked if he regretted supporting ‘Islamic fundamentalism’, responded:}

What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet Empire? A few crazed Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?\footnote{Zbigniew Brzezinski, when asked if he regretted supporting ‘Islamic fundamentalism’, responded:}
The Taliban were actively funded by the U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia during the war against Soviet occupation. But after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the backing of the Taliban has continued. John Pilger writes:

[T]he Taliban itself is a creation of the Americans and the British. In the 1980s … [they were] funded by the CIA and trained by the SAS to fight the Russians … . When the Taliban took Kabul in 1996, Washington said nothing. Why? Because Taliban leaders were … to be entertained by executives of the oil company, Unocal. With secret U.S. government approval, the company offered them a generous cut of the profits of the oil and gas pumped through a pipeline that the Americans wanted to build from Soviet central Asia through Afghanistan.\footnote{488} 

A U.S. diplomat commented: ‘The Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis. There will be Aramco [the consortium of oil companies that control Saudi oil], pipelines, an emir, no parliament and lots of Sharia law. We can live with that.’\footnote{489} 

Saudi support for the Taliban may be aimed at balancing Shia power in the region, but Seymour Hersh provides further insight: in the early 1990s the American National Security Agency electronically intercepted conversations between the Saudi royals. They discovered ‘a regime increasingly corrupt, alienated from the country’s religious rank and file, and so weakened and frightened that it had brokered its future by channelling hundreds of millions of dollars in what amounted to protection money to fundamentalist groups that wished to overthrow it. ... [B]y 1996 Saudi money was supporting Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda and

\footnote{489} Quoted in ibid.
other extremist groups in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Yemen, and Central Asia and throughout the Persian Gulf region.490

The electronic intercepts also revealed the underlying reason for tensions within Saudi society: unemployment, inadequate education, the use of the religious police and extreme, medieval punishments most readily for ordinary people, whilst the purported protectors of the shrines at Mecca and Medina ‘the Saudi princes – there are thousands of them – [are] going on drinking binges and partying with prostitutes, while taking billions of dollars from the state budget.’491 After King Fahd’s serious illness, the intercepts also revealed the fight between the senior princes for the throne.492 This intimate information made it possible for the Americans to deal with and exert influence on the ‘right people’.493

More recently, a reference to Osama bin Laden’s death was censored by the mainstream western media. In an interview with David Frost, the late Benazir Bhutto claimed bin Laden had been murdered, but Frost simply ignored what she said, and the BBC which broadcast that interview, edited the reference to bin Laden claiming Bhutto had ‘mis-spoken’.494 The obvious reason is that bin Laden provides the main justification for the ‘war on terror’ and he simply cannot afford to die. Further, this focus on individuals and nebulous organisations stems from the official definition of ‘terrorism’ which omits any reference to state

490 Seymour Hersh, Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 To Abu Ghraib, op.cit., p.323.
491 Ibid., p.326. The then Saudi Interior Minister, Prince Nayaf was keen not to release the royal ‘client list’ to the police. See ibid.
492 Ibid., p.324.
493 Ibid., p.328. But the contribution of ‘hundreds of millions of dollars’ to American projects also bought American sensitivity to Saudi investments and the business done by American oil companies. In 2000, for example, Halliburton was operating a number of subsidiaries in Saudi Arabia. See ibid.
494 See (Editor of BBC News Website Audio Video) Adam Batstone’s response to complaints about the editing, 21 January 2008 at Radical Films Co. UK, ‘Osama bin Laden Murdered’, BBC censors Benazir Bhutto David Frost Interview: Bhutto ‘mis-spoke’, @ http://radicalfilms.co.uk/2008/01/19/osama-bin-laden-murdered-bbc-censors-benazir-bhutto-david-frost-interview/. The interview was aired on 2 November 2007 and Benazir Bhutto was killed on 27 December 2007.
Hence, evidence of the use of microwaves and electrical discharges to injure and condition civilians has never formed part of the discourse on terrorism. The use of microwave (‘slow-kill’) weapons against women protesters at the Greenham Common American air force base, for instance, has never been referred to as a ‘terrorist’ act.496

4.6 Syriana: the Plot

The film opens in the Persian Gulf with impoverished oil workers, mainly from South Asia scrambling to get on a bus to work. This immediately sets up the tension between the wealth of the gulf and the people who form the basis of the oil economy. They are migrant workers who function like modern indentured labour with little or no job security.497 Their exploitation is almost taken for granted by the Arab society in the gulf; there is no attempt to mask it.498

The next scene is of a private party in Tehran where a C.I.A. officer Bob Barnes is sitting with Arash, an Iranian arms dealer. The partygoers smoke, drink and dress in western clothes,
only to return to the chador before going out again.\footnote{The familiarity between Barnes and Arash suggests that the Iranians are used to dealing with the C.I.A. Barnes speaks Farsi and is completely at home. There is no suggestion of a threat to his life. He is not hidden when they go out, and Arash clearly trusts him, at least as a business partner.} Barnes and Arash go to a warehouse, where Barnes hands over two Stinger missiles, having timed one of them to explode, thinking both were for the Iranian. But one is given to a blue-eyed Egyptian and hence is ‘lost’.\footnote{As the other explodes in the Iranian’s car, Barnes simply walks away, a job almost well done. This contempt for Iranians is part of the American dominant ideology where Iran is the pariah state, ‘projecting terror and extremism’ and although America can sell weapons to whomever it chooses, even the Taliban, the ‘illegal’ arms trade must be stopped. The Iranian perspective is rather different. When Barnes tells Arash ‘I thought they were both for you’, Arash simply throws him a bundle of cash and says ‘What do you care?’ The C.I.A. is not known for its principles; it is legend for its techniques of torture, and the murder or overthrow of democratic, especially left-wing politicians such as Mossadeq. It is also seen as opportunist, working primarily in America’s interest.}\footnote{It is significant that this person is Egyptian as the Muslim Brotherhood is prominent in Egypt. See footnote 513 below.} The contrast between rich and poor is a continuing motif throughout the entire film. But there is also this non-Islamist western-oriented section of Iranian society that suggests a many-layered complex society. This symbolises the ‘haggling’ that Naficy referred to in his critique of Althusser’s ‘hailing’.\footnote{It is significant that this person is Egyptian as the Muslim Brotherhood is prominent in Egypt. See footnote 513 below.}

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The next sequence is in Washington D.C. There is a meeting of members of the oil firm Connex which has just lost to the Chinese bid for drilling rights to oil fields in an Arab country run by the al-Sabaai family. A smaller firm Killen has won drilling rights to oil fields in Kazakhstan which Connex coveted. Connex wants a merger with Killen but the U.S.
Department of Justice (DJO) is investigating Killen’s activities in Kazakhstan. Bennett Holiday of law firm Sloan Whiting is asked to help get the merger passed by the DJO.

Later on a plane, Sydney Hewitt, Bennett’s senior colleague, explains that the merger could be extremely profitable provided there is continuing chaos in the Middle East, and if Bennett plays his cards right he could retire to a wealthy lifestyle.

Chaos in the Middle East is necessary because it invites American military presence, and that protects American interests. It appears to be almost imperative for the Americans to exert their power locally; they seem to require a physical presence on the ground. Their fire-power, however, is so excessive, that they can destroy and kill at will. American power has always been greater relative to the small Arab countries or even Saudi Arabia, but its physical presence makes it more prominent and it lays a challenge to those Arabs who oppose it.

In terms of ideology, the entire narrative projects the American myth of success and the rags-to-riches acquisition of wealth which constitute the American Dream. So profound is this belief that, as this film text shows, the motivation for most of the commercial decisions, and for the violence, is provided by the desire for wealth. The radical Hollywood directors Brian De Palma and Oliver Stone address this issue in the film Scarface (1983) where the main protagonist Tony Montana/Al Pacino says to his moll Elvira: ‘Is this what it’s about? Eating, drinking, snorting, fucking – what then?’ She responds: ‘We’re losers, we’re not winners.’

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502 Eugene Rosow notes that in the early twentieth century, the overwhelming majority of American business leaders were white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant men, from high-status families. Thus, for the majority of the masses, the lives of Robber Barons and gangsters provided an alternative model for success. Eugene Rosow, op.cit., p. 34.
In Switzerland, where energy analyst Brian Woodman lives, a news report says the planned merger would create a company with the world’s 23rd largest economy, and with 130,000 workers in 160 countries. Hence, the power of this company is global and, as Habermas has argued, a base/superstructure analysis is not adequate to analyse this economic reality. Here, rather than state intervention in the business cycle, there is international pressure on the developing economy, which any single country would find extremely difficult to resist.\footnote{For the catastrophic effect of Monsanto’s policies on Indian farmers and the suicide of 182,936 farmers in the period 1997 – 2007, see P. Sainath, ‘Neo-Liberal Terrorism in India: The largest wave of suicides in history’, 12 February 2009, \url{http://www.counterpunch.org/sainath02122009.html}. See especially the video ‘Monsanto-Indian Farmer Suicides’ \url{http://current.com/items/89109359_monsanto-indian-farmer-suicide.htm}, and ‘Monsanto in India’, \url{http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Monsanto_in_India}. See also Anthony Gregory, ‘Making the World Safe for Imperial Democracy’, 3 February 2005 \url{http://www.lewrockwell.com/gregory/gregory58.html}.}

When other factors such as dependence on the International Monetary Fund or on World Bank loans and on foreign currency earnings by migrant workers is taken into account, it becomes obvious that a more sophisticated analysis is necessary. However, in terms of power relations, the situation is reminiscent of imperial power and colonisation, this time with the active assistance of the local élite.

Woodman is asked by his firm to attend a party in Spain given by the Emir of the Arab country. Behind Woodman’s desk is a video of J.D. Rockefeller. As noted above, this Robber Barron used violence to control the domestic oil industry, but the violence projected by the Americans to gain control of oil fields is now international, and latter-day Smedley Butlers are clearly of value. It should be noted that the Americans have never denied the use of violence, but have justified it in the name of ‘making the world safe for democracy’.\footnote{See ‘To Make a World Safe for democracy, American Enters the War’ \url{http://www.schistory.net/campwadsworth/chapter1.html}. See also Anthony Gregory, ‘Making the World Safe for Imperial Democracy’, 3 February 2005 \url{http://www.lewrockwell.com/gregory/gregory58.html}.}

The next scene shows poverty and destitution for the migrant workers as there is no longer any work for them; the oil fields have been contracted to the Chinese.
At C.I.A. headquarters they decide to give Barnes a ‘desk job’ but he is first interviewed by an officer who demands a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer to the question whether Iran’s continued economic embargo will force a regime change and produce ‘a nice secular, pro-western, pro-business government’. Frustrated with the lack of understanding of a complex society, Barnes tries to answer the question but in vain. This overly-simplistic view of the world essentially denies the ‘other’ full political status. America wants to acquire wealth and at the expense of countries in the Persian Gulf if necessary. It wants Iran to be ‘secular’ and ‘pro-business’ and is willing to discipline it with nuclear weapons if necessary. It is already engaged in economic discipline. For Iran to have its own national and security interests that may conflict with the U.S. / Israel is not something the U.S. is willing to contemplate. Iran’s oil forms a part of American national interest; hence, America being the more powerful of the two can dictate its terms to Iran. Should Iran not accept them, it can be made to with the use of superior violence.

Present at this interview are members of the Committee for the Liberation of Iran (C.L.I.). This shows the close co-operation between the C.I.A. and the American oil lobby, many of whose prominent members are part of the C.L.I. The motivation for the C.I.A.’s actions hence, are economic.

In affluent Marbella, Woodman arrives with his family and tries to scout for business with the Emir. In the intimacy of the Emir’s family, it becomes clear the Prince Nasir is well educated, modernist and heir to the throne, whilst his younger brother is not very smart and wants to

maintain the status quo in the kingdom. In a pool accident, Woodman’s son is electrocuted. The rivalry between the brothers is precisely the sort of thing that the Americans will exploit, in their own interest.

In the impoverished compound of foreign workers, there is no work and they are treated ruthlessly by Arab guards. They talk about how life is better in the madrassas, and two young Pakistanis end up there. It is clear here, that although many people join the madrassa’s because of faith, the film text offers the alternative explanation that it is economic injustice that forces people there.

At the madrassa, the preacher talks about government based on Koranic principles. He says alleviating poverty has nothing to do with pursuing liberal economics, but rather there should be no more kings and slaves; equality would reduce the suffering in this world. This is not ‘extremism’ but rather a pragmatic position. Liberal economics is not concerned with the impoverished masses, except to claim that wealth will eventually ‘trickle down’; it has not done so, and this is an alternative, albeit non-western, view of what is necessary.

Woodman, despite his wife’s objections, goes to the Arab country, where ‘women walk five feet behind’, and where ‘the bin Laden group made billions’ air conditioning Mecca. He too is looking for success, and the gulf is where millions are to be made. The ‘lack of modernisation’ is precisely what Prince Nasir wants to change and Woodman suggests that he may have the impact of another Mossadeq. The subtext assures us that Nasir will not live.

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506 Prince Nasir is also not pro-American as is revealed in a speech he makes in the Lebanon. He thinks his brother ‘couldn’t run a brothel’.
507 All the high-tech gadgetry and presumably the wiring also is American.
On a yacht in France, the younger Prince is berated by Dean Whiting, managing partner of Sloan Whiting. He asks him if there is anything he can do for him, and if he wants ‘to be king maybe.’\textsuperscript{508} Whiting’s arrogance suggests he is familiar with the role of telling the Arab élite what they should be doing. He treats the Prince like a spoilt child and takes the position of an adult who will do his thinking for him.\textsuperscript{509}

At C.I.A. headquarters, Barnes is given the assignment of assassinating Nasir who they say is supporting terrorism. He is alleged to have paid for the lost missile and is spoken of as a ‘terrorist’. The story against him is clearly made up, but it does not occur to any employee programmed by the C.I.A. to check the story. It is simply taken on board as fact. The director’s strategy here offers a marked contrast with what happens when Barnes does question the C.I.A.’s interests and motives.

In Texas, Holiday finds out that the chairman of Connex Lee Janus, Dean Whiting, and Danny Dalton of the oil company Killen, are all members of the C.L.I. Dalton talks about Killen’s rights to drill in the Tengiz oil field.\textsuperscript{510} Later Holiday discovers that Dalton bribed the Kazakhstani Minister of Resources for the Tengiz deal.

In Maryland, a former C.I.A. colleague tells Barnes that the C.I.A. is a $30 billion a year business where it takes its cut whenever it gives a company security clearance. This is the start of a process of awakening for Barnes. When Barnes asks if it is safe to go to the Lebanon, where he wants to arrange Nasir’s killing, his colleague tells him to clear it with Hezbollah. It is obvious that the C.I.A., quite apart from American political rhetoric, is an

\textsuperscript{508} Dean Whiting is a consultant for certain members of the royal family.
\textsuperscript{509} He is eventually made King.
\textsuperscript{510} This is a reference to ChevronTexaco above.
active player in places like the Lebanon where it is familiar with radical organisations, as is Israel.\textsuperscript{511}

Arriving in the Lebanon Barnes tells Hezbollah that he is there on private business and is welcomed. Barnes meets with his local agent Mussawi and instructs him to kill Nasir. He gives precise instructions on how Nasir is to be killed.

However, Mussawi has left the C.I.A. and now works for the Iranians. He captures and tortures Barnes for the names of his other agents. But first he asks him if he knows anything about the methods used by the Chinese on the Falun Gong.\textsuperscript{512} This is punishment meted out to very large dissenting organisations, and Barnes is given a menu to choose from. The subtext here is given away by what Mussawi (whom Barnes called ‘Jimmie’), says about why people are tortured: normally they would be asked to recant their beliefs, but ‘if you have no beliefs to recant, then what?’ The violence perpetrated by the C.I.A. and the School of the Americas especially in Latin America had to do with converting people to supporting capitalist economic policies, and accepting the domination of their powerful neighbour. This C.I.A.-trained agent of torture has suddenly turned on his master, and would have killed him had he not been stopped by Hezbollah. But the C.I.A. is opportunist and it does not have any particular principles or beliefs for Mussawi to attack. It is the C.I.A. and its methods, and not the Chinese, which are under scrutiny here.

\textsuperscript{511} For Israel’s initial backing of Hamas, see ‘How Israel and the United States helped to Bolster Hamas’, 26 January 2006 @ \url{http://www.democracynow.org/2006/1/26/how_israel_and_the_united_states}.

\textsuperscript{512} For the threat the Falun Gong poses to the often violent and totalitarian Chinese Communist Party, see ‘Falun Gong: An evil cult?’, 27 October 2004 @ \url{http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A2922644}. 122
In the next scene, the blue-eyed Egyptian shows his missile to the poor Pakistanis who have lost their jobs and joined the madrassa where they are properly fed.\footnote{The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt and still has its largest organisation there. One of the poor Pakistanis is encouraged by his friend to give up his life so that his parents may have more money to live on. Presumably, there is some payment for martyrs. Eventually, the two, in a speed boat, crash the missile into a newly opened Connex-Killen natural gas terminal where a small celebration is taking place.}

At C.I.A. headquarters they discover that Mussawi is spreading the story that the C.I.A. attempted to kill Nasir. The C.I.A. decides to scapegoat Barnes and distance itself from his actions. He is questioned by the F.B.I. in a criminal investigation relating to the illegal arms trade.

Woodman has by now met Nasir who grants his firm business worth $75 million; Woodman also becomes the Prince’s economic adviser.\footnote{The business is offered as compensation for the accident in Marbella.} Later, Nasir reveals to Woodman the fights within the royal family for money, and how he wants to modernise the kingdom politically and make it economically more efficient and self-sufficient. He also says that his brother is liaising with American lawyers and wonders what he is being advised. Woodman answers: look at all the wars, including the Gulf War; this is a fight to the death for oil, while the wealthy Arab élite is encouraged in its frivolous pursuits. Nasir also complains that when he accepted the Chinese bid, he was suddenly called a terrorist by the Americans. The metadiscourse here is clearly aimed at uncovering the reasons and the methods of American domination of Middle Eastern oil economies. The American aim is to enable a capillary-like functioning of power and to ‘terminate’ dissent and alternative forms of government. This reality conflicts sharply with the American ideology of ‘justice’, ‘equality’ and ‘democracy’ and ‘free speech’.\footnote{In September 2009 the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan succeeded in forcing one of the largest newspaper groups in Pakistan to remove a regular column by a critic of the United States. See Ahmed Qureshi, ‘US
When Holiday confronts Dalton over what the DJO would term ‘corruption’ Dalton says:

Some trust-fund prosecutor, got off-message at Yale, thinks he’s gonna run this up the flagpole, make a name for himself, maybe get elected some two-bit Congressman from nowhere, with the result that Russia and China can suddenly start having, at our expense, all the advantages we enjoy here. No, I tell you. No Sir! Corruption charges! Corruption? Corruption is government intrusion into market efficiencies in the form of regulations. That’s Milton Friedman. He got a goddamn Nobel Prize. We have laws against it precisely so we can get away with it. Corruption is our protection. Corruption keeps us safe and warm. Corruption is why you and I are prancing around here instead of fighting over scraps of meat out in the street. Corruption is why we win.\textsuperscript{516}

Hence, the reason why the ‘third world’ has to stay in that position is so as not to compete with American privileges and the American ‘way of life’. Business has always been done this way.

Holiday tells Jimmy Pope who owns Killen about his discovery of Dalton’s corruption, but he explains that all he wants for the DJO is ‘the illusion of due diligence’ and that two successful prosecutions will give that illusion.\textsuperscript{517} With that, the merger should go through. This lends credence to Dalton’s view, and Sydney Hewitt’s prediction that Holiday could retire a rich man.

In his conversation with the Emir, Nasir is told that his brother will be king. The Emir says he wants to live in Europe and does not want any problems. When Nasir meets with his tribal council, they tell him that the younger brother is supported by America and 10,000 of their troops in the country. But Nasir says he has local support. This is American domination through the capillary functioning of power, but also a more prominent, physical domination

\textsuperscript{516} The Assistant Attorney General Donald Farish III is investigating the Connex/Killen merger.

\textsuperscript{517} ‘Due diligence’ refers to a certain standard of care required by companies. See Berg Duffy, ‘International Business and Commercial Law’, @ http://www.bergduffy.com/Personnel/Articles/95ddartl.htm.
by pure force. Regardless of what Nasir’s people want, the Americans will force their way on these people by dominating the monarchy. And it is the monarchy that has allowed the stationing of 10,000 American troops on its soil.

A former C.I.A. colleague of Barnes’s explains to him that killing Nasir has to do with U.S. interests, as Nasir wants U.S. military bases out of his country, whereas his brother does not. In the final sequence, Nasir who has nine out of eleven generals backing him, opts for a palace coup and is on his way to the palace, accompanied by Woodman.\textsuperscript{518} Here, a local Arab agent tells the C.I.A. what car Nasir is in, using his mobile phone and speaking in English. As the cavalcade proceeds it is intercepted by Barnes who has come to warn Nasir that he is going to be killed.\textsuperscript{519} All of this is picked up by satellite with astonishing detail.\textsuperscript{520} Just before Barnes speaks to Nasir, Fred Franks, Barnes’s superior at the C.I.A. who is watching the scene on a large screen, gives the order to ‘destroy the target’ and a remote-controlled missile is launched. Minutes later it hits the cars. There is nothing left of Nasir’s family – not even charred remains.\textsuperscript{521}

As explained above, the C.I.A. functions by recruiting local agents, so there is a local power network in place which is linked (as in a pyramid) to Washington. It does not matter who the

\textsuperscript{518} Initially Woodman is in the same car as Nasir, but then he swaps with Nasir’s wife and children. The whole family is now travelling together.

\textsuperscript{519} Barnes is now disillusioned with a corrupt CIA working in its own interest and that of big business, and he realises he has been used. He also knows that Nasir is not guilty of any wrongdoing, and decides to warn him.

\textsuperscript{520} There are currently commercial satellites with one-metre resolution. See Daniel Dubno, ‘Satellites Change how we see the Earth: In The Future, Expect Dramatic 3-D City Views’, CBS News, 1999 @ http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/1999/06/03/tech/digitaldan/main34059.shtml.

\textsuperscript{521} During the First Gulf War, Patrick Sloyan described the impact of depleted uranium weapons on a tank: ‘The sabot is a two-foot steel dart tipped with dense depleted uranium. It travels almost a mile a second .... The [one] that hit [Sergeant Tony] Applegate’s tank ... left a three inch hole where it went in and came out ... Some army experts believe most of Applegate’s body was sucked through the three-inch hole by a vacuum created as the Silver Bullet passed through. The only sign of Applegate was a charred hip bone. ...”The coffin didn’t weigh anything,” Mrs Applegate said. Patrick Sloyan, ‘The Silver Bullet In Desert Storm’, The Guardian 17 May 1992.
president is, this grid can be utilised by any American administration, for any purpose. And because of American interests in the Middle East, the status quo is maintained. America cannot imagine the Arabs continuing to do business once the conditions of their people improve. Hence, American ‘exceptionalism’ decrees that the status quo be maintained through ‘whatever means necessary’, which usually translates into ‘whatever force necessary’. The ‘overkill’ that is displayed, however, appears to have a symbolic value, that of the might of a superpower in a ‘unipolar’ world.

However, there is no narrative closure because the film ends with the young Pakistanis launching their American missile at a Connex-Killen natural gas terminal where there is a small celebration. The conflicts are unresolved here, but what the narrative does is to allow the subjugated political status and a political voice. It also invites interrogative spectatorship which enables a critique of the ideology incorporated into the film, and it exposes the power relations internal to a society and how they are linked to the superpower, apart from revealing the corruption in American society.

To conclude, this narrative is about state terrorism in the interests of the political / business élite in America. It is also about protecting the American way of life which is viewed in terms of competition with the rest of this planet. Hence, chaos in the Middle East is necessary because it invites American military presence, and that protects American interests. In order to spread their power, capillary-fashion, into Arab society, the Americans have familiarised themselves with the power struggles at important levels, which they then manipulate in their own interest. Because of the corruption and discontent within Arab society, local power relationships are fluid, but America with its overwhelming force dominates and maintains the status quo.
There is a suggestion in the film that the Americans do not take the time to understand other societies, but it may be argued that this is not required. There are no ‘beliefs to recant’: no principles or standards that matter; hence American ideology is a mask for its power manipulations and desire for hegemony. The idea that the Americans will ‘liberate’ Iran for the benefit of the Iranians would be laughable if it were not so worrying.\footnote{Arundhati Roy recently explained what ‘democracy’ means in modern society: ‘[D]emocracy serves the free market, and each of the institutions in democracy ... whether it’s the courts or whether it’s the media or whether it’s all the other institutions of democracy, they’ve been sort of hollowed out, and just their shells have been replaced, and we play out this charade. And it’s much more complicated for people to understand what’s going on, because there’s so much shadow play. ... [D]emocracy has been hollowed out and made meaningless. And when I say “democracy,” I’m not talking about the ideal. ... I’m not saying that countries that live in dictatorships and under military occupation should not fight for democracy, because the early years of democracy are important and heady. And then we see a strange metastasis taking over. ... [For instance,] the Supreme Court of the world’s greatest democracy [India] says ... on the one hand, “We don’t have evidence to prove that the person who was charged ... belongs to a terrorist group,” and [goes on to say] “but the collective conscience of society will only be satisfied if we sentence him to death.”’ Arundhati Roy ‘The Human Costs of India’s Economic Growth, the View of Obama from New Delhi, and Escalating US Attacks in Afghanistan-Pakistan’, 28 September 2009 @ http://www.democracynow.org/2009/9/28/author_arundhati_roy_on_conflicts. For the CIA’s fomenting of violence in Iran, paying ‘a $100,000 cash advance ... [to] organize not only kidnappings, but ... to behead hostages live on camera and put it on YouTube’ see Pepe Escobar in the news story, ‘Six Senior Iranian Revolutionary Guard Commanders Killed in Suicide Bombing, Iran Blames US and Pakistan’, 19 October 2009, @ http://www.democracynow.org/2009/10/19/six_senior_iranian_revolutionary_guard_commanders.} Iraqi society has been completely decimated, and this in the service of American power. And America inscribes its power on bodies – even those that evaporated in places like Hiroshima and Nagasaki, leaving human shadows behind.

It is because American power is so explicit that a Foucauldian analysis is essential. This type of analysis broadens the discourse and allows for factors, in addition to ideology, to be
scrutinised. The discourse then ties in cultural, social, economic and political factors in an attempt to explain what the director is trying to convey through the film text.
Chapter Five
The Film Text
The Battle of Algiers (1965)
Directed by Gillo Pontecorvo
Screenplay by Franco Solinas

Shot in black and white, and employing a quasi-documentary form, this political film text concerns the insurgency against the French occupation of Algeria. The film explicitly covers the battle of Algiers from 1954 to 1957, although the insurgency continued in the rest of the country until Algeria attained its independence in 1962.

Gillo Pontecorvo’s privileging of the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) fighters brings to the fore the struggle for independence and allows the Algerians political status. The metadiscourse is very clearly against the continued colonisation of the Algerians, and Pontecorvo’s demonstration of French economic domination, torture and cruelty is explicit. Nevertheless, the emphasis is not so much on economic and social-class factors, but on the ‘other’, the foreign French colonists. His portrayal of the commander of the French paratroops which allows engagement with that intelligent character, and the reliance on chronological historical detail has the impact of balancing the narrative, described by Edward Said as one of the greatest political films ever made.

The discourse on the colonisation of Algeria and the resistance to it covers a wide range of issues including ideology and the creation of subjectivity, the economic exclusion of the

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524 Ibid.
Algerians from the local economy, the nature of the insurrection and the use of force, the use of force by the French, including torture, the social groups involved in the insurrection, the raising of a national consciousness, and, briefly, the nature of the internal political struggle with regard to Islam.

5.1 The creation of a colonial subjectivity

Frantz Fanon who in 1959 joined the FLN, writing about the use of the French language and the inculcation of an oppressive culture in French colonies, explained the ideology incorporated in language that constituted subjectivity. For instance, he argued that the identity choices for black children were based on the model for French whites.\textsuperscript{525} In many children’s stories, characters symbolising fear and evil were represented by blacks or Indians.\textsuperscript{526} A child identifying with the hero essentially identifies against himself and, although a tension sets in, it comes to the fore when the child is rejected by white society. Fanon writes:

\begin{quote}
I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonised native, robs me of all worth, all individuality, tells me that I am a parasite on the world, that I must bring myself as quickly as possible into step with the white world.\textsuperscript{527}
\end{quote}

For Fanon, the Manichaean colonial world consists of white settlers and colonised subjects. The dominant ideology here creates a polarisation:

\begin{quote}
[T]he settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil. Native society is not simply ... a society lacking in values. ... The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is ... the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil. ... Monsieur Meyer could thus
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{526} Frantz Fanon, \textit{Black Skin, White Masks}, (London, Palladin 1970), quoted in ibid.  
\textsuperscript{527} Quoted in ibid., p.98.
\end{flushright}
... [tell] the French National Assembly that the Republic must not be prostituted by allowing the Algerian people to become part of it.\textsuperscript{528}

Fanon believed that the pseudo-scientific justification for these views was provided by the French psychiatric profession. Exemplary here was Dr Léon Mugniéry who worked in Algeria. Fanon writes:

The medical staff discovers the existence of a North African syndrome. Not experimentally, but on the basis of an oral tradition. The North African takes his place in this asymptomatic syndrome and is automatically put down as undisciplined ... inconsequential ... and insincere ... .\textsuperscript{529}

The ‘lazy, undisciplined and aggressive’ Algerian was used to oppose Algerian independence.\textsuperscript{530} Importantly, the hypothesis became an assumption for doctors, lawyers and judges working in Algeria. And the ‘scientific’ justification was provided by a psychiatrist, Professor Porot:

This primitivism is not merely ... the result of a special upbringing; it has much deeper roots. We even consider that it must have a substratum in a particular disposition of the architectonic structure, or at least in the dynamic hierarchisation of the nervous centres. We are in the presence of a coherent body of comportment and of a coherent life which can be explained scientifically. The Algerian has no cortex: or, more precisely, he is dominated like the inferior vertebrates, by the diencephalon. The cortical functions, if they exist at all ... are practically unintegrated into the dynamic existence.\textsuperscript{531}

And it is the cortex which distinguishes primitive from more evolved man. This type of thinking significantly accounted for the treatment of Algerians by the colonists. Even so, the Algerian brain was still capable of being ‘brain-washed’. General Edgar O’Ballance writes:

\textsuperscript{528} Frantz Fanon The Wretched of the Earth, op.cit., p.31. In September 1947, the Algerian Statute passed by the French National Assembly rejected the idea of integration, recognised two distinct communities, both within the French Union and created a new Algerian Assembly. Edgar O’Ballance, \textit{op.cit.}, p.34.

\textsuperscript{529} Frantz Fanon, \textit{Towards the African Revolution}, quoted in Irene L. Gendzier, \textit{op.cit.}, p.95.

\textsuperscript{530} Ibid., p.96.

\textsuperscript{531} Quoted in ibid., pp.96 - 97.
Psychological warfare methods, now commonly thought of as ‘brain-washing’ ... were applied to Algerian Muslims in internment camps and amongst groups of displaced persons. The system was first ... to breakdown their existing beliefs and cause the subjects to lose faith in the FLN ideals, aims and leaders. Then they were given a new belief ... in a French-Muslim Algeria. ... [T]he process [was] applied with ... barrages of indoctrination [using loud-speakers and pamphlets]. ... There were rewards for improvement and ‘correct thinking’, and the more responsive were elected ‘prefects’. These processes had surprising, and frightening, success. A howl of protest was raised by the French Communists, all Arab states and some Communist countries.\footnote{Edgar O’Ballance, op.cit., p.95. It should be noted that the thrust of General O’Ballance’s book is to argue how the French government could have been victorious in its opposition to the insurrection. It is quoted here essentially for the historical detail it provides.}

However, the context for this subjectivity is the grid of power relations in colonial society. It incorporates violence which is why Fanon felt a stronger violence was necessary to overthrow the system.\footnote{This is discussed further below.}

Roland Barthes discusses the French use of language to describe relations between France and Algeria. He argues that this language has no communicative value but functions like a code.\footnote{Roland Barthes ‘Grammaire Africaine’ in \textit{Mythologies}, (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1957), p137. Own translation from the French. This is not a literal translation, but seeks to provide the gist of the argument. Also, Barthes’s concept of mythology is akin to that of ideology. See ibid., pp.223 - 233.} He notes: ‘This writing is cosmetic: it aims to cover the facts with the noise of language or with sufficient signs of the language.’\footnote{Ibid., p.137.} Barthes then considers a number of terms: ‘\textit{bande}’ or band of rebels or prisoners, with the connotation of ‘outlaws’ with whom one does not discourse.\footnote{Ibid., p.138.} This is a moralisation of language, he argues; to convert the discussion to one about problems of peace, all that is required is an ‘arbitrary change of language’: the French band is called a ‘community’.\footnote{Ibid.}
The term *déchirement* or wrenching promotes the idea of an irresponsible history. The state of war is retracted under the ‘noble garb of tragedy’ and colonisation disappears in a ‘halo of powerless lamentation’.\(^{538}\) Hence, the statement in an official French letter to Ben Arafa of Morocco: ‘The government of the Republic is determined to make every effort to end the cruel *déchirements* that test Morocco.’\(^{539}\)

Barthes goes on to adopt an ethnological term, *manna*, a sort of algebraic symbol which represents ‘an indeterminate value of signification, itself empty of meaning, and able to receive any meaning whose function is to fill a gap between signifier and signified’.\(^{540}\)

‘Honour’ and ‘destiny’ are *manna*. Hence, ‘It would dishonour the Muslim population if they were to think that these men could be considered their representatives ... ’\(^{541}\) Further, it is not French military conquest which has subjected Algeria; rather, Providence has united the two destinies. The union is declared insoluble even in the glare of its dissolution: ‘We intend ... to give the people whose destiny is linked to ours, genuine independence in voluntary association.’\(^{542}\)

Further, there is a predominance of nouns, because, Barthes argues, they ‘come to us already known’.\(^{543}\) He writes:

> We are here in the heart of the myth: it is because of France’s *mission*, the *wrenching* apart of the Moroccan people, or the *destiny* of Algeria – presented grammatically as postulates, a quality conferred on them by the use of the definite article, that we cannot dispute it discursively.\(^{544}\)

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\(^{538}\) Ibid.

\(^{539}\) Quoted in ibid.

\(^{540}\) Ibid.

\(^{541}\) Ibid. of the Ministry of Interior. Ibid.

\(^{542}\) French official M. Pinay, at the U.N. This idea of ‘federation’ was explicitly rejected by the Algerians.

\(^{543}\) Ibid., p.142.

\(^{544}\) Ibid.
In contrast, the adjective has an ambiguous role: it is a product of an anxiety that nouns may have an unintended usage. Thus, independence becomes true, aspirations authentic, destiny indissolubly linked. The adjective aims at ‘clearing through customs’ the noun and its past disappointments, and introducing it in a new, innocent, credible state.545

Myth/ideology holds the subject in position. By denying the fact that the Algerians are fighting an oppressive power, they are denied political status. 546 Ideology resolves conflicts by denying that they exist.

5.2 The colonisation of Algeria

The French invaded Algeria in 1830 on the pretext of a diplomatic incident but the French Revolution had left France in economic ruin.547 Further, as Foucault argued, the bourgeoisie needed to protect themselves against an armed uprising, and perceived the ‘non-proletarianised’ people as the threat. Colonisation was used to ‘drain them off’ and they were used as ‘cadres, administrative functionaries, as tools of surveillance and control over the colonised peoples’.548 These colonists were given subsidies and the best land, expropriated from Muslims, which they farmed for cereal and wine production. Industry was discouraged to provide a ready market for French industrial goods.549

545 Ibid., p.143
546 If they were granted it, that could well create the conditions of possibility for political dialogue.
548 These were the ‘lesser whites’ who were prevented from forming an alliance with the indigenous population through the use of a racist ideology. Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge, op.cit., pp.16 - 17.
549 Edgar O’Ballance, op.cit., p.23.
After World War II, the French discovered deposits of iron, zinc, and other minerals. 

Algeria’s largest oil and gas fields were discovered in 1956.\textsuperscript{550} By 1954, most of the 8,451,000 Muslims lived on small farms or on marginal land.\textsuperscript{551} Three million were landless, and one million underemployed, relying on casual work on European farms.\textsuperscript{552} Ninety per cent were illiterate.\textsuperscript{553}

The Arab middle class, destroyed in the mid-1800s, began to reappear in the early twentieth century, composed of French-educated intellectuals, French-appointed Arab leaders and some army officers.\textsuperscript{554} They wanted complete integration with France, and so came to be known as the ‘Beni Oui Oui’.\textsuperscript{555} The marabouts, or holy men, and the tribal leaders, the caïds, charged by the French with keeping the Arabs and Berbers in a ‘state of docility’ were similarly called ‘Beni Oui Oui’.\textsuperscript{556}

Thus, Fanon argued that the only hope of revolution in Algeria rested with the lumpen-proletariat. He wrote:

\begin{quote}
The workers, primary school teachers, artisans and small shopkeepers who have begun to profit ... from the colonial set-up, have special interests at heart. What this sort of following demands is the betterment of their particular lot ... The immense majority of natives want the settler’s farm. For them, there is no question of entering into competition with the settler. They want to take his place. ...
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{551} Edgar O’Ballance, op.cit., p. 24.
\textsuperscript{552} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{553} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{554} Ibid., p.26. Most senior officers were French.
\textsuperscript{555} ‘The tribe of yes men’. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{556} Ibid.
It is clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain.\textsuperscript{557}

Fanon also argues that in the colonies there is no distinction between economic substructure and political superstructure. The whites are rich because they are white – ‘the cause is the consequence’– so Marxist analysis needs to be adapted to the unique circumstances in colonised countries.\textsuperscript{558} In addition the foreigner comes from abroad to impose his rule with violence. Thus, it is not ownership of factories or estates that distinguishes the ruling classes: ‘The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, ‘the others’.\textsuperscript{559} And they can only be evicted through the use of force.

5.3 Power and Violence

For Fanon, the ‘entire colonial enterprise was built on a foundation of force and conquest’ and the colonial yoke could only be thrown off by the use of force.\textsuperscript{560} This view has parallels with Foucault’s thought. Foucault argues that if power is the way in which relations of force are deployed, then it should be analysed in terms of conflict and war:

[Power could be viewed as] war continued by other means. This … implies that the relations of power that function in a society … rest upon a definite relation of forces … established at a determinate, historically specifiable moment, in war and by war. … It consists in seeing politics as sanctioning and upholding the disequilibrium of forces that was displayed in war. … [Also] political struggles … [should] be understood as episodes, factions and displacements in that same war. … [Finally] the end result can only be the outcome of war … decided in the last analysis by recourse to arms.\textsuperscript{561}

\textsuperscript{557} Frantz Fanon \textit{The Wretched of the Earth}, op.cit., p.47.
\textsuperscript{558} Ibid., p.31.
\textsuperscript{559} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{560} Irene L. Gendzier, op.cit., p.198.
\textsuperscript{561} Foucault here inverts Clausewitz’s aphorism that war is politics continued by other means. Michele Foucault, \textit{The Order of Things}, op.cit., pp.90 - 91.
For Foucault, society in general functions on the basis of power relations but for Fanon these relations are perhaps more extreme in colonies where the foreign colonists power originates in, and is reinforced by, the mother country. Fanon understands decolonisation as the ‘replacing of a certain ‘species’ of men by another ‘species’ of men’ without a period of transition.\textsuperscript{562} The first encounter between them and the continued exploitation occurs through the use of ‘bayonets and cannon’.\textsuperscript{563} The settler brings ‘the native into existence’ and ‘perpetuates his existence’.\textsuperscript{564} He owes his own existence ‘to the colonial system’.\textsuperscript{565} Fanon writes:

The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise … . The exploited man sees that his liberation implies the use of all means, and that of force first and foremost. When in 1956, after the capitulation of Monsieur Guy Mollet to the settlers in Algeria, the Front de Libération Nationale … stated that colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat, no Algerian really found these terms too violent. … [It] only expressed what every Algerian felt at heart: colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence.\textsuperscript{566}

Fanon’s views are given credence by Algerian politics. From at least the early 1920s, various Algerian political movements tried to better the conditions of ordinary Algerians and to increase the possibility of their political participation in local government, but to no avail. Most of these early movements wanted complete integration with France but the white settlers resisted any moves by the French government to alter their total domination of...

\textsuperscript{562} Frantz Fanon The Wretched of the Earth, op.cit., p.27.
\textsuperscript{563} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{564} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{565} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{566} Ibid., p.47.
Algerian society. However, the Setif massacres finally jolted the Algerians into action, eventually bringing about the insurrection.

On VE day on 8 May 1945, an Algerian nationalist procession in Setif was fired on by the police. That night, the Muslims rioted and 100 Europeans lost their lives. The authorities retaliated, killing 40,000 Muslims, with another 10,000 killed in Kabylie. Irene Gendzier notes:

The impact of Setif ... is difficult to overestimate. ... [After] the Second World War, during which Algerians had fought with Frenchmen and shared in the traumas of war, Setif was an ugly reminder that France and Algeria were not ... equals ... . Rabah Bitat, one of the original partisans in the FLN struggle, noted ... in March of 1956, when ... testifying before the Military Tribunal of Algiers, that after Setif he knew without the shadow of a doubt that he was one of the colonised. He described May 1945 as having created a veritable abyss between the Muslim and European populations in Algeria.569

The French also regrouped the Algerians into internment camps, ostensibly to clear large areas to better concentrate on ‘fighting terror’. By August 1958, 485,000 Algerians had been interned. Foucault, with reference to the confinement of people during epidemics, provides insight into the power relations involved. He notes:

This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place ... the slightest movements ... supervised ... all events ... recorded ... in which power is exercised without division ... all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism. ... It lays down for each individual his place, his body, his disease and his death, his well-being, by means of an omnipresent and omniscient power that ... [ultimately determines] the individual ... what characterises him ... belongs to him ... happens to him. ... Behind the disciplinary mechanisms can be

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567 For example, when in 1936 the French government decided to extend French citizenship to 20,000 Algerians, all the European mayors in Algeria resigned and the plan was set aside. This opposition was very determined despite the participation of 100,000 Algerians in World War I. See Edgar O’Ballance, op.cit., pp.27 - 42.
568 Ibid., p.33. Gendzier suggest the true figure may be between official estimates of 1,165 and 45,000. Irene L. Gendzier, op.cit., p.125.
569 Ibid.
570 Edgar O’Ballance, op.cit., p.126.
read the haunting memory of ‘contagions’ … rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who … live and die in disorder. 571

This disciplinary power held the Algerians in their subjectivity until powerful events raised their consciousness to the point of active rebellion.

5.4 The Algerian insurrection

In June 1946 Messali Hadj, a Pan-Arabist, formed the Movement Pour le Triomphe des Libertés Democratiquest (Movement for the triumph of Democratic Liberties) MTLD. 572 Socialist in orientation, it wanted universal suffrage, the removal of French troops from the country and complete independence. Initially a non-violent movement, it focussed on winning seats in local elections. Frustrated by repeated electoral rigging, however, the MTLD created a clandestine para-military organisation, the Organisation Speciale (Special Organisation) OS, discovered by the French in 1950 and later dissolved. 573

MTLD member Mohammed Boudiaf called a meeting in Switzerland in 1954 attended by those who favoured direct action. It led to the formation of the Comite Revolutionnaire pour l’Unité et l’Action (Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action) CRUA whose central committee consisted of nine men, among them Boudiaf, Ahmed Ben Bella, Belacem Krim, Mohammed Khider, and Hocine Ait Ahmed. 574 In July, the CRUA divided Algeria into Wilayas or military districts, and the Algerian insurrection began on 1 November 1954 with

572 Edgar O’Ballance, op.cit., p.33.
573 Ibid., p.35.
574 These nine men came to be known as the ‘Club des Neuf’ and also the Mouadjahed or freedom fighters. Ibid., p.38.
70 incidents of bomb-throwing, attacks on police stations and arson across the country, but concentrated in the eastern Aures Mountains.\textsuperscript{575}

Several companies of troops were sent from France. The CRUA changed its name to \textit{Front de Libération Nationale} (National Liberation Front) FLN.\textsuperscript{576} Political and military functions were formerly distinguished with the formation of the External and Internal Delegations. The External Delegation, based in Cairo, consisted of Bella, Khider, Boudiaf and Ahmed who controlled the political direction of the movement, procured arms and obtained financial and military assistance from sympathetic countries.\textsuperscript{577}

The Internal Delegation consisted of military commanders of the \textit{Wilayas} who trained the fighters and pursued active operations. They formed the \textit{Armée de Libération Nationale} (Army of National Liberation), ALN. In the first two years of the insurgency, the Muslim population was either persuaded or terrorised into backing the insurgency.\textsuperscript{578} When the ALN moved into the cities, it targeted the pro-French Muslims. They were warned in writing to change their allegiance and if they did not, were often shot.\textsuperscript{579} However, by 1956 the bulk of the Muslim population backed the insurgency. Heavy-handed French tactics possibly played a role in creating this support.

The French set up the stifling \textit{‘quadrillage’} or grid system in towns and cities which were garrisoned, and where there was complete cooperation between the military, the police and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{575} Ibid., p.39.
\item \textsuperscript{576} Ibid., p.41.
\item \textsuperscript{577} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{578} Ibid., p.43.
\item \textsuperscript{579} Ibid., pp.53 - 54.
\end{itemize}
the civil administration. Also, the French assault on the ALN used modern fire power, causing very high casualties.

In 1956 the ALN moved into the Kasbah in Algiers, a network of alleyways and adjoining rooftops where 80,000 Muslims lived, and from where it began to organise bombings in Algiers. In February 1957 the French 10th Paratroop Division with 10,000 troops commanded by General Massu arrived in Algiers. General Massu forcibly recruited ALN informers and penetrated the Kasbah with 1500 informers. Such was the terror inflicted on the Muslim population that prominent leaders of the ALN fled to Tunisia and by September the ALN surrendered in Algiers. However the insurgency carried on in the rest of the country leading to independence in 1962.

Just prior to this, on 22 April 1961 four retired generals launched a revolt against the French government. However, the French army stayed loyal and the attempted coup failed. During the revolt, one of the four, General Challe, appealed to the Americans to intervene. General O’Ballance notes that General Challe was justified in this because President de Gaulle wanted France to withdraw from NATO and the Americans ‘would have not have been averse to more amenable leadership in France’. Consequently, the CIA was ‘actively involved’ in the planning and preparation of the revolt. After some hesitation President

580 Ibid., p.64.
581 Ibid., p.65.
582 Ibid., p.80.
583 Ibid.
584 Ibid., p.81.
585 Ibid., pp.169 - 185.
586 Ibid., p.184.
587 Ibid.
Kennedy pledged his support for President de Gaulle and the generals in Algeria surrendered.\textsuperscript{588}

5.4.1 The use of torture by the French

During the insurrection a million Algerians were killed.\textsuperscript{589} Richard Phillips notes:

In Paris, Guy Mollet’s Socialist Party-led government ... passed the Special Powers Act giving the military a blank check in Algeria. Assassination, torture and rape were commonplace. As a leading French general later boasted: “We were given a free hand to do what we considered necessary.” Tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children were tortured and in Algiers alone more than 3,000 people ... “disappeared”. French “pacification” programs forced two million Algerians ... into barbed-wire concentration camps, and saw the destruction of over 8,000 villages.\textsuperscript{590}

A French journalist Henri Alleg was tortured in Algiers for his sympathies for Algerian independence. Ian Birchall describes this torture:

In June 1957 he was arrested by paratroops ... [and] repeatedly tortured. Electric shocks were administered to his ears, hands and genitals. A rubber tube was attached to a tap and running water was forced into his mouth until he felt he was drowning. ... Burning paper was applied to his legs, penis and nipples. ... He was forcibly injected with a so-called "truth drug". He was told that his wife would be brought in and tortured too. The paratroops boasted that they were the "Gestapo".\textsuperscript{591}

Speaking in 2007 Henri Alleg said of waterboarding:

[I]t is a terrible way of torturing a man, because ... you bring him next to death and then back to life. And sometimes he doesn’t come back to life. So, the use of torture, in my opinion, is a way of making all people fear that if they fight, if they join the fighters against Algeria, they would undergo such a treatment. So it’s the use of terror against the...
people who fight. It’s not a way of getting whatever information; sometimes they get it, but most of the time it’s useless.\footnote{Henri Alleg in ‘French Journalist Henri Alleg Describes His Torture Being Waterboarded by French Forces During Algerian War’, 5 November 2007 @ http://www.democracynow.org/2007/11/5/french_journalist_henri_alleg_describes_his. (Internet news programme.)}

In November 2000, General Paul Aussaresses who had been in charge of French military intelligence in 1957 admitted on French radio that he had ‘personally killed 24 Algerian prisoners’.\footnote{In September 1955, Larbi Ben M’Hidi, an ALN commander of was arrested and detained by the French police. On 6\textsuperscript{th} March 1957 the French officially said that he had hanged himself, although some French reports suggested he had been shot. Edgar O’Ballance, op.cit., p.48.} He said he had resigned himself to it as it was ‘commonplace’ and ‘there were [not] any alternatives’.\footnote{Peter Humi, ‘France still haunted by Algerian conflict’, 26 November 2000 @ http://edition.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/europe/france/11/24/algeria.torture/index.html.} Despite the fact that torture is prohibited by customary international law and by the 1984 United Nations Convention Against Torture, both the French in Algeria and the Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan, as also in Latin America, have openly employed it.\footnote{Michael Ratner, ‘Prisoner Abuse Is Absolutely, Explicitly Prohibited by International Law, 27 April 2009, @ http://www.chelseagreen.com/content/michael-ratner-torture-is-absolutely-explicitly-prohibited.} If it is accepted that information acquired under torture is generally unreliable, then it may be argued that the aim is more to terrorise a subject population and, as Foucault has argued, to ‘reactivate power’. Even so, in Algeria, although the ALN evacuated from Algiers the insurgency continued until independence. Hence, it appears that reversals of power on a large scale are indeed possible where a national consciousness is primed to act against an oppressive power.
5.5 Islam

At the Soummam conference on 20 August 1956, the ALN adopted a Socialist programme.\textsuperscript{596} The Soummam declarations stated that the Revolution was not a ‘religious war’; rather its aim was to ‘establish a democratic and social republic guaranteeing true equality to all citizens’.\textsuperscript{597}

Gendzier argues that in 1961 Algeria was described as an Arab-Muslim state ‘endorsing a close link between the political and religious character of the state’.\textsuperscript{598} However, most of the FLN’s early leadership was either socialist or had socialist leanings; this was also true of Algeria’s first two premierses Ahmed Ben Bella and Houari Boumedienne.\textsuperscript{599} It may have been the case at that early stage that Islam was part of a re-assertion of Algerian identity in contrast to the religion or the culture of the oppressor. However, after independence, as economic disparities between the social classes in Algeria worsened, the \textit{Front Islamique du Salut} (Islamic Salvation Front) FIS was formed.\textsuperscript{600} In 1992 parliamentary elections were cancelled when it became obvious that FIS would win.\textsuperscript{601} The 1996 revised Algerian constitution banned political parties based exclusively on religion.\textsuperscript{602} It would appear then that the Algerian insurrection was genuinely a national insurrection against colonisation.

\textsuperscript{596} Edgar O’Ballance, op.cit., p.71.
\textsuperscript{597} Quoted in Irene L. Gendzier, op.cit., p.176.
\textsuperscript{598} Ibid., p.173.
\textsuperscript{600} See Immanuel Ness, ‘Algeria Islamic Salvation Front’ @ http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/search?query=Algerian+FIS.
\textsuperscript{601} ‘Unrest and Civil War’, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{602} Ibid.
5.6 The Battle of Algiers: the Plot

The first scene opens with an Algerian, tortured by the French army, who is weeping. He gives the general an address, is dressed in the French army uniform and forced to betray the FLN in the Kasbah.\(^{603}\) There is no question of where his sympathies lie. He is tortured into submission by a force he is physically unable to resist.

The film proper begins with soldiers surrounding a door in the Kasbah and spraying it with bullets. The informer reveals a false partition behind which the protagonist of the film, Ali La Pointe of the FLN is hiding with two men, a woman and a child.

The soldiers tell La Pointe that the FLN is finished, all its leaders dead. The narrative then flashes back to 1954 and shows the contrast of the European part of the city with the impoverished Kasbah.\(^{604}\) An FLN voice over says it aims to restore Algerian independence based on fundamental human rights and Islamic principles.\(^{605}\) It asks for negotiations with the French government. This is an explanation of why there is an insurrection and it gives the FLN legitimate political status.

There follows a scene in a prison where a Muslim prisoner shouting ‘Allahu Akbar’ is guillotined in full view of other prisoners. This beheading is a poignant moment which shows such total subjugation and domination of the Muslim, that it is clearly a demonstration of power. French power is inscribed on the decapitated body; it is a power that can withdraw the

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\(^{603}\) The film does not distinguish between the FLN and the ALN.  
\(^{604}\) This contrast functions like a motif throughout the film.  
\(^{605}\) The ‘Islamic principles’ here have more to do with recognising Muslim Algerians and with justice, rather than the demand for an Islamist state.
right to life. But this act also incites the activation of a latent power in the Algerians. It is this
that makes each one of them realise ‘that he was one of the colonised’.

An FLN communiqué of 24 April 1956 accuses the colonial administration not only of
creating misery for the Algerians, but also of corrupting Arab society with degrading vices. It
bans drugs, prostitution, and alcohol, and threatens offenders with punishment or death.
Although the ideology in evidence here may be ‘Islamic’, the concern is more political
because people who are easily manipulated are a risk to the movement. The threats evince the
seriousness of the FLN project.

La Pointe, who has been recruited by the FLN, goes in search of a Kasbah resident, Hassan el
Bridi. The FLN has tried to recruit him twice but he has resisted. He is shot by La Pointe, his
companions told to spread the word that the Kasbah must support the FLN. This is the local
power network where unequal power relations are in evidence between the FLN and the
people of the Kasbah. La Pointe’s gun is ‘speak(ing) its piece’. 606 The FLN is convinced that
the only way to activate the power of the Kasbah is by using terror tactics, but it is aware that
this is a limited use, since these tactics can also alienate people.

A few months later, the FLN marry a couple, taking over the function of French registries.
Again, this is not a particularly Islamic affair, but the act deprives the French of total control
over Algerian society.

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606 In the gangster film Little Caesar (1930), Rico, having shot his rival, tells the others they are to take orders
from him or else ‘my gun’s gonna speak its piece!’ Eugene Rosow, op.cit., p.16.
In June, various policemen are killed and their weapons stolen. The French army retaliates and kills Arabs. This is asymmetric warfare, with the guns concentrated on the French side. The FLN kills to capture ammunition. Pontecorvo is faithful to the history of the FLN here, because this was one of the ways in which they acquired weapons especially when the French blocked their supply routes. The Kasbah is sealed off with checkpoints where Muslims have to show their identification papers. With this move, the French assert their control over every individual in the Kasbah. As Foucault explained, the ‘penetration of regulation into ... the smallest details of everyday life ... assure(s) the capillary functioning of power’. The aim is to alter their behaviour, to deny support to the FLN.

There is armed rebellion in Algiers, and the fight is from the Kasbah. The Europeans round on an old man sitting on a pavement. He is utterly confused as they threaten him, and finally he is arrested. The Police Commissioner finds his address; he is a labourer. That night the Commissioner goes to the Kasbah and places a bomb which brings down a large part of the Kasbah. The next day the Kasbah mourns as bodies are brought out. As anger rises in the Kasbah, La Pointe is warned by his FLN contact to stop the protest as the French have set them up. They intend to fire on the crowd. The Kasbah holds back. The dominant ideology oozes from the cracks here. The Kasbah does not house a people fighting for their independence; it houses ‘terrorists’ or ‘illegal combatants’. They have no rights and may be ‘exterminated’ to protect the interests of the French in Algeria. Since terrorists only understand the language of violence, there is no other option but to blow them up. Being ‘aggressive’ they are bound to retaliate, and that will justify taking care of the problem for once and for all. Yet, the FLN reads the strategy and stops a French massacre in the Kasbah.

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608 For the protection of people fighting for independence under the Geneva Conventions 1949 (Additional Protocol 1 of 1977) see ICRC, ‘International Humanitarian Law – Treaties and Documents’ @ http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/7c4d08d9b287a42141256739003e636b/f6c889fee14a77fde125641e0052b079.
The FLN then organises the bombing of specific targets by the women of the Kasbah who bleach their hair and look ‘westernised’ to get past the checkpoints.

On 10 June 1957, the French paratroops arrive in Algiers. They are applauded by the French residents of the city. The voice over says they are there to maintain law and order, and protect people and property. They have also come to combat terrorism in Algeria.609 This is the dominant ideology writ large.

Lt. Col. Mathieu Philippe, who commands the paratroops, is quiet spoken, serious, efficient, experienced in warfare, ruthless but with a savoir faire. He gets to the point: he says that of the 400,000 Arabs in the city, only a minority rules by terror; ‘We have to destroy them.’ He explains that the FLN has a pyramidal structure, where any one person only knows three others. To destroy them, it is necessary to reconstitute the entire pyramid. The aim is information, the method ‘interrogation’ conducted in a manner sure to produce answers. False sentiment in this situation leads to ridicule and impotence.

In the Kasbah a letter is circulated informing people of the coming debate on Algeria at the U.N. 610 The FLN proclaims an eight-day general strike to coincide with the debate. This is a tactic to counter the French claim that the FLN is not representative of the whole of the Algerian population. A general strike would show solidarity with the FLN.

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609 For the French this is a question of discipline, of reasserting control and of taking care of the contagion of lawlessness and rebellion.
610 The FLN has been trying to internationalise the Algerian struggle for independence and the letter states that they are at last victorious.
There follows a scene in which La Pointe discusses the strike with a senior member of the FLN, Larbi Ben M'Hidi. It is here that Pontecorvo gives the FLN full political status. This is an intelligent conversation, about strategy, between men engaged in fighting for the freedom of Algeria. La Pointe does not favour the strike because the FLN has temporarily stopped all direct action. M'Hidi explains that terrorism is necessary at the beginning, it acts like a trigger, but then people must decide to move the struggle on through political means. ‘You don’t win wars or revolutions with outrages’, he says. This is why they have organised the strike: to mobilise the Algerians and to show the U.N. their strength. He also explains that ‘after we’ve won, the true difficulties begin’.  

This scene provides a stark contrast with the Colonel’s perspective. He gives a press statement during the strike in which he terms the strike an ‘insurrection’. He says an armed insurrection is an inevitable stage in a revolution. It is similar to the guerrilla activity in Vietnam, at Dien Bien Phu. That was where the French lost, but this time, he tells the press, ‘it depends on you’. To suggest that the strike is similar to guerrilla activity is to deny the distinctions being made as regards strategy by the ‘other’. This is a constant negation of the status of the ‘other’.

Now the interrogations begin, and the Colonel begins to construct the pyramid. In discussing the FLN he likens it to tapeworm. He says it does not matter how much of it is destroyed, if the head remains it reproduces itself.

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611 But the history of the struggle shows that these political opportunities were not always available. Nevertheless, the FLN repeatedly sought political dialogue.

612 In times of war the mainstream media usually acts on behalf of the government. This is the battle of winning ‘hearts and minds’ and galvanising opinion in favour of the government. This is a bid for the press to project the dominant ideology. What the Colonel does not say, of course, is that the Vietnamese may have won because of superior military tactics, and because the majority of the people wanted the French out.

613 The army breaks the shutters in the Arab shops and forces the men back to work. The UN, unsurprisingly, does not take any action on behalf of the Algerians.
On 4th March 1957 M'Hidi is arrested and displayed to the press who ask how he can justify using bombs on civilians. He responds that it is worse to drop napalm on innocent Vietnamese villages killing thousands. ‘It would be easier for us if we had planes’, he says. Asked if the FLN could defeat the French army, he says its chances are greater than of France changing the direction of history.

Days later the Colonel is asked about a minister’s report that M'Hidi hanged himself in prison. Given he was ‘bound hand and foot’, the press ask if the report is credible. The Colonel suggests they speak to the minister. For his part, he had respect for M'Hidi’s ‘moral strength’ and intelligence, but he was dangerous. As noted above, the French did kill their prisoners, perhaps because of the conviction that their interests were so threatened that to do anything else would entail the failure of the project. But in all of this, the Algerians were not to be treated as people with rights protected by international conventions and customary law. In the dominant ideology, they are simply not on a par with Frenchmen.

The press then ask him directly about ‘torture’. The Colonel responds:

"The word “torture” does not appear in our orders. We ask questions as in any police operation against an unknown gang. The FLN asks its members to keep silent for twenty-four hours if they are captured. Then they can talk. That’s the time required to render any information useless. How should we question suspects? Like the courts and take a few months over it? The legal way has its drawbacks. ..."

The FLN wants to kick us out of Algeria. ... When the rebellion started, there were no nuances. All the papers, even those of the left, wanted it suffocated. We’re here for that. We are neither mad nor sadists. They call us fascists. ... We are soldiers. Our duty is to

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614 This is an obvious indication that the FLN is a force to be reckoned with. After death, the acknowledgement may be given but the caution of danger applies. The Colonel is aware that the press have witnessed M’Hidi’s intelligence, and perhaps this acknowledgement resolves any conflict that the press may have with the treatment of the FLN, especially by the Colonel.
win; thus, to be quite clear, I’ll ask you a question myself: Must France stay in Algeria? If the answer is still “yes,” you must accept all that this entails.615

This script could best be described using Barthes’s analysis of language that functions like a code. The ‘unknown gang’ is the bande, but ‘torture’ is really the manna ‘necessity’. The soldiers are simply doing what is necessary to keep Algeria French, which is apparently what the press wants. Hence, they must accept the soldiers’ methods. As with ‘destiny’ there is no arguing about it. And as Barthes explained, ‘we are here in the heart of the myth’.

There follow explicit scenes of waterboarding, of the torture of men with gas torches and electrodes, as women watch and weep.616

In August and September 1957 there are fire-fights in the Kasbah. Finally, the informer recruited at the start of the film leads the Colonel to La Pointe’s hideout behind a false partition. The Colonel tells him to surrender, he does not, and the wall is blown up. The Colonel now admits that the FLN is headless.

In December 1960, there are ululations and celebrations in the Kasbah. The FLN is back and there are thousands of green and white flags at rallies, which show that the FLN has mass support. It is a display of an active and vibrant national consciousness. The piercing sound of the ululation is markedly non-European. Pontecorvo uses it to show the coming of age of the Algerian nation. The winning of independence in 1962 is inevitable.


616 The torture of Algerian men usually happened in custody. But here Pontecorvo has the Kasbah watching. It may be that the Kasbah was acutely aware of what was going on; as noted above, Richard Phillips asserts that men, women and children were also tortured, so in this sense it was a shared experience.
To conclude, this political film text requires the sort of analysis that Foucault suggested. Ideology is clearly important in explaining the French and Algerian perspectives and their conduct, but it is one element of quite a complex discourse. Colonisation has to do with the creation of subjectivity, with economic and cultural (including linguistic) dominance, with political objectives and the use of force and violence to obtain them. The use of torture explicitly calls for a Foucauldian analysis because power is here inscribed on the body. And the need for this is to reassert power and dominance. But what is also apparent is the resistance to this power, and eventually its reversal as a national consciousness is activated.
Conclusion

Ideological analysis in film theory developed from *auteur* analysis and structuralism. In the post-1968 period, film theory became politicised and began to incorporate Marxist concepts, especially from the Althusserian model. Colin MacCabe, for instance, argued that the classic realist text interpellated individuals into subject positions. It was a closed discourse which worked towards a fictive resolution of ideological conflicts; the metadiscourse presented ideology as ‘truth’ and the real as that which *is*; the real was not articulated. Analysis then was based on an interpretative symptomatic reading of the text which revealed its ‘breaking points’ and ‘constitutive lacks’. The question was framed by Pierre Macherey: ‘*In what relation to that which is other than itself, is the work produced?*’617

Jean-Luc Comolli and Paul Narboni argued that ‘every film is political’ and incorporates the ideology which produces it.618 They offered a classification based on the varying relationships between the film and the dominant ideology; here, category (e) films were those that incorporated an ‘internal criticism’ which emerged from the cracks, the internal tension of the film.619 The concept of ideology incorporated was that of a discursive strategy aimed at ‘spuriously accounting for realities’ and masking conflict.620

The Marxist theory from which these concepts were drawn was critically re-evaluated, and developed, at various times; this was due, in part, to the polarisation caused by events such as

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619 Ibid.
the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, but often because the theory developed in the
nineteenth century had to be revised to reflect modern conditions of capitalism.\textsuperscript{621}

Karl Mannheim, for example, adapted the Marxist ideological analysis to a sociological
methodology. Mannheim’s focus was on the sociological conditions that shaped knowledge.
For Jürgen Habermas, politics was not restricted to the superstructure, but with government
intervention, was incorporated in the functioning of the economic base. Further, as social
development was increasingly determined by the logic of scientific and technological
progress, the masses became depoliticised and democratic discussion was excluded. To
capture this impact, Habermas argued that ideological analysis needs to extend beyond
particular class interest to consider the effect on society and mankind as a whole.

Althusser’s inflexible structuralist model also came in for criticism, as it was argued that
interpellation, if it took place in the manner suggested, was not absolute and the subject often
offered resistance; this was evident in broad political spectrums and the subversions and
reversals of power at local levels. However, what this criticism has accomplished, in many
cases, is a clarification of the concepts used and their adaptation to differing circumstances as
opposed to a total rejection of Marxist theory. In this respect, ideological analysis in film
theory has retained the critical concept of ideology.

However, the continuing changes to the international strategic power balance have again
necessitated a review of the concepts used in film analysis. With the demise of the Soviet
Union and the ushering in of the unipolar world, cinema fictions have begun to scrutinise the

\textsuperscript{621} Philip Kaufman’s \textit{The Unbearable Lightness of Being} (1988), based on the novel by Milan Kundera, covers
the events of the Prague Spring and the Soviet occupation.
functioning of the global superpower, especially in terms of power relations. This thesis argues that in this respect, the concepts developed by Michel Foucault which address issues of power relations need to be incorporated into film analysis to interpret contemporary film texts. Although Foucault is critical of the Marxist concept of ideology, he is not dismissive of ideological analysis altogether, but suggests that ideology be incorporated as one element in a broader discourse. The Foucauldian critical methodologies of archeology and genealogy (the latter examining the role of social, political and economic institutions and factors), in addition to Foucault’s concept of power / knowledge and dynamic power relations provide a way of extending the analysis to include the consideration of a power grid comprising unequal power relations, its use to establish dominance and hegemony, and the resistance to it.

This model applied to Syriana exposes the power relations between the oil industry and the juridical and political structure in America, the latter represented by the C.I.A. It shows how these interests are interwoven and articulated in an attempt to acquire excessive amounts of wealth and the power and dominance that goes with it, and how this power is used to quash the attempts for political, social and economic development in oil-producing Arab countries. Indeed, the narrative explicitly states that this power is used to maintain the status quo, especially where there is chaos, or in the case of Iraq / Iran to create it, because chaos invites foreign military intervention which is essentially in the service of commercial interests.

Although The Battle of Algiers was produced in 1965 it is particularly useful in showing the application of the model developed here because the power relations in the film text are made very explicit. It also experienced a revival after the Iraq invasion when it was shown in America and the Middle East in an attempt to investigate how power relations have suffered reversals historically and, in the case of America, how that might be avoided.
The scene depicting Barnes’s torture requires a Derrida-type deconstructive reversal to show that it is the history of C.I.A. torture that is under scrutiny. Although here C.I.A. power faces a reversal, it is superficial because these are the techniques used by the C.I.A., and America by extension, to maintain its global hegemony, thus assuring itself of its superpower status.

A Foucauldian analysis necessitates the consideration of a variety of factors other than ideological, because what is being analysed, in addition to ideological and political rhetoric, is how and why these power relations take the form that they do. It is this that, in *Syriana*, explains the launching of the missile both at the Prince and at the Connex-Killen terminal. Hence, a purely ideological analysis would not be adequate to analyse this text.

*The Battle of Algiers* is a political text which privileges the fight for Algerian independence. The physical force and brutality with which the Algerians are treated is shown graphically, with power inscribed on the body very much in the Foucauldian sense. Here again, although ideological elements are significant, the text requires an analysis of power relations to explain the French-Algerian relationship, and especially the reversal of power that comes about as Algeria finally succeeds in wresting its independence from France.

It is clear from this application of Foucauldian concepts that they do enable one to access the dynamic substrate of force relations, so significant in trying to understand not just film texts, but the consequences of superpower politics in a unipolar and dangerous world, which they are trying to depict. Future research could perhaps examine in more detail the ‘grey areas’ of

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how subjectivity is created, how agency operates and how this can be related to cinema fictions. Given the challenge Foucault poses to traditional western philosophical thought, a future research project could look at the philosophical underpinnings of Foucault’s thought in greater detail an attempt to examine the insights that led Foucault to pose this challenge.

There may also be an explanation as to why certain radical film directors view power and violence which such clarity and insight. Oliver Stone, for example, served in Vietnam and this experience has clearly influenced both his politics and his films. Gillo Pontecorvo joined the Italian Communist Party and then left it, but Francis Coppola’s history of the United States as depicted in the Godfather trilogy (1972,1974,1990) could perhaps be explained in part by his Italian heritage. This is not to suggest a reversion to auteurism but to look at the film text as one element in a historically specific discourse that considers the impact of social, political and cultural factors in shaping perspectives and creating unique insights.

624 See Kay Johnson, ‘Oliver Stone Goes Back To War’, 7 September 2007 @ http://www.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1659928,00.html.
Appendix
American power is inscribed on the body as the histories of Japan, Vietnam, and Iraq, amongst others, have documented.

In Iraq, the Bush administration’s torture programme was a matter of stated policy, with health professionals present during these sessions, acting in a supervisory capacity. The visual images of American power were published on the internet, to a global audience. Despite detailed reports on the torture, there have been no serious prosecutions as the American public has accepted torture and ‘extraordinary renditions’ as part of the conduct of its foreign policy.625

The First Gulf War was notable for the large-scale use of Depleted Uranium (DU). DU is a very dense element which is pyrophoric: on hitting a hard target, it burns at temperatures of 1200 degrees centigrade, shedding twenty per cent of its mass as dust.626 The nano-sized particles of DU ‘trash the body’ by damaging the DNA: the damage is ‘so severe that patients develop multiple simultaneous cancers’ a syndrome ‘unique to internal depleted uranium exposure’.627 In 2005 there was ‘an epidemic of cancer in Iraqi children’.628 American power has been inscribed not only on the bodies of current generations but on future generations of Arabs and Afghans. There cannot be a more emphatic statement of American power than that inscribed on the genetic code of the Other.

626 See Campaign Against Depleted Uranium @ http://www.cadu.org.uk/intro.htm#ref3
628 Ibid.
America’s main targets have been civilians, whether in Iraq, Vietnam or Japan. Japan was suing for peace when the atom bomb was dropped on two of its cities. Professor Gar Alperovitz has argued that the atomic bomb was used, not to save allied lives, but because it was a potent diplomatic instrument, utilised for the purpose of impressing the Soviet Union with the nature and the serious intent of American power.629 The threatened future use of all the weapons in America’s arsenal, with impunity, demonstrates America’s superpower status and its hegemonic role on this planet.

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629 Gar Alperovitz, The Decision To Use The Atomic Bomb, (New York, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1996). Gar Alperovitz is the Lionel R. Bauman Professor of Political Economy at the University of Maryland.
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