The Puzzle of Domination in Society: Seeking Solutions in the African Context.

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

THOKOZILE MADONKO

The financial assistance of the Andrew Mellon Foundation towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author, and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Andrew Mellon Foundation.

ABSTRACT

The presence of human destitution, impoverishment and degradation in the midst of plenty has puzzled social thinkers for millennia. One of the oldest and grandest of theories: *the* theory of ideology attempts to provide an answer to the puzzle of domination in society. Michael Rosen, in his book *On Voluntary Servitude* (1996), argues that the solution provided by the theory of ideology is problematic. Furthermore, on the basis of his critique, Rosen argues that we should abandon the theory of ideology and consider alternatives to it. Even though many contemporary academics have turned away from the theory of ideology, because they view it as an imprisoning meta-theory, this study explores the possibility of there being a meta-theory that could help us to make sense of the world.

Through an examination of Rosen's critique this thesis shows that Rosen is too quick in his dismissal of the theory of ideology because he fails to consider that a revised functionalist theory of ideology can be expanded to account for the mechanism(s) that ensure that, over time, the society in question acquires ideological consciousness to further its welfare. This thesis shows that Rosen is correct in his criticism of the theory of ideology's explanation of domination because the content, history and social effects of ideological consciousness cannot be *fully* explained in terms of their role in promoting or stabilising relations of domination.

In light of Rosen's criticism the thesis shows that if one provides both an explanation of the psychological motivations of individuals and of the nature of the oppressive society in which they find themselves then what I call an integrated theory of ideology can be developed. In order to illustrate the importance of an integrated theory of ideology the study moves away from high-level theoretical abstraction to concrete social analyses, focusing on the work of Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko and their explanations of domination. The reason this study focuses on their work is because in their role as social scientists, Fanon and Biko provided a powerful critique of colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial society. It will be argued that Fanon and Biko were able to provide a lasting critique of colonial reality because they offered their critique within the framework of such an integrated theory. Consequently, this study argues that, as Fanon and Biko's work illustrate, an integrated theory of ideology qua critical theory ought not to be abandoned because it is crucial for understanding and resisting forms of oppression that exist in the world today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing is my passion. Words are the way to know ecstasy. Without them life is barren
bell hooks

In the course of writing this thesis, I have received support and encouragement from a number of individuals. I would therefore like to express my appreciation to those who have given me their support and assistance.

An infinite amount of thanks must go to my supervisor, Dr Leonhard Praeg, for taking me in at a time when I thought I had no voice. He restored my confidence in the academy and was truly a pleasure to work with.

I would also like to thank Professor Peter Vale for his time, effort and encouragement throughout the many phases of this project. I am especially grateful to Professor Paul Bischoff whose sound advice kept me focused when things appeared their most bleak. A special thanks to my colleagues in the Department of Political and International Studies and the Department of Philosophy who have always been supportive.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr John Gillam in the Rhodes University Financial Aid Office, his assistance and advice have made it possible for me to obtain the funding necessary to undertake this thesis.

I would like to thank my mentor, Dr. Louise Vincent, for helping me to discover my voice and also for showing me where to find love in the most extraordinary of places: Writing.

I would also like to thank the strong people in my life, Odette Cummings, Michele Ruiters, Alison Gerber, Britt de Klerk, Zanele Ndlovu, Tara Short, Maeve Mather, Eusebius McKaiser, Carla Tsampiras, Neil Overy, William Oliver, Timothy Othieno, Angelo Fick, Senovia Welman, Morgenie Pillay and Francis Hulley who continued to keep me in their lives throughout this process.

Most importantly, I am indebted to my family for their continuous and tireless financial and personal support throughout my University career. My partner, Eitan Dale Prince, has also been an amazing source of inspiration, love and encouragement, for which I owe him a special debt of gratitude.

CONTENTS

Introduction: The Puzzle of Domination

> *In the past 10 years the world's total income has increased by an average of 2.5% a year. And yet the numbers of the poor in the world have increased by 100 million. Of the top 100 biggest economies, 51 are corporations, not countries. The top 1% of the world has the same combined income as the bottom 57%, and the disparity is growing. Now, under the spreading canopy of the war against terror, this process is being hustled along. The men in suits are in an unseemly hurry. While bombs rain down, contracts are being signed, patents registered, oil pipelines laid, natural resources plundered, water privatised and democracies undermined.* (Roy, 2002)[1]

The presence of human destitution, impoverishment and degradation in the midst of plenty has puzzled social thinkers for millennia. Michael Rosen, in his book, *On Voluntary Servitude* (1996) provides a critique of one of the oldest and grandest of theories: *the* theory of ideology. This theory seeks to explain why the majority of people are oppressed by the minority:

> The reason, it claims, is that societies are systems that produce the kind of consciousness that prevents the members of a society from behaving as their interests would otherwise dictate (Rosen, 1996:1).

He argues that the explanatory power of this theory is that it offers a certain type of explanation for a puzzling fact about political life: a functionalist one, where (1) ideology sustains a social order and (2) the presence of ideology is explained by the fact that it sustains that social order (Rosen, 2000:2). Furthermore, Rosen argues that according to the theory of ideology,

> the ruled accept this legitimacy not because they have been tricked or duped by conscious effort or propaganda on the part of the rulers, but because there is something about the structure of society that leads to the production of the "false consciousness' that the society "needs" for its survival (*ibid.)*

As the opening quote by Arundhati Roy illustrates, the problem of domination in society is an urgent one. Yet, Rosen argues, "the solution offered by the theory of ideology is fundamentally unsatisfactory" (*ibid.*:1). Rosen therefore questions the two main premises of the theory of ideology and argues that it is not the case that coercive societies:

1) persist in virtue of false consciousness on the part of their citizens and that
2) this false consciousness persists in response to the 'needs' of the society in question.

Rosen's (1996:260) critique of the theory of ideology challenges both these claims. He argues that the ontological commitments of the two claims, that individuals suffer from

[1] Arundhati Roy 2002 "Not Again" *The Guardian* September 27

ideological consciousness and that societies are self-maintaining, transcend what can be justified according to the explanatory standards of the social sciences. Rosen specifically argues that the theory of ideology fails to provide an explanation of the mechanism(s) of how false consciousness contributes to the maintenance of oppressive societies at the level of the individual. On the basis of this critique Rosen suggests that we should abandon the theory of ideology and consider alternative explanations.

Even though many contemporary academics seem to be abandoning the theory of ideology because they view it as an imprisoning meta-theory, I still wish to explore the possibility of a meta-theory that provides a framework within which we may understand the problem of domination. In this thesis I shall argue that Rosen is too quick in his dismissal of the theory of ideology because, as will be argued, he fails to take into account the fact that a revised functionalist theory of ideology can be expanded to account for the mechanism(s) that ensure that, over time, the oppressive society acquires ideological consciousness to further its welfare. There are merits to Rosen's critique of the theory of ideology's explanation of domination because the content, history, and social effects of ideological consciousness cannot be *fully* explained in terms of their role in promoting or stabilising relations of domination. Therefore, it will be argued that the functionalist explanation of the theory of ideology needs to be adapted and extended to included micro-mechanisms to explain the theory's functionalist claims. An integrated theory of ideology will be developed that provides an explanation of both the psychological motivations of individuals and of the nature of the oppressive society in which they find themselves. Contrary to Rosen, the solution to the puzzle of domination offered by an integrated theory of ideology is indeed explanatory. As a critical theory, the integrated theory of ideology advanced here is, I believe, crucial for understanding and resisting forms of oppression that exist in the world today. It enables social scientists not only to describe and explain past social phenomena but also to make certain predications about the future (Taiwo, 1996:256).

In order to show the explanatory power of the integrated theory of ideology, this thesis will move from high-level theoretical abstraction to concrete social analyses. In an effort to defend an integrated theory of ideology and *Ideologiekritik*, the final chapter of this thesis will offer a critical analysis of the explanation of domination provided by Fanon and Biko. It will be argued that both Fanon and Biko use what effectively amounts to such an integrated theory of ideology in order to make sense of the oppressive

societies they find themselves in. Fanon and Biko, in their explanation of domination adopted, though not explicitly, the two fundamental assumptions at the core of the integrated theory of ideology advanced here. The first assumption is that the oppressed suffer from a form of false consciousness that prevents them from seeing the true nature of their oppression. and the second assumption is that societies are systems in the sense that they regulate themselves in some way. The reason Fanon and Biko were able to provide powerful critiques of colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial society is because their critique included a micro-foundational account of ideology and a macro-account of ideology. Despite the critiques of Marxist social theory, the integrated theory of ideology is a useful way to explain how society works and it is indispensable for understanding and resisting the forms of oppression that are characteristic of the modern world (Shelby, 2003:154).

The first chapter of this thesis details Rosen's understanding of the definition of ideology, in particular the notion of ideology as "false consciousness". In addition, the ways in which consciousness may be held to be "false" are explored. A discussion is presented about what it is that makes such forms of consciousness "ideologically false". It will be argued that by using the term "false" in its ethical sense, as opposed to its epistemological sense it is the *function* of a form of consciousness that will render it ideologically false. The latter part of the first chapter focuses on Rosen's definition of false consciousness because this definition provides the basis of his critique of the theory of ideology. Rosen (1996:47) argues that ideological consciousness is (1) consciousness that benefits some social entity or structure and has been formed according to a poor mechanism and (2) comes about or persists because of the fact that it benefits the entity or structure in question. The question that needs to be asked is "What kind of explanation is the theory of ideology?" To which the answer would be that it is essentially a "functional explanation". The problem with this definition of ideology, according to Rosen, is that it is not clear that society, as a rule, produce the kind of consciousness required for its preservation and it is not clear that even if there is false consciousness that such consciousness necessarily functions to support or maintain oppressive societies.

This criticism necessitates an understanding of the explanatory validity of a functionalist explanation of ideology. The second chapter explores the validity of the explanation provided by the functionalist model of the theory of ideology. This involves some analysis of what it means to explain (that is, how to explain) in addition to establishing what counts as a good explanation. G.A. Cohen, in *Karl Marx's Theory of History: a defence* (1978), aims to show that a "functional explanation" - which he argues is characteristic of Marxist social theory - does count as a good explanation. It will be argued that much of the criticism levelled against the functionalist model and functionalist explanation is valid. Nevertheless, Rosen's critique does miss one explanatory programme of a functionalist cast. I will argue that the functionalist model of ideology understood within this programme is of some importance for social science because functionality can serve an explanatory role in determining why certain phenomena, for example ideology, are deeply embedded in society. However, the theory helps to explain deeply embedded social phenomena such as ideology at the level of the whole, namely society.

It will be argued that the revised theory of ideology, as formulated at the end of chapter two, is merely a macro-foundational account of ideology. It provides the social theorist with a way of understanding a wide range of phenomena, including ideology, in terms of the part they play in the totality (James, 1984:84). This, however, presents a problem for the theory because it fails to give an account of ideology at the level of the individuals who make up that totality. Rosen, Elster, and other critics of the theory of ideology are correct when they argue that a macro-foundational account of ideology is incomplete and must be complemented by an account of the actions and attitudes of individuals in order to *explain* how it is that they come to be oppressed.

If it is the case that false consciousness contributes to the persistence of oppressive systems and that there is indeed a strong correlation between the two phenomena, Elster (1999:5) argues that in order to accept this law like generalisation a glimpse inside "the black box" is required. According to Elster (1995) on could view an oppressive social system as 'the black box' and in order to provide a causal explanation between false consciousness and the persistence of that oppressive social system, one has to open up the black box and show the nuts and bolts of the system in question. This is required in order to know *how* false consciousness contributes to the maintenance of oppressive societies. Rosen, Elster, and other critics of the theory of

ideology argue that because the theory of ideology fails to identify the *mechanism(s)* that explain how it is the ideological beliefs serve to legitimate society, that we should consider alternatives to it. A *mechanism* will be understood as an account of how false consciousness contributes to the maintenance of oppressive societies at the level of the individual.

Cohen (1978:283) argues, contrary to Rosen, that even in the absence of an account of a mechanism which ensures that, over time, individual's come to hold beliefs that help further an oppressive society's welfare, the functionalist explanation of ideology is still explanatory. It will be argued that it is possible to claim that the usefulness of the beliefs of the dominated play a role in the maintenance of an oppressive system, even in the absence of the knowledge of *how* their usefulness explains the persistence of those beliefs. Rosen (1996:259) disagrees with this claim and states that the functionalist theory of ideology should be abandoned. He (*ibid.*:199) argues that the theory of ideology is not the *only* explanation available of how oppressive societies survive. One possible explanation could be that the rule of the many by the few is not so much a matter of ideological consciousness as it is the failure on the part of the many to take effective collective action. The possibility that there exist reasonable and plausible alternatives to the theory of ideology would undoubtedly undermine the validity of the background beliefs that sustain it.

The third chapter of this thesis explores what these alternative explanations of domination entail. The chapter provides a critical account of four alternative explanations to the theory of ideology. It will be argued that, contrary to Rosen, the alternative explanations do not undermine the theory of ideology but help to justify it. It is my contention that these alternative explanations really dovetail with, and enhance, the explanatory power of the theory of ideology. I will show that these alternative explanations provide a micro-foundational account of ideology and, rather than compete with the theory of ideology, provide an elaboration of the macro-foundational claims made by the revised theory of ideology defended in chapter two. By supplementing the revised understanding of the theory of ideology with an account of the mechanism at the individual level an integrated theory of ideology can be formulated. It will be argued that such an integrated theory of ideology – one which contains both a micro-, and macro-foundational account of ideology - provides the framework within which social theorists can gain a better understanding of the nature and perpetuation of domination in society.

Finally, chapter four brings the discussion together and provides a critical evaluation of the integrated theory of ideology developed in chapter three. The focus shifts from the high-level theoretical abstraction of the first three chapters to concrete social analyses in this fourth chapter. In an effort to defend an integrated theory of ideology and *Ideologiekritik* the main focus of the chapter will be on the explanation of domination provided by Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko. Both Fanon and Biko experienced the brutal effects of domination. Despite this, and probably because of this, they sought to provide an explanation of why oppression was so pervasive in their societies. According to Fanon and Biko, in order to overcome the oppressive nature of colonialism change in the whole social structure is required. However, they argue, this change can only happen once change has occurred in the consciousness of the individuals who are oppressed. It is argued that Fanon and Biko were able to provide a critique of the colonial reality because they provided their critique within a framework of an integrated theory of ideology. By employing the assumptions of an integrated theory, Fanon and Biko did not consider racist ideology as a mere accident: clearly the victims of racism suffered from ideological consciousness, in part because of the beneficial effect it had on the preservation or stabilisation of relations of domination in colonial and post-colonial society. Fanon and Biko were able to provide a powerful account of colonial reality because they understood that the social character of the individual (a micro-foundational account of ideology) was related in a complex way to the structure of society (a macro-foundational account of ideology). In conclusion one of the possible solutions to the puzzle of domination lies in the idea of *totality,* without losing sight of the individual elements that constitute it. Despite the critiques of Marxist social theory, the integrated theory of ideology will be presented as indispensable for understanding and resisting the forms of oppression that we witness today.

Chapter 1 What is Ideology?

1. *The* Theory of Ideology

Michael Rosen, in his book, *On Voluntary Servitude* (1996) sets out to critique one of the oldest and grandest of theories: *the* theory of ideology. To speak of *the* theory of ideology is clearly an oversimplification (Rosen, 1996a:210). There are in fact almost as many theories of ideology as there are theorists of it (Eagleton, 1994:14). However, it is possible to take a step back and identify the stream of thought that originally fed these varied theories of ideology (Rosen, 1996:2). In discussing *the* theory of ideology, this thesis will be discussing "a genus with a variety of species", thereby acknowledging that many theorists of ideology do not share the same commitments, and that many of the current uses of the term 'ideology' will be only distantly related to what this thesis takes to be the underlying structure of the theory (*ibid.*). Rosen's analysis of the theory of ideology is being addressed because he rejects the theory and argues that he is "critical not just of those theories of ideology that have actually been proposed but, more broadly, of any theory of ideology that proceeds from such assumptions" (*ibid.* :3). Rosen's post-mortem of the theory has important implications, because he is essentially criticising the underlying assumptions and possibility of *Ideologiekritik*. It will be argued that both Rosen's account of the theory of ideology and his critique of it are problematic. As a result, the theory of ideology will be defended in the following chapters. The aim of this chapter will be to set out the original scope and purpose of the theory of ideology as understood by Rosen (1996). I begin with a brief account of what the theory of ideology purports to explain.

The theory of ideology claims to provide a solution to the puzzle of domination. It gives a distinctive answer to the question of why those who are oppressed do not always reject such treatment (Rosen, 2000:1). The theory of ideology argues that "societies are systems that produce the kind of consciousness that prevents the members of a society from behaving as their interest would otherwise dictate" (Rosen, 1996:1). This theory can be said to have originated from Marx and is essentially a critical theory of society. It argues that there is something about the very nature of society that allows for relations of

domination to occur. Ideology is seen by many theorists as the screen between us and the world[2]; it prevents us from seeing the true[3] nature of our world.

Rosen proposes a valuable idea that the aim of analysis should be to examine what a term or a complex of terms has been used for and thereby decipher "its point" (Rosen, 1996:30). In the case of ideology, for him, "its point is explanatory: to explain the persistence of unequal (and unjust) societies". It could be argued that the main function of ideology is to provide a way to understand why there is cohesion and consensus in society and, furthermore, why ideological consciousness is the decisive variable in explaining mass mobilisation and manipulation (Sartori, 1969). As a result, ideology is seen as an important concept that can be used by social scientists to make sense of certain phenomena in political life. What is then necessary to discover is whether or not the theory of ideology is indeed efficacious in this regard. Does it explain why individuals hold beliefs that undermine their interests, and how does this maintain illegitimate societies? It is possible to argue that the theory of ideology does provide a useful explanation of why individuals hold the beliefs that they do since it draws our attention to our consciousness as well as to the very structure of society.

The present chapter is mainly intended to set out Rosen's understanding of the definition of ideology, in particular the notion of ideology as "false consciousness". The scope of false consciousness will be investigated, and the ways in which consciousness may be held to be 'false' will be explored. Then it discusses what makes such forms of consciousness 'ideologically false'. It will be argued that it is the function of a form of consciousness that will render it ideologically false. A form of consciousness is ideological not because it is 'true' or 'false', rational or irrational, but because it is serves to legitimate an unjust social order. It will be argued that false consciousness is at most a necessary, but not a sufficient, part of the definition of ideology. The term 'false' in false consciousness will be used in its ethical sense as opposed to its epistemological sense. For the former, what matters is not the character of the beliefs (for example, that beliefs correspond with reality), but the way in which the beliefs intersect with power (Eagleton, 1994:6). According to this view, false consciousness "is a form of thought generated or

---

[2] This is claim is a problematic one. One of the assumptions of the theory of ideology is that one can juxtapose the "social system" (the world) and "individual interests" (us). Rosen is critical of this assumption. The implications will be discussed in more depth chapter two.

[3] One has to ask 'true to whom' and under what conditions? Furthermore, how does one define true consciousness without depending on unverifiable *a priori* assumptions? See the discussion of Rosen's critique of functionalist explanation in chapter two.

skewed out of shape by the exigencies of power" (*ibid.* :8). Hence, a theorist of ideology may argue that certain beliefs are an example of false consciousness even if those beliefs are true. What makes such beliefs ideological is the way in which they function to preserve relations of domination. In conclusion, it will be argued that the theory of ideology provides an explanation for why domination occurs in society – an explanation that Rosen ultimately rejects.

2. Defining Ideology

Defining 'ideology' is crucial as the term has been used in many ways. The term has been applied to the beliefs the members of a group hold, the concepts they use, the attitudes and psychological dispositions they exhibit, and their motives, desires, values, predictions, works of art, religious rituals, and gestures, among many. Such broad and unspecific use seems to suggest that every human group has an ideology (Geuss, 1981:5). Ideology has also been defined either too vaguely as being "socially conditioned or socially interested thought" or too restrictively as "false ideas which help to legitimate an unjust political power" (Eagleton, 1994:15). In fact it has been argued that the assorted use of the concept 'ideology' in many contemporary social scientists' writings has devalued it. Being very specific about what the term actually means can help rescue it ambiguity, although one could concede that "ideology is to some extent a technical term of social science, each person is entitled to define it as seems best to him, and no one can dismiss a usage on linguistic grounds" (Miller,1972: 432).

A good starting point for analysing ideology is the account provided by Rosen because, as he argues (2000:3), the account he provides has the "virtue of clarity." Rosen's central argument for his definition of ideology is that it not only shows that the concept of ideology has an explanatory point but also highlights the role that the concept plays in the thought of Karl Marx and those influenced by Marxism. Secondly, Rosen's analysis of the definition is useful because his analysis elucidates the assumptions of critical theory. Finally, Rosen bases his criticism of the theory of ideology on the definition of ideology that he provides. It will be argued that Rosen's definition of ideology and his critique of the definition are problematic: what then is meant by 'ideology', and how does it claim to provide knowledge about the world?

The reason why the term 'ideology' has been defined in a variety of ways is because social theorists have developed theories of ideology in the course of trying to answer very different questions (Geuss 1981). The question investigated by this thesis is why apparently illegitimate, unjust, and oppressive regimes manage to remain stable. The theory of ideology argues that "the ruled accept the legitimacy of the rulers, even though it is against their own interests to do so" (Rosen, 2000:3). Rosen (*ibid.* :30) draws attention to Adorno's definition of ideology as 'necessary false consciousness'. The central idea here is that societies have a systematic character and are maintained, apparently irrationally, in many cases, by the attitudes and beliefs of those who live in them. The idea of 'false consciousness' therefore plays an important role in the definition of ideology. The theory of ideology claims that unequal or otherwise illegitimate societies gain compliance of their members *by means of* false consciousness. False consciousness is therefore the crucial factor that enables societies to reproduce themselves and it is necessary in that it tends to support or stabilise society by contributing to its legitimation. Rosen argues that ideology, as false consciousness, is a critical concept involving a contrast between the forms of consciousness that agents actually have and the way that the theory claims that they ought to think, feel, or perceive.

Geuss (1981) distinguishes between three research programmes where theories of ideology have been developed. The first programme is an empirical study. Here, a theory of ideology arises that describes and explains certain features of or facts about human social groups (Guess: 1981:4). An example is when one studies the cultural or socio-cultural features of a group, for example, the kinship system, farming practices, artistic traditions, religious and scientific beliefs, a theory of ideology can arise. Guess (*ibid.*) likens this project to that of many twentieth-century anthropologists who, for the sake of empirical enquiry, subdivide the socio-cultural sphere into different 'parts', such as the economic, social and ideological. The second programme is a criticism of the beliefs, attitudes and wants of the agents in a particular society (*ibid.* :12) The last programme is one where the agents' wants, needs, desires and interests are identifiable in addition to being relatively constant. Here, a theory of ideology arises in the course of determining "what kind of socio-cultural system or what world view would be most appropriate for that group" (*ibid.* :22). Guess argues that these programmes use the term 'ideology' in various ways. In the first, 'ideology' is used in a purely descriptive it can therefore refer to

the beliefs the members of a group hold, the concepts they use, the attitudes and psychological dispositions they exhibit, their motives, desires, values, predilections, works of art, religious rituals gestures and so on. Thus, according to this definition, it would seem that every human group has an ideology. The theorist is not praising or blaming a group by asserting that its members 'have an ideology', he or she is merely describing it (*ibid.*:5). In the third programme, 'ideology' is used in the positive or "laudatory sense", and is therefore identified as the set of those attitudes and beliefs which best enable agents to satisfy their wants and needs and further their interests (*ibid.*:22).

Although Geuss's schema is questionable, it does help one understand of how a critical theory of society underpins a research programme. Rosen's definition of ideology fits Geuss's second research programme, which criticises the beliefs, attitudes and wants of the members of a particular society, in what is also known as *Ideologiekritik* (Geuss, 1981:12). Geuss argues that this use of the term 'ideology' is pejorative or critical. In that sense ideology means "(ideologically) false consciousness" (*ibid.*). Marx's discussion of ideology, it can be argued, is a case in point. When Marx refers to a set of ideas as 'ideological', Miller (1972: 433) argues, Marx is calling into question the validity of those ideas. According to Marx, a set of ideas will lack validity and be considered false not because the beliefs do not correspond to the facts but because of their oppressive function. The idea of 'false consciousness' is central to Marx's explanation of ideology and, as Miller (*ibid.* :435) argues, Marx "makes 'false consciousness' the defining feature of an ideological system". Rosen highlights this by stating that Marx was committed to the idea that class societies in general, and capitalism in particular, are characterised by some form of false consciousness, and that this pervasive false consciousness is an indispensable part of why such societies can survive (Rosen, 1996:222).

According to Geuss (1981:12), the aim of criticism is to demonstrate to agents in society that they are deluded about themselves, their position, their society, and their interests – bearing in mind that the theorist of this research programme knows in advance how they are deluded. Guess argues that there are two ways of demonstrating to people that they are deluded. One could explain to them *why* they hold the beliefs and attitudes they do. Secondly, one might have an independent theoretical interest in understanding and explaining *how* it came about that the agents develop their ideological consciousness, and to understand why they continue to suffer from it. In the case of the

former, the agents, once aware of *why* it is that they hold the beliefs they do and what beliefs they *ought* to have, are thereby enlightened. They are then, it is thought, in a better position to understand what their 'true' interests are. For the latter, certain steps can be taken by theorists to highlight how agents could no longer be deluded or could change the conditions under which they continue to suffer from false consciousness. The idea is that, with the change in conditions, they will be emancipated from these 'illusions'. What was (and is) important for Marx and his intellectual descendents in the critical theory tradition is therefore to critically expose and overcome the problem of false consciousness (Welshon, 1991:164).

It is argued that Marx gives both an explanation of why individuals hold the beliefs they do and an explanation of how it came about that the agents developed, and continue to suffer from, false consciousness. The reason, it would seem, is that false consciousness is a "product of the material conditions in society" (Miller, 1972:433). Rosen (2000:2) argues that the thought behind the concept of ideology is that it plays a "systematic role in sustaining a certain social order". The explanation of why individuals hold the beliefs they do, why they suffer from false consciousness and why they continue to do so is that there is something about the structure of society that leads to the reproduction of the false consciousness. The society 'needs' false consciousness for its survival. For the system, according to this idea, false consciousness is not just a lucky accident: i*deologiekritik* maintains that there is a complex relationship between the nature of society and the beliefs individuals hold.

2.1. Ideology as False Consciousness

How did *Ideologiekritik* come to equate ideology with 'false consciousness'? "False consciousness" needs to be unpacked in order to show in what sense, or by virtue of what properties, a form of consciousness is ideologically false. Eagleton (1994:12) argues that for the younger Marx, ideology "was a matter of illusion and chimeras", but later it was "folded into the material world itself" and was anchored no longer in consciousness but "in the day-to-day workings of the capitalist system"(*ibid.*). As a result the term "false consciousness" shifted itself from an epistemological to an ethical sense (Eagleton, 1991:90). Rosen (1996:30), on the scope of false consciousness, sees it including the beliefs, motives, desires, and values that individuals. This scope suggests what forms of consciousness would benefit the social order, particularly since Rosen

(1996:47) holds that these beliefs, attitudes, motives and desires are formed "according to a poor mechanism."[4] The first sub-section below discusses the scope of false consciousness drawing heavily on Rosen (1996) and Guess (1984). Then I consider the "intension" of false consciousness (Rosen, 1996:46). It will be concluded that it is the way in which forms of consciousness function that renders them 'ideologically false'.

2.1.1. The Scope of 'False Consciousness'

Consciousness

Part of the confusion around the term 'consciousness' in the theory of ideology is that it can often mean two different things. It can mean 'mental life' in general or else mean (as in Marx) a particular historical system of belief, for example, religious, juridical, and political (Eagleton, 1996:72). Furthermore, individuals and groups do not simply have randomly collected bundles of beliefs, attitudes and life goals. Consciousness refers to all levels of thought ranging from basic attitudes and values to reflectively-held beliefs and well articulated theories (Rosen, 2000:2). In analysing the scope of false consciousness Rosen uses the term 'consciousness' in the broadest of senses, to be as inclusive as possible in defining consciousness. Hence, those areas of human existence to which ideology applies are left open and would therefore include 'unconscious' beliefs, attitudes and so forth. Geuss (1981:12) similarly refers to consciousness to include beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions. Note that forms of consciousness that are considered ideologically false are only portions of consciousness since, it is argued, not all consciousness is false. Due to not all consciousness being false, Geuss narrows the term down when looking at what beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions would be considered ideologically false. He defines 'form of consciousness' as a "particular systematically interconnected subset of all the beliefs, attitudes, etc, the agents of a group hold." He argues that certain aspects of this subset of beliefs may be widely shared among the individuals in a group and that this systematically interconnected subset of beliefs is central to the agents. This is because they deal with central issues of human life[5] and consequently have a deep influence on the individual's behaviour (Geuss, 1981:10).

---

[4] Since the social order is the orderly balance of many diverse and incompatible interests, there will be varying forms of consciousness that benefit various differing parties.

[5] For example, they give interpretation to such things as death, the need to work, and sexuality, or are central metaphysical issues themselves (Geuss, 1981:10).

Plamenatz (1970:24) holds that false consciousness is not just any kind of false beliefs, but rather a set of mistaken beliefs about matters important to individuals in a society. This was clearly seen in Geuss's analysis of consciousness where agents do not easily give up those beliefs which play an important part in their behaviour. It can therefore be concluded that elements of consciousness deemed 'false' consciousness are going to be pervasive and have extensive social consequences. Of course, it is problematic to assume that one can determine whether beliefs are "mistaken" or even "important to individuals". Nevertheless the theory of ideology assumes that it is possible for a theorist to make this distinction.

In investigating the scope of false consciousness it must be ascertained what it is about certain beliefs, attitudes, motives, desires and values that would be considered false. Why would a particular set of beliefs, motives, desires, values, and so forth be considered false consciousness? Rosen (1996:31) divides the possible modes of "false" into three categories:

1) practical false consciousness — disorders in the way in which we respond to and act within the world;
2) cognitive false consciousness — disorders of the system by which we perceive, judge and reflect upon nature, society and ourselves;
3) distortions of identity — deformation of a subject. Individualism, for example, Rosen argues is viewed as an ideological distortion because it does not take into account the collective entity of social groups.

Let us consider these categories in more detail.

2.1.1.1. Practical False Consciousness

This first mode refers to disorders in how we respond to and act within the world. It will be argued that the second and third modes of false consciousness, discussed below, affect the way in which individuals respond to and act within the world. In other words, the beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and distorted sense of self of an individual will play an important role in the way in which an individual acts within the world. The first mode is divided into disorders of (a) desire and the will; (b) values, ends or norms; and (c) disorders of emotion.

As individuals interpret their world and act upon it, they are also moved by it. Rosen (1996:39) explains how individuals "react to it – by feeling pleasure and pain and by other, more complicated, emotions." Much of *Ideologiekritik* aims to show that individuals lead lives dominated by inappropriate emotions – such as fear, anxiety and guilt – which prevent them from ultimately enjoying true happiness (*ibid.* :40).

Inappropriateness here also applies to individuals' desires, values, ends and norms. The assumption here is that the theorist of ideology knows what would be deemed an 'appropriate' emotion, desire or value, and can prove that his or her method of analysis escapes an ideological taint. Rosen (1996:39) contends that some Marxists have argued that "it is precisely the belief in the existence of 'values' as objective and independent features of reality that has helped to obscure the truth of the matter".

An advocate of the theory of ideology maintains that a form of consciousness can be criticised on the basis of the motives that lead the subject to adopt it. Geuss (1981:44) argues that a form of consciousness can be criticised because of non-motivational features of the conditions under which an individual could have acquired it. Rosen distinguishes two ways in which desires can be criticised in a theory of false consciousness. Desires may be of the first order, directed at particular things, states of affairs or experiences, or of a higher order where desires are related to other desires. For example, I may desire somebody will love me, or desire a house; alternatively I may desire not to have the desire to gamble. Second order desires can act as a standard of criticism for first-order desires (so the fact that I desire not to desire to gamble may be taken as an indication that I find the desire to gamble undesirable). However, we can also criticise these second-order desires. For example, my desire not to want to pay taxes may be judged negatively rather than positively. Rosen (1996:37) argues that this illustrates that there may be desires of an even higher order than second order desires. The critical standpoint of a theorist could represent a "third-order desire" for example, the view that the individual ought to desire to pay her taxes (*ibid.*). The theory of false consciousness therefore criticises desires that are deemed wrong, as being inappropriate for the individual from the critical standpoint. Desires are deemed *false* by impugning the motives of those who adopt them in relation to the normative claims made about what the individual ought to desire.

The second way in which desires may be criticised in a theory of false consciousness is through ascertaining whether desires include "essential reference to subjective states other than those of the individual who has the desire or not" (*ibid.*). Stated differently, an individual may desire that people hold attitudes and beliefs towards her for certain reasons. For example, she may desire to be loved by others by virtue of the fact that she possesses those qualities that she values, or that others value. The assessment of these desires, in particular the desires that are formed on the basis of

what she believes others desire of her, is often interpreted as a loss of authority on her part, "an abandonment of the individual to external power" (*ibid.* :38). This is what Rosen (*ibid.*) refers to as the "sociability of desire" which can be considered part of a theory of false consciousness when those desires function to the detriment of the individual holding them, as in the loss of authority associated with my desire to be what others desire of me. Welshon argues that this critique is crucial in Marx's theory of ideology. He argues, "Karl Marx, never questioned the denial of first-person authority to ideology; indeed he depended upon that denial as warrant for his rejection of defences of capitalism offered by its propagandists and mystified apologists" (Welshon, 1991:163).

It has been said that the role of the critique of ideology is to enlighten individuals about their true interests and true desires by freeing them from errors about their situation in the world. For rationalism, the principal form of false consciousness involving a desire is the inability of individuals to overcome their dependence upon desires. The falsehood of the desire stems from the failure of individuals to participate effectively in being 'master' of their own lives (Rosen, 1996:38). In Aristotelian terms this is a weakness of will, or, *ákrasia*. The individual struggles to translate their desires into action or they have desires that they are unable to change or to control. To be rational then is to be able to select one's actions so that they further one's long-term interests. Rosen argues:

> In general, rationalism takes the view that the good for human beings consists in exercising and, if possible, increasing the individual's discretionary powers of conscious choice and voluntary action and using them to select between those desires that are, and those that are not, truly desirable. (*ibid.* :17)

This rationalist conception of the self has dominated the Western view of human nature. Rosen is highly critical of this idea and ultimately calls into question the rationalist view of the self that informs the theory of ideology. He argues that rationalism (which he refers to as one of the two[6] "background beliefs" of the theory of ideology) is a historically embedded conception that has come to be taken for granted at a deep level and over a long period of time, for reasons, Rosen (2000:7) argues, "that were not purely rational or scientific". Ultimately, Rosen (1996:275) is in favour of an explanation of compliance that has a "genuinely anti-rationalist understanding of the self." This is not to say that an anti-rationalist explanation of domination will not address the way that

[6] According to Rosen, the second background belief informing the theory of ideology is that societies are systems, in the sense that they maintain themselves in ways that cannot be understood simply from a common–sense individualistic perspective (Rosen, 1996:7).

individuals respond to and act in the world. Rosen (*ibid.* :39) argues that critics of rationalism will "have their own criticisms of the way that desires are formed and the detachment of the individual from active engagement."

Here I shall investigate Rosen's critique of the theory of ideology in terms of the theory's ontological commitments to rationalism. It is clear that the beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of an individual will have implications for how an individual acts in the world. How can the systems by which we perceive, judge and reflect upon nature, society and ourselves be considered 'false'?

2.1.1.2. Cognitive False Consciousness: Beliefs Attitudes, Perceptions

A debate exists amongst theorists of ideology on what constitutes an adequate account of false consciousness. Critics of the theory of ideology have argued that a satisfactory explanation of the difficult notion of false consciousness is one that provides a clear distinction "between false consciousness in the proper sense, and simple empirical error" (Miller, 1972:435). But some theorists disagree. Rosen (1996:33), for example, argues that the falsehood of a belief, in terms of it failing to correspond to the facts, is not a sufficient condition for a belief to be ideological; nor is it a necessary one. Such a demand is in fact considered peripheral to a theory of ideology (*ibid.*). It is peripheral because the falsity which is involved in an ideology must be found at the level of the whole — the overall theory or belief system or practice and the social system in question. Plamenatz (1963) concurs when he argues that an account of ideology does not necessarily involve a discussion of whether or not a form of consciousness is true or accords with the facts. Nevertheless, contrary to Rosen, Plamenatz argues that an account of false consciousness does require an explanation of who benefits from the ideology. Plamenatz is of this view because ultimately a theory of ideology is a theory of how forms of consciousness stabilize, promote, or maintain a particular society or group. The theory of ideology is an explanation of how agents act in a sense *successfully* that is, in relation to interests that are not their own (Rosen, 1996:33)[7]. Therefore, contrary to the critics of the theory of ideology, what constitutes an adequate account of false consciousness is one that explains how ideological beliefs are located in the wider picture of beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and actions of the agents[8] and, as Rosen

[7] It should be noted that this does not mean that the beneficiaries of the ideology do not suffer from false consciousness.

[8] This also includes a wider picture of the social system that the individual is a part of.

argues, not just whether or not the beliefs contained in the form of consciousness are supported by empirical evidence.[9] Rosen divides cognitive false consciousness into disorders of: (a) belief, (b) attitude, and (c) perception.

Beliefs, Attitudes, Perceptions

In Rosen's analysis of ideology he argues that ideological beliefs[10] must be related to society in two ways:

> First, it must be the case that such a belief has the consequence of preserving a particular structure in the society in question. Secondly, the false consciousness of which the belief is an expression must be social in origin. (*ibid.* :32)

Plamenatz concurs when he states that, for Marx, a theory or belief that purports to describe some aspect of reality is ideological when it maintains some part of the social order, in particular one that is part of domination. A belief may be ideologically false not because it is empirically false, but rather "because it serves to maintain the social order" (Plamenatz, 1963:344). Geuss (1981:13) summarises this when he argues that a form of consciousness is ideologically false by virtue of its function. The main point here is that both Geuss and Plamenatz argue that a form of consciousness is ideologically false if it serves to maintain the social order at the expense of those who live within the social order.

Rosen argues that for a belief to be ideological it must meet the above-mentioned criteria. The members of a society may believe that the earth is flat and this is somehow tied into their understanding of their existence. This belief may have extremely important social consequences. For example, those who try to say that the world is otherwise may be punished by that society. However, that society has developed this belief for arbitrary reasons, based on a false account of phenomena, not as part of any general explanation of how unequal or unjust societies preserve themselves (Rosen, 1996:32). In other words, the belief does not assist in the explanation of the way in which the society maintains itself, for once the society discovers that the world is round, the people could still hold onto their understanding of their existence[11]. Rosen (*ibid.*) illustrates how the

---

[9] However, the importance of empirical evidence for the theory of ideology is not being denied. It is simply that the empirical evidence is only part of the story when determining what forms of consciousness are 'false'.

[10] This can also be applied to attitudes and perceptions.

[11] Rosen (1996:32) argues that beliefs in natural sciences are less likely to meet the two criteria. This is not to say however, that they do not have social consequences. If they are to assist in preserving social structures they will do so less directly than beliefs about human beings and their social relations.

falsehood of a belief is neither sufficient nor a necessary condition for the belief to be ideological. Imagine that a society believes that the earth rotates round the sun. They have developed this belief not because of any sound scientific theory of the universe but rather because the members of this society see the universe as a macrocosmic version of their own society. The sun represents their chief and the earth corresponds to the rest of the society, who move in accordance with the chief's wishes. The belief about the earth and the sun, although true, can be considered ideological because it meets both criteria: firstly, the belief has the social consequence of preserving the chief's position and that of his people, and secondly, it is social in origin (although not rational) because there is nothing inherent in the earth's rotation around the sun that results in the chief obtaining his social position (*ibid.* :34). It can therefore be argued that an ideology may contain elements of truth (such as, the earth rotating around the sun) and still serve the purpose of maintaining inequalities in society. This is important since, as it has been argued, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions may be ideologically false due to the way they are located in the 'whole'. The theory of ideology seeks to be historical in its scope and approaches society as a 'totality', in terms of its general structure (Miller, 1972:444).

It can be argued that much of the subject matter of ideological beliefs is not explicitly about the empirical world or society at all. Plamenatz (1963:329) argues that this is so because an ideology, although claiming to explain some aspect of the real world, does not confine its explanation to an account of the facts. Let us take the example presented above. Rosen (1996:33) refers to such a belief as a "first order belief" since it is empirically true. However, the belief about the earth's movement affirming the chief's position is a false "second order belief" (*ibid.*). Rosen therefore argues that

> the immediate account given by the agent of his or her action is not false in its terms, but must be completed by a further higher explanation ... [T]his higher perspective condemns the individual to 'false consciousness' in the sense of failing to understand the full significance of his own actions. (*ibid.*)

Geuss (1981) gives a good account of how "the higher perspective condemns the individual to 'false consciousness' ". He lists four ways in which a form of consciousness can be considered ideological by virtue of what he refers to as the beliefs' epistemic properties. Here the belief is ideological in the way it is formed and the structures of explanation into which it is fitted.

1) The form of consciousness is an ideology if it mistakes the epistemic status of some of its apparently constituent beliefs. An example of mistaking the epistemic status of a belief would be when an individual believes that unicorns exist and then constructs a set of values and attitudes on the basis of this belief. Rosen (1996:3) argues that an individual with such a belief is "treating the inanimate as animate." Religious beliefs are often classified as this kind of mistake. Geuss (1981:13) argues that since "beliefs about gods are not empirically verifiable ... a theological form of consciousness is based on a mistake about the epistemic standing of one of its central constitutive beliefs." This however, elevates the empirically verifiable to a privileged status, even though many beliefs are not empirically verifiable. It can be argued that beliefs would be classified as ideological if they presented value judgements as statements of fact, and if the belief were social in origin and had the consequence of preserving a particular structure in society. It is clear that value judgements have a different 'epistemic standing' from descriptive beliefs for example. These kinds of disorders in how we perceive, judge and reflect upon nature, society and ourselves are therefore important to uncover.
2) A form of consciousness can also be considered ideological is if it contains an 'objectification' mistake. This is because the form of consciousness contains "a false belief to the effect that some phenomenon is a natural phenomenon" (Geuss, 1981:14). Miller (1972:443) also includes this mistake in his analysis and refers to it as the distortion of *"eternalisation"*. It involves treating relationships or characteristics that are historical and contingent as if they were fixed in the nature of things. A good example of this is the way in which some classical economists view the production of commodities for exchange and their sale in a free market as being the 'natural' pattern of economic life. Despite their greater knowledge economists made the mistake of eternalising what was merely a current social relationship (*ibid.*).

Geuss (1981:14) also argues that human agents or 'subjects' are suffering from cognitive false consciousness if they falsely 'objectify' their own activity. For example, when individuals regard one of their actions as 'foreign' to themselves, they see their actions as a natural process outside their control. Miller (1972:444) refers to this as 'reification', which he argues is the "apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is in non-human or possible supra-human

terms". He distinguishes this from forms of consciousness that suffer from the distortion of eternalisation; he reserves 'reification' to indicate the attitude of mind "which reduces the individual to an object of a certain kind, having fixed properties" (*ibid.*). An example is found in sexist ideology where certain general qualities are held to characterise all women regardless of the fact that individual women may not possess them. Miller (*ibid.*) argues that when this occurs, i.e., when the individual is wholly identified with the group, class or category to which she belongs, her individuality is effectively denied.[12] Reification is in fact most pervasive when it is used to apply to "society", "the community" or "the people".

3) The third way in which a form of consciousness can be considered ideologically false on the basis of its epistemic properties is if it contains a false belief "to the effect that the particular interest of some subgroup is the general interest of the group as a whole" (Geuss, 1981:14). Welshon (1991:166) goes into further detail and discusses the fallacy of hasty generalisation, which involves assuming that what may be true in an individual case is true for all. This is closely related to the fallacy of composition inferring properties of wholes or aggregates from properties attributed to some of their parts. The theory of ideology is primarily concerned with explaining why individuals accept certain oppressive regimes even though it is clearly against their interests to do so. Hasty generalisation seems to provide a possible reason for why this is the case. It could be argued that people hold beliefs that are an inaccurate reflection of the individual but not of the group. This is because some people believe that what is a reflection of the individual can also be held as a reflection of the group. For example, consider the belief that every worker can become wealthy. It is clear that some workers do become wealthy, as in the case of the wealthy capitalist who started at the bottom. However, it is fallacious to believe that what is true for one worker is true for all. Even though individual workers can become very wealthy, it is an inaccurate reflection of reality to believe that every member of the working class can obtain such wealth (Welshon, 1991:166). This example shows how cognitive false consciousness can help stabilise the capitalist structure.

4) The fourth and final way a form of consciousness is considered ideological in virtue of some epistemic property is if it mistakes self-validating or self-fulfilling beliefs for

[12] This is closely linked to Rosen's discussion of the third mode 'distortions of identity'.

ones that are not self-validating or self-fulfilling (Geuss, 1981:14). For example, when members of a certain ethnic group are assumed to be lazy, unreliable, and unintelligent, and on the basis of this certain types of actions are taken towards them in ways that make them actually seem lazy, unreliable, and unintelligent. This may be done by refusing them employment or restricting their access to education, employment, and so forth. The belief that members of a certain ethnic group are lazy can be self-fulfilling when those individuals are not afforded the opportunity to behave differently and disprove the idea. Therefore the force of the beliefs depends on mistaking their epistemic standing, i.e. misconstruing them as non-self-fulfilling beliefs.

Miller (1972:443) argues that the above distortions ultimately consist in the "failure, or refusal, to see a particular piece of individual behaviour as part of a wider social system." According to him, in order to understand society a theoretical framework is required that gathers not only a wider range of evidence than is present in the ideological view but also supplies a structural theory of the phenomena which form the objects of false consciousness (*ibid.*: 444). In order to debunk cognitive false consciousness effectively, such a theory of society would have to be historical and holistic. If it were not, the forms of false consciousness described above will persist. Yet, one of the possible criticisms of any alternative theory to the dominant[13] ideology is that it may well fall prey to similar forms of ideological false consciousness identified in the dominant ideology. The question then is, how does the theory of ideology avoid the very criticisms levelled at theories suffering from false consciousness? I will call this criticism the 'ideology as false consciousness criticism' (Rosen, 1996:270).

This criticism argues that the theory of ideology has to defend itself as if it were not also a product of ideology. According to Miller (1972:447), this is a weak criticism of *Ideologiekritik* since there is nothing wrong with saying that one set of beliefs is ideological and admitting that one's own position may also be ideological. He argues that the concept of ideology can be "used to characterise the ideas of a group of people, as an essential preliminary to social analysis, even if at a later time this characterisation itself is revealed as ideological from another point of view" (*ibid.*). The reason why Miller

[13]The term 'dominant' is being used very loosely. This is because it might be the case that false consciousness is the *failure* to form an adequate, shared system of beliefs (Rosen, 1996:2). Rosen argues that the theory of ideology is not necessarily committed to the view that unequal societies are reproduced by some positive set of shared beliefs, values or cultural practices — a 'dominant' ideology.

dismisses the ideology as false consciousness criticism is because he recognises that Marx never provided an adequate account of the distinction between false and true consciousness (*ibid.* :439). According to Miller the implication of this, for Marx, is that it is difficult to account for the claimed superiority of the truth of Marxism over the truth of the belief systems it opposes. Taking this in to account, Miller (1972:447) does not see this as a damaging criticism of the theory of ideology because he argues, by way of example, that even though Einstein was able to show that Newton's laws of motion were erroneous he did not have to suppose that his own theory could be just as easily displaced. Thus, it is not problematic for *Ideologiekritik* to identify beliefs as ideological without supposing that its own theory could end up as a prime example of the very thing it is criticising. Furthermore, Eagleton (1994:17) disputes that idea that the ideology as false consciousness criticism assumes that is that the theorist of ideology must have some access to absolute truth. Contrary to some postmodernist academics, the theory of ideology is "as much concerned with the functions, effects and motivations of beliefs [as] with their truth-value" and it is not necessary, in order to spot a falsehood or distortion, for one to have some access to absolute truth (*ibid.*). In fact, we do not have to have knowledge of the truth of our own position to assert that, for example, "Apartheid is a social system which leaves something to be desired" (*ibid.*). In agreement with Miller, I consider this a weak criticism of the theory of ideology, because more is required than just the criticism that the theory of ideology could potentially be ideological, to show why the theory of ideology is unsatisfactory.

In concluding the discussion of the second possible mode of false consciousness, i.e. cognitive false consciousness, let me add that the beliefs that have been examined may not be conscious. Rosen (1996:34) argues that beliefs of individuals "may, indeed, be *concealed* from those who hold them." Crucially, the concealed beliefs may be part of the explanation of the ideological character of those beliefs, which are explicitly acknowledged (*ibid.*). Individuals may be able to explain why they hold certain beliefs or have certain attitudes or perceptions, may not be aware of the 'real' reasons why they hold those particular beliefs or attitudes. According to the theory of ideology, uncovering these reasons will assist in explaining why some explicit beliefs are ideological (*ibid.*).

For example, Jo may believe that Muslims make poor friends. Jo is able to explain this belief on the basis of her actual experience and observation of Muslims. A friend who was Muslim may have betrayed Jo, and Jo generalised from this experience

to include *all* Muslims. It is clear that her belief is 'false', because it is a generalisation. The 'true' basis of Jo's beliefs, about Muslims (which she would probably fail to acknowledge as her beliefs) may be the unstated belief that Muslims are innately inferior (Rosen, 1996:34). Rosen argues that there are three ideological beliefs in the above example, with the first two being consciously held beliefs (the first belief, Muslims makes poor friends, and the second, Jo's belief of being betrayed) and the third unconscious (Jo's unstated belief that Muslims are inferior). The example provides additional insight into how an individual may hold beliefs that go against their interests. It may be that individuals are not even aware of the fact that their actions are governed by beliefs that they themselves are unable to acknowledge.[14] It can therefore be argued that restricting ideology to conscious beliefs would omit too much. It is clear that unconscious beliefs (if they exist at all) that are social in origin and have the consequence of preserving a particular structure in society would be important cases of "false consciousness". The uncovering of such beliefs, which critical theory aims to do, would surely be enlightening to the agent.

2.1.1.3. Disorders of Identity: Individual, Collective, Metaphysical

The third possible mode of false consciousness that Rosen examines is what he refers to as *distortions of identity*. The theory of ideology is meant to be part of a critical theory of society aimed at producing enlightenment in the members of society. In the long run, such an enterprise is meant to free those individuals from coercion which is at least partly self-imposed. Eagleton (1994:2) argues that the most difficult form of emancipation is always self-emancipation. An important task for the theory of ideology is to show where the very identity of the individual can be deemed 'false'. Rosen (1996:31) argues that distortions of identity involve the deformation of a subject and may initially be categorised according to whether the subject in question is: (a) individual, (b) collective, or (c) metaphysical or cosmic.

[14] This can also apply to those whose interests are being served. Geuss argues that, according to Lukács, "the bourgeoisie could and can act to further its interests 'unconsciously' or under the influence of one or another form of false consciousness". Geuss argues further, "so the bourgeoisie, paradoxically enough, has an interest in being self-deceived" (Geuss, 1981:24).

Individual Identity

The theory of ideology argues that the self can be thought of as suffering from false consciousness when an individual is unable to recognise that his or her own activity, or that the product of his or her activity, belongs to him or her. The individual may, in fact, have a distorted conception of the role he plays in relation to the activities he carries out and consequently of his place in the world. He is thought of as having suffered a 'loss of identity'. Hegel is extremely influential here. He argues that freedom refers to the ability to remain with oneself in otherness (Rosen, 1996:40). Hegel adds that this relation of the self with the other is important because an individual could not become aware of himself without the awareness of other human beings. Individuals gain knowledge about themselves through knowledge of others. In addition, individuals gain knowledge about themselves through the kind of work they do. Hegel discusses the battle for self-knowledge in his account of the master-slave dialectic. Marx, on the other hand, extends the notion of 'loss of identity' further with his account of alienation. Marx's theory of ideology is probably best seen as part of his more general theory of alienation, expounded in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844). For Marx, individuals could suffer from false consciousness when under certain social conditions their human powers, products and processes escape from their control (Eagleton, 1996:70) and even see themselves as separated in some way from themselves and their life activity (Ollman, 1971:134). This results in people being unable to express themselves in ways they should be able to, according to Marx. Marx believes that this is crucial; to him because expression is the essence of what it means to be an autonomous person.

This loss of identity can be related to the modes of false consciousness discussed in practical and cognitive false consciousness above. For example, Eagleton (1996: 70) argues that the concept of alienation is closely linked to that of 'reification' — "for if social phenomena cease to be recognisable as the outcome of human projects, it is understandable to perceive them as material things, and thus to accept their existence as inevitable". To illustrate this, Marx argues that people in capitalist society lead a corrupted life — a life of alienation and economic estrangement, the result of which is the creation of inauthentic beliefs, needs and desires that then require satisfaction. These needs, however, are not 'real' in that they are constructs of broken relations between people and nature and the subsequent distortion of who people really are.

Such a distortion can also be the result of the collective nature of the world the individuals find themselves in.

Collective Identity

The second disorder of identity is levelled at society itself, in terms of what is considered the 'collective' identity of the individuals that make up society. Rosen (1996:42) sees this as an important strand of thinking about false consciousness and ideology, which he loosely refers to as *organicism*. Organicism, according to Rosen, represents a direct challenge to the assumption of individualism. Here, social groups are seen as collective entities with their own irreducible conditions of identity, properties and powers. For example, the production of public goods occurs at the level of the collective and not by any one individual that constitutes that collective. In contrast to the assumptions of individualism, organicism argues that "the apparent common sense that leads to ontological individualism itself incorporated an ideological distortion" (*ibid.*).

In *Das Kapital,* Marx claims that under capitalism the social relationships of the producers to their collective labour have been transformed into 'material relationships between persons and social relationships between things'. The organicist therefore regards individualism as an immediate reflection of what society is like, although not a representation of the final truth about society. In order to restore collective identity there needs to be a change in attitude towards society on the part of observers and theorists. Society itself must be transformed. This 'collective' identity needs to be restored, according to Marx, because without it individuals "deny their roots in social life with politically oppressive effects" (Eagleton, 1996:80). In his book *Black Skins, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon (1986) gives a detailed account of how it is that the black man became dominated and he argues that in order to overcome this oppression in society not only do the minds of the oppressor and the oppressed alike need to be addressed but there also needs to be a "radical re-ordering of society" (Gibson, 1999:11). It is difficult to deny that Fanon had a particular understanding of our social nature, in that the oppressive nature of colonialism undermines the 'collective' identity required to enable the black man to see his role in his own oppression. It is only by the "radical re-ordering of society" that the 'collective' identity can be restored to enable individuals to see the role they play in social life. This aspect of the theory of ideology valuably argues for the emancipation of the individual at the level of the collective by acknowledging the role the collective plays in social life.

It is clear that the theory of ideology is influenced by the notion of "unintended consequences" — the idea that the actions of individuals in society have consequences that go beyond what the individuals themselves do. Society is likened to a social organism in which the unintended consequences of social actions undertaken within it are beneficial for the society in question (Rosen, 1996:128). However, society can be structured in such a way that the unintended consequences of social actions undertaken within it are not beneficial to the individuals. When this occurs, some theorists argue there is a need for the very structure of society to change so that collective actions will benefit the individuals within that society. Hence, the theory of ideology claims that for oppression to be overcome there needs to be not only a change in attitude towards society on the part of observers and theorists but also a transformation of society itself (Rosen, 1996:42). Is the emancipation of the individual only possible with the restoration of a 'collective identity' that is not grounded in false consciousness? Rosen (1996:101) contends that this helps to explain the theory of ideology's background belief that "societies are entities that preserve themselves by shaping the individuals and institutions of which they are composed." To put it simply, in this view, society is like an organism capable of self-maintenance.

Metaphysical Identity

This disorder of identity is a particular concern of Hegel, who influenced the theory of ideology in general and Marxism in particular. Hegel makes a stronger claim against methodological individualism[15] than the organicists. For Hegel, the collective subject that loses and recovers itself in history is ultimately the source of order and meaning in non-human nature as well. Rosen (1996:42) argues:

> Indeed, it is only by realising the unity of its self-consciousness and unconscious aspects that *Geist*, the subject of history, comes to be restored to itself. To this extent, the individual that recognises its(sic) oneness with *Geist* must recognise not just the products of human activity but the non-human aspect of reality with which it (sic) is confronted as something that is not alien to it (sic).

Here, knowing reality means that one has to understand the process whereby *Geist* reveals itself; and to grasp that process is to comprehend the achievements of

[15] Jon Elster (1982: 453) argues that the view that society is like an organism is one of the problems within the Marxist tradition and insists that methodological individualism is important for an understanding of why domination occurs in society. He is in favour of methodological individualism because it shows how ideological hegemony is created and entrenched at the level of the individual, which, in his opinion, organicism fails to do. He argues that it fails to do this because of its commitments to the Hegelian tradition and functionalist sociology.

mankind and the movement towards full understanding of the world which allows mankind to know the world and its place in it (Plamenatz, 1971:37). This however begs the question as to whose account of the metaphysical truth we use as criteria for measuring the false. The "achievements of mankind" in the African context could, among many other options, be interpreted as the liberation of the continent by the West or the systematic oppression of the black man by the West. The theory of ideology does not, as was argued, have to have some notion of an absolute truth. It claims that for the oppressed and exploited peoples to emancipate themselves they require a knowledge of how the social system works and how they stand within it (Eagleton, 1994:17). For Hegel, therefore, the distortion of identity of a metaphysical kind comes about when "*Geist* lacks the unified self-presence that comes when it knows itself in its otherness" (Rosen, 1996:161). False consciousness arises due to the failure of individuals to appreciate the nature of their own agency, or of the higher agent, *Geist*, of which they are embodiments.

Rosen contends that one of the major problems with Hegel's work, and ultimately with Marx, is the significant background role that absolute idealism plays in the theory of ideology. In particular, he is referring to the "relationship between individual agents and historical processes and the apparently independent life taken on by certain material objects" (Rosen, 1996:43). According to Rosen (*ibid.*), the challenge for the theory of ideology, as understood by Marx and later by theorists of Marxism, is to try to account for such phenomena *without* commitment to the idealist assumptions, particularly as such assumptions fall prey to the 'ideology as false consciousness' criticism.

2.1.1.4. Conclusion

The discussion has examined the scope of false consciousness. It was shown that particular sets of beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and so forth that are 'false' are so by virtue of the ways in which individuals use them to perceive, judge and reflect upon nature, society, and themselves. 'False' also refers to the ways in which individuals respond to and act within the world, as well as the distortion of their identities. Again, the theory of ideology is more concerned with the function of these "disorders" than with their truth-value (Eagleton, 1994:17). As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, what makes such forms of consciousness ideologically false is the way they function to preserve relations of domination. It was argued that it is the latter way of differentiating

false consciousness that is of crucial importance for understanding the concept of ideology. With this, the use of the term "false consciousness" has shifted ground from its epistemological to its ethical sense. The falsity of ideology in this context, then, is the falsity of the way beliefs, desires, and so on function in support of oppressive social systems (Eagleton, 1996:91). What *Ideologiekritik* still needs to reveal is how the above modes of false consciousness function within social life.

2.1.2. What Makes Such Forms of "False Consciousness" Ideologically False?

We have seen that beliefs that are true may still be ideological and that the scope of the theory of ideology can extend to areas of mental life (attitudes, actions, and emotions) that are not true or false by virtue of their correspondence to a mind-independent reality. Rosen (1996:43) argues that it may seem better to "identify ideology not with *false* consciousness but with consciousness that is *irrational*." This is because it may help to avoid the problems associated with linking ideology with the concept of 'false consciousness'. For beliefs to be ideological or "a form of consciousness" to be ideological (in Geuss' terminology) they need to function in a certain way (Plamenatz, 1971:31). Hence, the question to ask is not whether an ideology is true or whether it accords with the facts but rather to discern who benefits from it. A form of consciousness is ideologically false when it serves to maintain the social order at the expense of those who hold the beliefs and attitudes. What is meant when it is said that a form of consciousness is 'ideologically false' due to the manner in which it *functions* in society? Rosen looks at the role that rationality plays in the understanding that an ideology can give us. He argues that the notion of irrationality has been employed to understand what makes a form of consciousness 'ideologically false' (Rosen, 1996:43). Ideology is no longer identified here with *false* consciousness, but with consciousness that is irrational (*ibid.*). Below I argue that is not the character of beliefs that renders them ideological but rather the way they *function* in society. In other words ideology is not a matter of rationality, as theorists of rationalism claim, but a functional matter.

2.1.2.1. Ideological Irrationality

The notion of rationality is important in *Ideologiekritik,* which maintains that any action an agent makes should be one that is rationally grounded (Geuss, 1981:44). Geuss (*ibid.* :58) argues that a critical theory, like the theory of ideology, does not merely provide information about the rational manner in which agents should act *if* they had certain interests but also claims to inform agents about the interests that it *is* rational for them to have. It can therefore be argued that the role of *Ideologiekritik* is to specify to the individuals suffering from false consciousness that they should modify their beliefs in order to attain the ideal of a rational and satisfying existence. Rosen ultimately questions how individuals think, feel, or behave. In other words, he questions whether their consciousness is defective or against their interests. Furthermore, who determines "their interests"? What kind of irrationality would be ideological? For Rosen, a definition of rationality that is restricted to some formal set of decision-rules would exclude much of what is relevant to the theory of ideology. He concludes that it would be "impossible to give a single, tight and inclusive definition of it" (Rosen, 1996:43). He therefore, employs a 'thin' definition of rationality (in the philosopher's sense of committing itself to little specific content), as follows: "consciousness that is formed (beliefs or values held, action taken) *for good reasons*" (*ibid.*). Irrationality, then, involves consciousness that is formed for bad reasons.[16]

2.1.2.2. Towards a Definition of Ideological Consciousness

The previous section showed that the scope of false consciousness ranges from disorders in how we respond to and act within the world, to disorders of the system by which we perceive, judge and reflect upon nature, society and ourselves and finally to distortions of identity. What makes these types of disorders ideological is the way in which they function to preserve relations of domination. What then does the theory of ideology's definition of ideological false consciousness look like? The next section investigates the types of definitions of ideological consciousness that have been proposed. Rosen (1996:43) offers the reader a series of problematic definitions of ideological false consciousness. In the process of rejecting these definitions Rosen presents what he considers to be an adequate definition of ideological false consciousness that best resembles the meaning of ideology in the theory of ideology. To

[16] The terms 'good' and bad' here are set against the assumptions of what the theory of ideology explains as 'good' or 'bad'.

defend the theory of ideology, we need to grasp how Rosen understands the definition of false consciousness in the theory. In fact, Rosen argues that Marx provided a similar definition. Rosen's final definition shows why he sees no explanatory value in the theory of ideology. I shall argue that Rosen's exposition of the theory of ideology is not valid and that the theory of ideology can be vindicated.

2.1.2.3. Rosen's Definition of False Consciousness

We now examine a series of definitions of ideological consciousness that Rosen rejects, in order to clarify what he considers to be *the* definition of ideology, which underpins his critique of the theory of ideology.

1.) *Ideological consciousness is consciousness that is formed for reasons that are social in origin.* (Rosen ,1996:43)

The problem with this definition is that some beliefs are social in origin and widely accepted because there is good evidence for their truth, and hence not based on any bad reasoning and so not irrational. In addition, the beliefs, though social in origin, do not necessarily function in support of relations of domination. I believe that what renders consciousness ideological is the way in which it functions in society. The definition does not adequately address this requirement. As Rosen (*ibid.*) argues, "to be caused socially to believe something may be a good reason to hold it" and this does not necessarily harm the believer – let us say, a person's belief in washing their hands after handling refuse. One could argue that this belief is social in origin because of the social way in which the individual acquired it. It is difficult to see how such a belief could be considered ideological, yet in terms of the definition above the fact that the belief is social in origin renders it ideological. There is a further, more substantive objection from Rosen (*ibid.* :44), based on what is meant by 'social in origin'.

The term 'origin' is problematic because when explaining phenomena we cam distinguish between why something came about and why it persists. It is possible to conceive that the old belief in the divine right of kings may not have been social in origin (for instance, it may have been 'magically' placed in the minds of people by an alien being) but still consider it ideological because of the function it serves. Rosen (1996:44) states, "a religion, say, could come about by chance but be preserved by social selection mechanism. Would it not then be ideological without being social in origin?" It is difficult to argue that a form of consciousness is 'false' (or irrational) by virtue of its origin (Geuss, 1981:36). Often what seems to be *genetic Ideologiekritik* (*ibid.* :38), is actually a

kind of *epistemic Ideologiekritik,* functional criticism in disguise. In that case, one may not be criticising a form of consciousness because it is social in origin but because, given that it arises in a particular society, it will have certain functional properties, such as Marx's critique of religion. It seems that Marx is arguing that religion is social in origin (which in fact it may be), yet the main criticism seems to lie in the fact that it is a powerful tool in maintaining the social order. Marx proposes "the wretchedness of religion is at once an expression of and protest against real wretchedness" (in Rosen, 1996:176). It would then seem that the criticism does not lie in religion itself but in the role that religion plays in society, in maintaining a profane world. Geuss (1981:39) argues that what is at issue is "a form not of genetic but epistemic *Ideologiekritik."* What is wrong with ideological forms of consciousness is not their origin but their 'false' representation of social reality. Geuss (*ibid.*) concludes that it is therefore difficult to attribute ideological consciousness to consciousness that is formed for reasons that are social in origin.

This leads Rosen to argue that the term 'origin' should be used in a broader sense. He proposes that something "was social in origin *either* if it came about *or* if it were to persist for social reasons" (Rosen, 1996:44). According to Rosen, there is a more substantive objection to this first definition, namely a Humean one. Hume criticised rationalism for maintaining that beliefs and perhaps most values are the products of some reflective processes. Quite the contrary, he said it could be argued that many of our beliefs and perhaps most of our values are not formed for reasons at all (*ibid.*). In that view and contrary to Geuss, it is highly problematic to use origin as a criterion for rationality. Rosen follows Hume and therefore rejects the first definition with its test of origin as a criterion of rationality.

2) *Ideological consciousness is consciousness that lacks good reasons in its favour.*

This definition is also problematic because it leads one to question what would constitute 'bad' reasons. The theory of ideology, however, provides the answer that ideological consciousness promotes or preserves a certain "bad" social order. A reformulation of the definition is as follows:

> *Ideological Consciousness is consciousness that benefits some social entity or structure.*

Here are two contrasting examples of consciousness that benefit some social entity or structure. The first is a belief among members of a community that it is good to

use condoms to protect themselves from Aids; the second is a belief among women that, due to their biological makeup, they are not entitled to question their husbands. Both, Rosen (1996:45) asserts, are beliefs that benefit the social order. While the second is potentially ideological, the first is not. What then distinguishes the two examples? Rosen locates the division through the notion of 'interests'. In the first example the belief serve the interests of both the individual who holds it (he will protect himself from contracting Aids) and the social order of which he is a member (the whole community may be able to reduce the spread of Aids). In the second example, the belief serves the interests of a social group (men) within the social order and perhaps the interests of the social order as a whole, but not in the interests of the individual women. For instance, if a woman's philandering husband refuses to wear a condom, her belief would clearly be against her interests in that she might contract Aids from him. A further criterion is therefore required in the definition of false consciousness, which is as follows:

> *Ideological consciousness is consciousness that benefits some social entity or structure and goes against the interests of the individual who holds them.*

The theory of ideology has to contrast the forms of consciousness that agents actually have with the way that the theory claims that agents ought to judge, feel or perceive. Some theorists would say that this is the fundamental problem. It is not a theory about how the world works but rather an assertion about how the world ought to work, in a way that itself could be deemed ideological. Rosen (2000:2) argues that the theory of ideology depends on the notion of 'interests'. The claims made by the theory of ideology are bold because it holds that the theorist knows better than the individuals he or she is studying. This is one of the most controversial areas of the theory: it proposes that great masses of people, for long historical periods, have been unable to perceive the facts about their own social situations, yet an accurate vision is somehow accorded in a moment to the theorist, who is privileged to see right through the irrationality of others. Looking for 'true interests' is a powerful analytic tool in the study of ideology but, I would argue it is not without its problems.

Rosen argues that it is not true that all beliefs that go against people's interests are irrational. A salient example is of an American soldier who is prepared to sacrifice himself in defence of his country. Rosen (1996:45) asks, "Is the soldier not, quite rationally, going against his interests?" The definition of ideological consciousness

needs to distinguish between what people desire and what is (really) in their interests. Geuss in, *The Idea of a Critical Theory* provides a useful account of the difficulties of

> what it might mean to distinguish the 'true' or 'real' or 'objective' interests of agents from their 'merely apparent' or 'merely phenomenal' or 'perceived' interests, and what might be meant by the claim that a group of agents is deceived or deluded about its true interests.

He asserts that one of the problems with the concept of 'interest' is that it is supposed to connect or mediate reason with the faculty of desire. As was evident in the discussion of the scope of false consciousness, desires can be false. Is it not possible to have correct desires but to have no 'interest' in satisfying them? For example, an alcoholic may have the desire to stop drinking but may lack interest to act on his desire. However, the opposite is possible: the alcoholic may have the interest to stop drinking but may lack the desire to do so. Do interests then arise out of desires or is it the other way around? As Geuss (*ibid.*) states, recognition of interests may also give rise to new desires. This leads him to argue that for people to distinguish between desire and what is (really) in their interests, their particular "desires could be rationally integrated into a coherent 'good life'." For example, drug addicts can be said to have the interest to give up their addiction even if they do not recognize this interest because it is taken for granted that health is central to one's conception of the 'good life' and drug taking *cannot* be integrated into such a life. The assumption here is that individuals can hold beliefs that are against their interest because the theorist has a conception of what ought to be in the individual's interests.

It therefore seems possible that a distinction can be made between what agents think and desire and what they ought to think and desire. Rosen argues that, for this reason, it is not problematic that a critical theorist can make these kinds of judgements: individuals often make such judgements of themselves. For example, Tim may be aware that his social smoking is not in his interests and that he is *right* to think (or feel) that he should try and refrain from smoking. Rosen (2000:5) contends that it does not seem impossible for the theory of ideology (or any critical theory) to make such judgements. Obviously, if individuals do make such judgments about themselves and even more so if they make them about others, they are under an obligation to justify their judgements. It is possible to argue that the theory of ideology claims to do just that. It assumes that it is possible to distinguish between what an individual ought to believe and what they in fact believe. Rosen proposes that the theory of ideology fails to give an adequate justification and consequently an explanation of the validity of such an assumption, that individuals

"can systematically come to hold beliefs which are against their interest to hold" (Wolff, 1996:230).

In conclusion, Rosen (1996:45) argues that "to show that a form of consciousness is in our real interests, then, is one way of showing that there is a good reason to hold it." It is clear that 'interests' are related not only to (effective) desire but also to judgement (Geuss, 1981:53). The 'good reason' for the Frankfurt School is possibly that the form of consciousness assists in aiding 'self-knowledge', (i.e. knowledge of one's own wants, needs and motives, and knowledge of what kind of life one would find acceptable and satisfying) which is important in enabling the individual to lead a 'good life'. The definition provided above, therefore, has to shift from the notion of interest to the idea of justification. The definition must therefore be reformulated as follows:

> *Ideological consciousness is consciousness that benefits some social entity or structure and is not capable of being justified.*

This definition clearly overcomes the problem encountered in the example of the American soldier for it is possible that operation *Infinite Justice,* in which he is going to participate and which aims at protecting democracy and the American way of life, may be a good reason in favour of his sacrifice. However, a belief may be capable of being justified while still being ideological. For example, Susan may hold the belief that the earth rotates round the sun, not because of some sophisticated knowledge of the universe but because she observes how women must constantly 'circle' their husbands. She then believes that the same pattern must be true for the universe. It is clear that the belief that the earth rotates around the sun is capable of being justified, even though Susan's reason for holding the belief has nothing to do with its justification. The danger of assessing forms of consciousness in terms of their justifiability is that their ideological character may be missed (Rosen, 1996). These objections force Rosen to find an alternative criterion of ideological consciousness. He provides the following solution and argues that the key is to try to combine both elements, as follows:

> A form of consciousness is *prima facie* reasonable if we can point to its having been formed by a good mechanism or procedure; potentially a form of false consciousness if it results from a defective one. (*ibid.* :46)

What is then assessed as a reasonable way to form a belief is the use of the mechanisms of sense perception and inference. A belief may therefore be assessed as reasonable even if it is false and unreflectively formed by virtue of it being obtained as a result of the ordinary mechanism of belief formation (*ibid.*). The next definition of ideological consciousness discussed by Rosen goes as follows:

3) *Ideological consciousness is consciousness that benefits some social entity or structure and has been formed according to a poor mechanism.*

This definition begs the question, "What makes a form of consciousness poor or deficient?" It also suffers from an element of circularity. As noted by Rosen (*ibid.*) "a mechanism or procedure for the formation of consciousness is poor *because* it leads to 'false' consciousness." Thus, this definition fails to specify independently what would make a particular form of consciousness poor or deficient.

Implicit within this definition is that for a form of consciousness to be ideologically false it must benefit a particular social order. Furthermore, these forms of consciousness are formed for reasons of general irrationality — as Rosen (*ibid.*) asserts, "they are 'produced' by special features of the social order that they benefit or *because* they benefit that order." Plamenatz argues that Marx and some of those influenced by Marxism often speak as if the function of ideology is to promote the interests of the ruling classes. He states that "not everything that serves this function is false consciousness and not everything which is false consciousness serves this function" (Plamenatz, 1963:325). However, this is not an adequate criticism of the theory of ideology. The theory of ideology would not consider a form of consciousness ideological unless it benefited or promoted the social order. Thus, the false consciousness to which Plamenatz refers would not, according to the theory of ideology, be considered false consciousness.

Rosen (2000:1) is correct in stating that ideology is always in some sense "false consciousness", and that false consciousness is at most a necessary, and not a sufficient, part of the definition of ideology, as will be argued later. What will be difficult for the theory of ideology to show is that ideological beliefs not only function in a way that stabilises society but that their function is why they exist. Rosen therefore asserts that this is where the competing explanations for the theory of ideology take form. It is not obvious that beliefs that benefit a particular social order and that are formed irrationally are 'produced' by special features of the social order that they benefit or are produced

because they benefit the order (the latter seems to be the stronger claim made by Marx and some of those influenced by Marxism). Jon Elster (1982) argues that compliance with the existing social order, rather than being an instance of the ideological formation of consciousness, may in fact be due to the mechanism by which individuals adapt their desires to what they perceive to be available to them. Elster's account is based on social psychology. When speaking of Marxist theory, Elster contends that Marxists have not shown how ideological hegemony is created and entrenched at the level of the individual. Elster (1982:456) argues that "without a firm knowledge about the mechanisms that operate at the individual level, the grand Marxist claims about macrostructures and long-term change are condemned to remain at the level of speculation." This competing explanation and others will be looked at in greater detail in later chapters.

According to (Rosen, 1996:47), it is necessary that the definition of ideology contained in the theory of ideology distinguishes between ideological consciousness and non-ideological consciousness. The effect of this is that the theory states that ideological consciousness is consciousness that is formed *because* it benefits the social order. This, he argues, strengthens the requirement that ideological consciousness must be social in origin even further, so that:

> in order to be ideological, a form of consciousness must not only benefit a social order but must have come about or persist because it benefits the social order in question (*ibid.*).

Here, the force of the term ideology lies in its capacity to discriminate between ideological consciousness and non-ideological consciousness in terms of the way it functions in social life. Thus:

4) *Ideological consciousness is (1) consciousness that benefits some social entity or structure and has been formed according to a poor mechanism and, (2) comes about or persists because of the fact that it benefits the entity or structure in question.*

As Rosen (1996:47) argues, "adapted and strengthened in this way, this account has a good deal to recommend it." The scope of false consciousness has been examined and it is evident that a certain state of mind (i.e. a set of beliefs, attitudes, values, emotions, and identity) on the part of the oppressed assists in the acceptance of oppressive or otherwise illegitimate social orders. This then led to an inspection of the attributes contained in the term 'false consciousness'. What became apparent was that what makes such states of mind ideologically false is that such states are not a mere accident and they are not the outcome of conscious propaganda or manipulation on the part of the powerful members of society. Rather, such states are ideologically false

because of the intrinsic, perhaps a functional, characteristic of the social system in question, which *does and should* produce such states of mind (Wolff, 1996:210). The theory of ideology therefore claims that certain oppressive societies necessarily produce a consciousness that such societies as systems need. In Theodor W. Adorno's (1974) phrase, it is 'necessary false consciousness'. It can be argued then that a form of consciousness is 'false' because it legitimises relations of domination and oppression (Geuss, 1981:33). As was noted, a belief may turn out to be 'true' (i.e. observationally accurate) but still 'false' in its functional sense (*ibid.*). Therefore, what is significant is whether a belief serves the function of benefiting some social entity or structure, and if it comes about or persists because of the fact that it benefits the entity or structure in question.

2.1.2.4. Rosen's Critique of The Theory of Ideology

Ultimately, this is where Rosen's main critique of the theory of ideology lies. Rosen (2000:5) argues that it is not clear that societies, as a rule, produce the consciousness required for their preservation. Rosen (2000:6) provides a useful breakdown of what he sees as the main tenets of the Marxist theory of ideology[17]:

1) Contemporary societies are capitalist, hence exploitative, hence oppressive;
2) but they are accepted by their members.
3) Therefore those members must suffer from false consciousness, and it is reasonable to assume that
4) false consciousness is not an accidental product of the societies in question.

It would seem that the theory of ideology provides for (1) a social explanation for why domination and oppression occur in society and for (2) why the racist or vulgar economists have the beliefs they do. The reason for both (1) and (2) is not wholly due to a sheer failure of rationality (Rosen, 1996:47). Ideological consciousness is therefore not necessarily a form of *irrationality* (*ibid.* :48). Taking this into account it is possible to have a set of beliefs that are ideologically false but also are rational (Eagleton, 1991:25). In other words, such beliefs may be internally coherent and consistent with the available evidence and be held on apparently plausible grounds. Thus, "the fact that ideology is not at root a matter of reason does not license us to equate it with irrationality" (*ibid.* :26). Rosen (1996:48) also does not believe that ideological consciousness is necessarily

[17] Rosen (1996:222) importantly points out that Marx has no *theory* of ideology. In other words, he has no consistent, single way of making these points.

irrational. It is possible that an individual can form a belief for bad reasons and it may not be in the individual's power to form it for better reasons, for example, the view that society is in some way deceptive or defective. In the case of the former, it would not seem irrational for someone to view the stick as being bent in the water. In the case of the latter, an individual would not be considered irrational if, given that her only experience of women in a patriarchal society has been of women doing the housework, she concludes that women must do housework. Rosen (*ibid.*) therefore concludes that "although some forms of ideological false consciousness are irrational, it should not be assumed that all will be." Significantly, Eagleton (1991:31) contends that "to deny that ideology is fundamentally an affair of reason is not to conclude that it is immune to rational considerations altogether."

Rosen (1996:7) argues that this definition of ideology is influenced by two deep 'background beliefs'. The first is that societies are *systems* in the sense that they maintain themselves in ways that cannot be understood simply from a common-sense individual perspective. The second is that unequal societies are preserved not by coercion alone, but by a form of 'false consciousness' on the part of those in whose interest it would be to change those societies (*ibid*). It is true, in my opinion, that there is a lack of good evidence for the fourth claim that false consciousness is not accidental, but a product of the societies in question (Rosen,2000:6). Furthermore, Rosen argues that the above definition omits a class of cases of forms of consciousness that would fall within the scope of a theory of ideology. He argues that such cases would have the following structure:

1) A form of consciousness results from a poor mechanism.
2) It benefits a particular social order.
3) It is *specific to* that social order (it may be taken to result from features that are specific to that social order).
   BUT:
4) It does not exist *because* it benefits that social order. (Rosen, 1996:47)

Importantly, the above describes a form of consciousness that is explained in relation to the social order, for instance, the belief that in South Africa one should not challenge taxi drivers. This may be explained by the fact that South African public transport is not regulated and that taxi drivers have free rein over whom they will transport. It would seem that the belief that has been formed by a poor mechanism supports the social order but it does not necessarily exist because it benefits that social order, for it may be plausible that even with a regulated public transport system the same

belief would stand. There is nothing, it would seem, inherent about the unregulated public transport system in South Africa that leads to this particular form of consciousness. For example, as Darwin recognised, animals may have features that allow them to survive but this does not mean that they contrived those features in order to survive. There is a functional relationship between the feature and the animal but it is not necessarily a causal relationship between the two. In the final analysis, Rosen (1996) questions whether or not ideology, as defined above, is a sufficient condition for the continued existence of given relations of dominance. As Geuss (1981:16) argues:

> the fact that some beliefs in a form of consciousness are used to legitimate some social practice or institution in no way implies that those beliefs are the *only* ones which could be used, much less that the practice would cease to exist if they could no longer be used to legitimise it.

3. Conclusion: Functional Explanation

This chapter investigated what is meant by 'ideology'. Through an examination of the scope of false consciousness it was argued that ideology is essentially a functional matter. As discussed, Rosen is critical of this conception of ideology. He is critical of the theory of ideology's explanation of how it is that individuals may hold beliefs that are against their interests. He argues that, according to the theory of ideology, the society in which individuals live is arranged in such away that they come to suffer from ideological consciousness, and that this ideological consciousness is *necessary* for social reproduction. It is thus not just an accident that individuals hold the beliefs they do, but rather as a result of the normal operation of the basic social institutions. Moreover, for these institutions to operate and reproduce themselves it is *required* that these beliefs be held (Geuss, 1981: 71). As a critical theory, the theory of ideology purports to explain to individuals that the unconscious determinants of their consciousness and behaviour are coercive social institutions. The theory of ideology has therefore revealed the conditions and the 'context' under which individuals have acquired these beliefs, attitudes and norms and how they have come to hold their basic world-picture (i.e. how they have come into being as social subjects) (*ibid.* :70). Ultimately, since the theory of ideology forces individuals to question their social existence, they thereby acquire self-knowledge.

The question that needs to be asked is "What kind of an explanation is the theory of ideology?" It was argued that the kind of explanation provided by the theory of ideology is essentially a 'functional explanation'. Rosen, however, contends that the theory of ideology as a functional explanation is an invalid kind of explanation. Rosen (1996) and Elster (1982, 1985) both reject the functional explanation, arguing that it does not make good on its claims to explain the nature of social life and the role of ideas in maintaining that nature. The next chapter will investigate why Rosen is critical of the theory of ideology understood as a functional explanation and what else may explain domination in society.

Chapter 2. What Is Functional Explanation?

1. Introduction

It was argued, in the previous chapter that what renders beliefs ideological is not the character of the beliefs in question but rather their function and perhaps their origin. Thus, there was no reason why these beliefs should necessarily be false in themselves. Eagleton (1991:90) asserts that in this context "the term 'false' has shifted ground from its epistemological to its ethical sense." The theory of ideology, as discussed, claims that societies have a systematic tendency to produce, in the majority, beliefs which tend to support or stabilise the illegitimate rule of the minority. The type of phenomena the theory of ideology is supposed to explain can be described as follows:

1) There are occasions when certain beliefs or systems of beliefs are widespread in a given society.
2) Although to believe something is to believe it to be true, these particular beliefs are held for reasons other than their truth or approximation thereto.
3) The prevalence of these beliefs tends to have some sort of beneficial effect upon the preservation or stabilisation of that society.
4) The beneficial effect arises through apparent legitimisation of society or its elements. (Wolff 1996:230)

In sum, it was argued that the theory of ideology gives an essentially two-fold explanation of how it is that *prima facie* illegitimate societies—societies with which it would simply not be rational to comply—maintain themselves without depending solely on coercion (Rosen, 1996:260). The first element of the explanation is that societies maintain themselves by virtue of ideological consciousness on the part of the citizens. Secondly, this ideological consciousness is neither a mere accident nor the intended outcome of the conscious propaganda or manipulation on the part of the powerful but occurs in response to the 'needs' of society (Rosen, 1996:210). Therefore, ideological consciousness is "held to be a [functional] characteristic of the social system in question. It should produce such states of mind" (Rosen, 1996a: 210). It would seem that the theory of ideology assumes that the nature of society is self-maintaining. Rosen (1996:102) argues two views have become established commonplaces in social thought: the view that societies are entities that preserve themselves by shaping the individuals and institutions of which they are composed; and that the actions of individuals in society are held to have consequences that go beyond what the individuals themselves intend or foresee,. Furthermore, he argues that the

consequences of human behaviour should be interpreted from the perspective of a self-maintaining entity, namely, society (Rosen, 1996:102).

How are we then to comprehend society as self-maintaining? Should it be likened to a single biological organism or to a species? Cohen (1978:269) argues that society is best likened to a species because it allows for generalisations that have explanatory relevance to be made about the individuals that make up the society. Yet a species is, at best, a pseudo-entity, a hypostatised collective identity attributed to the myriad individual entities that make up the species. If this is the case, Rosen (2000:339) asks the question, how could such a thing as a species be said to be self-maintaining? According to Cohen (1978:269), just as a single biological organism is considered a basic, self-maintaining entity, so too can a species, for example giraffes, be considered self-maintaining. As a result genuine explanations can be provided about giraffes. For example, an explanation of why it is that the species 'giraffe' has a long neck, is that a long neck is good for the giraffe's survival. Cohen (1978:296) argues that what makes this functional claim about the species 'giraffe' true is an explanatory story about the way in which individual giraffes breed selectively, subject to environmental pressures. It was Darwin's theory of evolution that provided the explanatory story of how it is that an individual giraffe acquired a long neck. In fact, Cohen calls this justificatory underpinning of the idea of species as self-maintaining an "elaborating explanation" (Rosen, 2000:399). Similarly, as has been argued, if society is like a species then any functional claims made about society, to be explanatory, must be underpinned by an elaborating explanation similar to that of Darwinian theory in the natural sciences. This chapter will investigate whether the theory of ideology provides an elaborating explanation to support its functional claims.

As argued in the previous chapter, to speak of *the* theory of ideology is an oversimplification. Rather, there exists a collection of explanatory models that fall within this general framework. Part of Rosen's project is the isolation of various models of ideology in Marx's work. He concludes that these models are all wanting for a variety of reasons. It is the third model the "Functionalist Model" of the theory of ideology that Rosen identifies that I am interested in, namely, Marx's functional explanation of ideology (Rosen, 1996:222). In the conclusion of the previous chapter I argued that the concept 'ideology' was essentially a functional matter. In order to make sense of the claim that individuals suffer from ideological consciousness because it is necessary for

social reproduction, an outline of the *mechanism* explaining the connection between the belief system and oppressive society is necessary. Thus, a 'model' of a theory of ideology will be understood as an outline of the mechanism by which ideological phenomena are identified and explained in an attempt to provide an empirically well-specified account, that is, connecting *explanans*[18] *and explanandum*[19] by means of a plausible explanatory connection (Rosen, 1996: 168). What will be investigated in this chapter is the adequacy of the explanation provided by the functionalist model of the theory of ideology. This clearly involves some analysis of what it means to explain (that is, how to explain) in addition to establishing what counts as a good explanation.

I shall focus on a critical account of one of the explanatory models that is articulated in the writings of Marx[20]. Rosen called this model the "functionalist model" of the theory of ideology[21]. According to him this model is unsatisfactory because of its ontological commitments, specifically the idea that societies are self-maintaining entities (Rosen, 1996a:227). Furthermore, he argues that the conception of society that is assumed by the functionalist model is not supported by a plausible elaborating explanation (Rosen, 1996:258). Rosen (1996a:227) contends that trying to construct a theory of ideology along lines strictly parallel to the natural sciences – the interpretation of the idea of a correspondence between base and superstructure in terms of functional explanation – falls short of what is needed to sustain it.

It will be argued in this chapter that much of the criticism raised against the functionalist model and the functionalist explanation is valid. However, Rosen's critique misses one explanatory programme of a functionalist cast. The functionalist model of the theory of ideology understood under this programme is of some importance for social science because functionality can serve an explanatory role in determining why certain phenomena, for example ideology, are deeply embedded in society. Before I look at what I consider to be a valid functionalist explanatory programme, I will provide a brief discussion of Rosen's critique of the functionalist model of the theory of ideology.

---

[18] The *explanans* is whatever it is – theory or something different – that we think is going to do the explaining (Rosen, 1996:4). For example, the theory of ideology is considered to be the *explanans*.

[19] The *explanadum* is what is supposed to be explained, for example, relations of domination (Rosen, 1996:4).

[20] It should be noted that the theory of ideology in the sense presented here is that of Marx, who is considered the founder of the theory of ideology (Rosen, 1996a: 210).

[21] In *On Voluntary Servitude* Rosen also refers to this model as the "Correspondence Model" of the theory of ideology.

2. Functionalist Model of the Theory of Ideology[22]

What is the functionalist model of the theory of ideology? One of the possible ways to explain ideology is to try to establish what *function* it has in the social order. This question involves finding out what *determines* the existence and prevalence of ideology. Several social scientists have argued that the kind of explanation provided by the theory of ideology is a type of functional explanation. Cohen (1978:278) argues that Marxian explanations are functional, and concedes that there has been debate this between Marxists and non-Marxist social scientists. Functional explanation will be defended in the following sections by arguing, contrary to its critics, that it is explanatory because it provides a basis – albeit an assumptive basis – for explaining the necessary social processes, for example, ideological consciousness (Petit, 1996:300). It will be concluded that functional explanation has intellectual validity and value because it is at the foundation of what I will term a macro-foundational account of ideology. The theory of ideology will be reformulated as a macro-foundational account of ideology that provides social theorists with a way of understanding a wide range of social phenomena, including ideology, in terms of the part they play in the totality that is society. This section provides an account of the functionalist model of the theory of ideology.

The main elements of this model of the theory of ideology are drawn from the preface that Marx wrote in 1859 for his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. The major contributor to this model is G.A. Cohen. In his book *Karl Marx's Theory of History: a Defence* he developed a sophisticated account of the functionalist model of the theory of ideology. Cohen's analysis of the correspondence between base and superstructure, in terms of functional explanation, is the most defensible form of this model and will therefore be discussed in great detail in what follows. Cohen (1978:264) defends the functionalist model on the grounds that the theory corresponds to the kind of explanation that is regarded as quite unproblematic in Darwinian biology.

---

[22] We distinguish 'functionalism' from 'functional explanations' in the social sciences (Kincaid, 1990, Cohen, 1978) to avoid their confusion, which has in the past hampered the critique of the functionalist model of ideology. Functionalism is a specific sociological theory, best seen as a particular application of functional explanations (Kincaid, 1990:343). In agreement with Cohen (1978:284), the theory of ideology can assert functional explanations and reject the doctrine of functionalism. This is because functionalism is conservative in its view that all elements of social life (for example, ideology) support or reinforce the whole society, which is in fact to say that every element in the 'status quo' becomes functional simply because it is present. Cohen (*ibid.*) argues that if everything serve a useful purpose or was indeed indispensable then there would be no scope for desirable social change. This claim is in my opinion counter to functional explanation in historical materialism, which predicts large-scale social transformation (*ibid.*).

Rosen (1996:184) argues that Cohen's analysis is valuable because it takes up the challenge of trying to demonstrate that Marx can redeem the claims he makes for his theory of history *without* needing special assumptions about the kinds of entities or forms of explanation employed. In Marx's theory of history, what kinds of entities does Marx invoke as basic? According to Rosen (1996:184), in the social sciences the sorts of entities that theories postulate are by no means uncontroversial. Indeed, one of the disputes within the literature on the philosophy of social science is about, "what should figure in the ontology of social explanation"(*ibid.*). Is it therefore possible that Marx's view of history—following a path through stages and the understanding of societies as systems, held together by some inner principle—can be defended as unobjectionable from the point of view of scientifically informed secular materialism? Is it possible to construct social scientific theories according to methodological standards that are justified by their acceptance elsewhere? Rosen (1996:222), in contrast to Cohen, argues that it cannot. He (1996:6) maintains that Cohen's reconstruction achieves the opposite of what Cohen is trying to claim and that there is, in fact, a great distance between the methodological assumptions and standards of evidence that apply in the physical sciences and in evolutionary biology (Rosen, 1996:6). According to Elster (1985:463), "functional analysis ... has no place in the social sciences, because there is no sociological analogy to the theory of natural selection." Elster (1985:463) is therefore sceptical of the claims Cohen makes concerning the relationship between functional explanation and historical materialism. Becker (1988:869), in addition, argues that Cohen fails to defend Marx's main claims and "does no more than attempt to bring about the Marxian claims into a certain type of coherence." Cohen (1980:129), however, contends, "there is no viable alternative construal of the central claims of historical materialism" and that should his defence fail, historical materialisms as such fails. Despite Cohen's (1980:129) confidence, there are alternative explanations of historical materialism and there is a great deal of disagreement over whether his version of historical materialism is indeed Marx's theory of history[23]. Since the concern here is with Cohen's theory of functional explanation, his views of the nature of historical materialism are of interests only in so far as they illuminate his discussion of functional explanation.

[23] See Richard Miller, "Productive Forces and the Forces of Change: A review of Gerald A, Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense*", The Philosophical Review, 90, 1, 1981.

In the Preface to the *Contribution* Marx writes that

> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations ... namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness... . Changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformation it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of the natural sciences, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.

According to Cohen (1978: 279), if one were to follow the explanatory ties as Marx has laid down, the best account of the nature of the tie is that it is a functional one. This functional relationship is best understood by an organic analogy. In an organism, some parts play a more decisive role of maintenance. Yet, those parts stand in "internal relations with one another" (Rader, 1979:56), as in the hierarchical structure where the heart is more immediately important that the kidneys in the maintenance of the human body. This is not to say that the heart and the kidneys are not in some way interrelated; if the kidneys were to fail this would have fatal consequences the human body including the heart. The claim is that there is a total functional integration in which each part of the organism is what it is because of its relations to other parts and to the organism as a whole. Similarly, it is possible to argue as Marx does that one should see society in its totality. Marx identifies the base as playing a more decisive role than the superstructure in the maintenance of a particular society. In addition, to avoid the criticism of reductionism that has been read into Marxism, the relationship between the base and superstructure can also be construed as one of internal relatedness (*ibid.*:54). Hence, as Marx identified, during the "Middle Ages the feudal system was the more determinant but religion was the more dominant among the effects in the psychological and cultural life of the people" (*ibid*:78). This is not, as some critics of Marxism have claimed, to suggest that Marx viewed the economic structure alone as explaining the Middle Ages. Rather, as elements within an organic whole, the correspondence between the ideas of a society are constantly interacting and interweaving with the economy of that particular society (*ibid.*). To summarise, the explanatory tie that Cohen identifies is one in which the correspondence between the relations of production and the forces of production is "dialectically interactive, being cause-and-effect of one another" (*ibid.*). To a large extent Cohen's interpretation of this notion of correspondence is in terms of another part of

Marx's theory — the correspondence between the relations of production and forces of production. He believes, however, that what he has to say holds, *mutatis mutandis,* for base and superstructure (Rosen, 1996:185).

Before examining the functionalist theory of ideology I shall discuss briefly the debate about whether or not ideology should be considered as part of the 'superstructure' which corresponds to the economic 'base'. Plamenatz (1963:323) argues that the above-mentioned quote by Marx is highly obscure and that Marx seems to be saying that within the superstructure there are forms of consciousness that are ideological and others that are not. However, it also seems that Marx is arguing "the *entire* superstructure is ideological" (*ibid*:*325*). The confusion on whether or not ideology should be considered part of the superstructure is due to the way in which Marx uses the word ideological. Some Marxists say that when referring to the entire superstructure as ideological, Marx is using the term ideological to mean "all theories and doctrines which are not scientific, and also all normative concepts" (Plamenatz, 1963:324). For Marx the key function of ideology is to support interests and, therefore, it is ultimately class-based. Thus, the rules of moral and legal conduct that support what would otherwise be illegitimate social entities would be considered ideological. Plamenatz's (1963:329) main concern is his view that it cannot be the case that *all* legal and moral concepts are ideological. In other words, there will be moral and legal beliefs that do not function to support illegitimate societies. However, this objection does not hold force because these moral and legal beliefs would not be considered ideological given the definition of ideology as set out in the previous chapter.

Cohen (1978:21) argues that there is a distinction between the superstructure and ideology. In his view the superstructure consists of institutions, such as universities, but does not include knowledge, since knowledge is not an institution. Cohen (1978:21) therefore concludes that "ideology, on the other hand, is also not an institution, but like science, a set of ideas." Rosen, (1996:185) is not convinced, and says that he does not see why the superstructure is not ideological in its entirety, despite there being ideological consciousness outside of the superstructure. There is little agreement among Marxist scholars. Nevertheless, the issue of how to interpret the claim that ideology is derivative or determined arises whatever view one takes of the nature of the elements of historical materialism (Meyerson, 1991:17). Suffice it to say that the implications of this debate will become more apparent once the functional explanation has been set out.

2.1. Functional explanation

Cohen outlines the key points of Marx's "Preface" as follows:

> Now relations of production are said to *correspond* to the level of development of the productive forces and in turn to be a *foundation* on which a superstructure rises. (Cohen, 1982:485)

The economic base explains the nature of the production relations, and those in turn explain the character of the superstructure that is co-present with them. Cohen (*ibid.*) argues that the kind of explanation ventured here is a species of functional explanation. This is a distinctive explanatory procedure where reference to the effects of phenomena contributes to its explanation. For example, the superstructure functions to support the relations of production and as a result is as it is because of the effect it has in stabilising economic structures (Becker, 1988:870). In order to explain how the economic structure can have such an effect on the superstructure a subtle and complex theory of causality is required. It is therefore argued that functional explanation is "a *special* type of causal explanation ... deriving its peculiarity from generalisations of distinctive logical form" (Cohen, 1978:250). Cohen defines a functional explanation as follows:

> Functional explanation is an explanation in which a dispositional fact explains the occurrence of the event-type mentioned in the antecedent of the hypothetical specifying the disposition. (Cohen, 1982:486)

The hypothetical generalisation, according to Cohen (1978:259), must be a matter of law. He explains that in a functional explanation it is a *consequence* law – a universal conditional statement whose antecedent is a hypothetical causal statement – that makes it explanatory (*ibid.*).

It is functional explanation in biological science that offers the obvious model with which to think about such explanations in social science (Petit, 1996:292). In biology the question arises as to why we find such a trait in this or that sort of organism. For example, why do giraffes have long necks? The answer given is that the trait serves a certain function: it makes it easy to find food. The very fact of serving such a function, of conferring the sort of benefit in question on its bearers, is meant to explain why the trait is found in individuals of the relevant type. In social science the aim of functional explanation is to explain why certain social traits are to be found in this or that society or institution just as the biological analogue explains why certain traits are to be found in this or that species or population.

An example from social science where a functional explanation could be employed, would be to answer the question posed by Reich,[24] "W*hy* do the majority of those who are hungry not steal?" Cohen (1978:251) refers to this type of question as a *why-question* and the answer to it would be considered a *why-explanation.* In contrast, there are also *what-questions,* which refer to not wanting to know why a trait or institution is the way that is, but rather to what it is. For example, if someone were to ask why the computer keyboard is shaped the way it is, a possible answer could list the utility of having an ergonomically shaped keyboard without exploring the actual existence of that type of keyboard. However, it is possible that a satisfactory answer to a what-question may also be a correct reply to a why-question. For example, if it were asked, "What is the purpose of the shape of a keyboard?" the response offered may be that it protects individuals who use the keyboard from hurting their wrists. Such a response aids explaining the existence of that type of keyboard. Cohen argues that why-explanations carry with them commitments and liabilities of a certain kind which are absent when answering a what-question only. If Cohen is correct, what would then constitute a genuine explanation?

Cohen (*ibid.* :251-253) maintains, contra theorists like Hempel and Wright, that what constitutes a genuine explanation has a lot to do with our understanding of what explanations are meant to do. For Cohen, 'to explain' means "quite simply, to make clear, so that to explain why is to make clear why, to explain what is to make clear what, etc." Thus, according to Cohen, functional explanations purport to answer why-questions and will therefore be considered genuine explanations if they successfully make clear why certain phenomena perform the functions that they do. In addition, Cohen (*ibid*:253) maintains that functional explanations answer why-questions under certain conditions and not by virtue of their meaning. It is important to understand how Cohen defends functional explanation in light of his understanding of what constitutes a genuine explanation.

Functional explanation, Cohen argues, "is very roughly, an explanation in which an event, or whatever else, if there is anything else that can have an effect is explained in terms of its effect."

[24] In Rosen (1996:1).

There are two elements central to a functional explanation:

> 1) For one phenomenon, A, to be functionally explained by another, B, is to suggest that A should be appropriate or (be good for, promote) B; and
> 2) That A should have come about *because* it is good for B. (Rosen, 1996:185)

From the above we can say that A has the effect *x* (being good for or promoting B) but it should be noted that we are not maintaining that A occurred because *x* occurred. Cohen (1982:485) argues that this would render functional explanation no different from ordinary causal explanation. Kincaid (1990:343) argues that the real issue about functional explanation is that it concerns assertions whose practices exist in order to promote their effects and not just that practices have effects. In addition, the form of explanation is not "A occurred because it caused *x*." Cohen (*ibid*:486) argues that we would be faced with similar constraints on explanation and time order rule. For example, by the time A has caused *x*, A has occurred, so the fact that it caused *x* could not explain A's occurrence. As we have seen, the explanation of the correspondence between the base and the superstructure is not an ordinary causal explanation, but something very different because if it were not, it would have the fatal defect of treating an effect as a cause (*ibid*:261).

The above explanation does not rely on such a generalisation, where the resulting benefit or promotion of B rendered by A explains the existence of A. Instead, a dispositional fact about A and B explains A, that if A *were* to occur, it *would* benefit or promote B. In other words, the form this type of functional explanation takes it that A occurred because it *would* cause *x*. Cohen (1982:486) explains it as follows, "[A] occurred because the situation was such that an event of type *A* would cause an event of type *X*." Hence what does the explaining is the "dispositional fact ... of the event type mentioned in the antecedent of the hypothetical specifying the disposition" (*ibid.*). Therefore, what justifies a functional explanation for Cohen (*ibid.*) is what he refers to as *consequence laws*.

Kincaid (1990:344) argues that for Cohen functional explanations are a subspecies of consequence explanations – explanations that explain causes by their consequences. Cohen (1978:259) outlines what the 'truth conditions' are of what he calls *consequence explanations*. He argues that what makes the citation of consequences explanatory, be they beneficial or not, is "when it relates to a

consequence law in whatever way an explanatory precedence-statement[25] relates to a pertinent law" in ordinary causal explanations. It should be noted that if all consequence explanations were functional explanations, then it is possible that a functional explanation could articulate dysfunctionality, for example, if the consequence in question leads to the dissolution of the relevant social system or organism. Cohen (*ibid*:264) therefore concludes that "the fact, if it is a fact, that all plausible consequence explanations are functional explanations, does not tell against an account of the structure of functional explanation which abstracts from its functional character." In other words, functional explanations are therefore not only those consequence explanations in which the occurrence of the *explanandum* event (possession of the *explanandum* property, and so on.) is functional for an entity; it may turn out to be dysfunctional for that very entity (Smith, 1984:515).

Cohen, however, does concede that this depends on the background against which consequence explanation is offered. In biology or anthropology or economics it is a conception of species or societies or economic units as self-maintaining and self-advancing. Cohen contends, "Consequence explanations are accordingly accepted only when they are also functional explanations." Hence, if we had a background belief that views entities as self-destructive we would then accept consequence explanations only, in this instance, if they explain dysfunction. Consequently, according to Cohen (1978:264), such explanations would be called "dysfunctional explanations". The implication of this is that we can make sense of the view that a set of beliefs may serve the function of undermining a society and thereby being dysfunctional for the society. Furthermore, this dysfunction is in some way explanatory of why those beliefs are held.

Cohen (*ibid.*:260), however, does argue that the truth about what makes precedence-statements explanatory is complex. His argument is that he can only claim "that a *generalisation*[26] makes a precedence-statement explanatory", yet *how* it does is (even more) debatable. For Cohen, a consequence law relevant to the explanation of an event (as opposed to, for example, the explanation of an object's having a certain property) takes this form:

---

[25] Cohen (1978:253) defines a precedence-statement as follows: "a *precedence-statement* says of one event that it preceded another event."

[26] The generalisation must be a matter of law. Cohen (1978:259) argues that it is widely recognised that the law need not be known for the precedence-statement explanation to be true and justified; that it may admit to exceptions; that it may relate event-types individuated by descriptions other than those used in the precedence-statement to identify the particular events: the generalisation conferring explanatory role on 'f preceded e' is rarely 'whenever (an event) F occurs, (an event) E occurs.'

> IF it is the case that if an event of type E were to occur at *t*1, then it would bring about an event of type F at *t*2,
> THEN an event of type E occurs at *t*3. (*ibid.*)

Cohen (1978:260) argues that should you delete 'IF' and you replace 'THEN' with 'IF', you obtain the form of a consequence law that states the necessary condition of the occurrence of an event of a certain type. However, it may be difficult to 'know' this. Cohen also argues that, contrary to what is sometimes said, this does not purport to explain causes by effects. Hence he is trying to defend functional explanation from the criticism that it allows for 'backward causation' (Meyerson, 1991:32). Cohen's defence is valid because he argues that what does the explaining is not the resulting effect but rather a previously existing disposition.

The statements above are not *ordinary* causal explanations and as discussed, what does the explaining is the dispositional fact about the event. Cohen (1978:260) is therefore confident that effects cannot precede causes. An example from Cohen (*ibid*:261) is the performance of a rain dance by a community. One could ask why it is that a community would perform a rain dance. The answer often cited is to re-enact social cohesion. The explanatory value of consequence explanations is, according to Cohen (*ibid*:262), that it is explanatory to cite the effect of the rain dance (social cohesion) not because its effect explains it, but because "*it had that effect that allows us to infer that the condition of the society was such that a rain dance would have increased its social cohesion, and it is implied that the inferable conditions occasioned the performance of the dance*". Cohen (*ibid.*) concedes that it might not be easy to know the generalisation. He (*ibid.*) asserts that it "is a question about explanation in general how to back up a particular explanatory claim when it is not supported by an easily recovered generalisation." Cohen argues that it is often the case in the natural sciences that one can be *certain* that a phenomena *p* explains a phenomena *y* and yet unclear *how* it explains it. Rosen (1996:190), however, is not satisfied with Cohen's analysis of consequence explanations and argues that it is more problematic for functional explanation than Cohen acknowledges. This leads to what I have identified as the first criticism of functional explanation, namely that it denies that such claims have adequate evidence to confirm them.

2.2. The Confirmation of Functional Explanation

In his book, *Karl Marx's Theory of History,* Cohen argues that:

> The confirmation of consequence explanations and laws raises no unusual problems. To stick to simplifying the statement, the law-statement (and hence explanation it would support) is confirmed by instances satisfying its major antecedent and consequent, and disconfirmed by instances satisfying its major antecedent only. A complication arises in assessing whether the major antecedent is satisfied, since it attributes a dispositional property. We therefore confront the problem of counterfactuals, but not in any novel way. (Cohen, 1978: 190)

In order to establish that an ideology A has come about *because* it benefits the base, B, we must establish a law—one that relates to A's disposition to B with A's existence. To put it differently, the law must show that when A would be useful or serve its function, A comes to exist. In Rosen's (1996:190) view, Cohen contends that consequence explanation does not have to contradict the very simplest empiricist account of the relationship between evidence and theory. We should look at cases where there is both A and B confirming the supposition (that A has come about *because of* B), and cases where there is B but not A disconfirming it (*ibid.*). Rosen (*ibid.*) outlines that structure as follows:

> Fact 1: An ideology, A, exists.
>
> Fact 2: A benefits the base, B.
>
> The consequence law: Fact 1 comes about *because of* Fact 2. That is, Fact 2, *hence* Fact 1.

According to Kincaid (1990:344), a functional explanation is an explanation that invokes a particular sort of consequence law as seen above. For Kincaid, (*ibid.*) a consequence law is a correlation between A and its disposition to B. In order to confirm the consequence law we need to show that A causally contributes to B (by supporting it or promoting it). If we are able to do this then we have initial evidence that A exists because of its function. However, Rosen argues that there is still something lacking in this explanation. Evidence is still required of how it is that Fact 2 explains Fact 1. In Darwinian biology the evidence for Fact 2 (in this case, a trait Y benefits organism X) is provided by the theory of natural selection. That evidence comes from establishing inheritance.

The question Cohen then asks is how it could be determined that Fact 2 is true without Fact 1 also being true? The reason he asks this is because Fact 2 is the major antecedent and the consequence law would be disconfirmed in the case where Fact 2 is true, but the consequence, Fact 1, is not. It would seem that it is possible to state that

one situation is good for another situation when that first situation itself does not obtain. The problem, however, is that this seems to be an absurd claim to make. It should be noted that this would only be the case if it were taken that the explanation provided was of some particular ideological belief. According to Rosen (1996:190), the consequence laws in question allow for the explanation of *certain kinds* of belief held in *certain kinds* of situations in terms of the benefit they would bring. This does not seem to differ from any other scientific hypothesis. I would argue that we can confirm hypotheses about such benefits in general, even though there may be cases in which those kinds of beliefs do not obtain (*ibid*:191).[27]

2.2.1. Rosen's Critique of the Scope of the Consequence Law

How are we to determine the scope of the supposed law? Rosen (1996:191) critiques Cohen's account of the confirmation of consequence explanations and argues that Cohen does not adequately show what counts as an explanation. Furthermore, the theory of ideology relies on a 'just-so' story (a hypothetical dispositional fact) and does not provide for the kind of evidence that a natural scientist would find acceptable (*ibid*:271). We are concerned with the laws that make the explanation valid in the particular case, such as why a particular ideology exists. It would seem that Cohen is dismissing this requirement. Cohen, it could be argued, wants to claim that functional explanation has predictive power that reaches far beyond its function in any particular explanation. However, this is problematic, for how are we to then make sense of the particular situation? Perhaps the supposed law should be understood to imply:

> that *whenever* a form of consciousness, A, would benefit a social structure, B, then that form of consciousness will obtain—that South African whites will believe *whatever* would favour apartheid. (*ibid.*:191)

This, yet again, would be absurd because an incalculable number of beliefs *would* benefit the established social order. The South African whites could in fact, believe that aliens have taken over the government and hence that it is impossible to change the government. Would the theory of ideology then be empirically disconfirmed when the hypothesised beliefs do not in fact obtain? Rosen (*ibid.*) concludes that surely

---

[27] Cohen (1978:262) says that once we have a consequence law-statement relevant to the explanatory claim the result is that the explanation is not, in fact, supported by a law so neatly generalising it. He does argue. however, that it is for simplicity of presentation that he presents his account in this way. For example, Jane taking too many sleeping pills may explain her being asleep for twenty-four hours even though not everyone who takes too many sleeping pills will sleep for that long. It would then be false to say that whenever somebody takes too many sleeping pills they will sleep for twenty-four hours.

an advocate of the theory of ideology would not want to defend it in this absurd form. What then would an advocate of the theory of ideology *want* to claim?

One possibility would be to examine only those observed cases where the form of consciousness is *prima facie* beneficial to the social structure. Rosen (*ibid.*) argues that this is still unsatisfactory because the theory of ideology becomes unfalsifiable yet again, "for the evidence used to assess it is just restricted to those cases in which by assumption it is observationally confirmed." Rosen (*ibid.*:190) would like to understand how he could tell that it is true that one state is good for another state when that first state itself does not obtain. Again, what would be the scope of the supposed law? To illustrate, suppose that the sort of consequence explanation that Cohen is trying to defend is of this form:

> The bourgeois media report industrial conflicts in a style which favours the capitalist class *because* that style of reportage has the asserted tendency. (Cohen, 1972:271)

What then is the scope of the law of which this is supposed to be an instance? Would the scope of the law be about reporting of industrial disputes or about reporting in general? It would seem important to know the scope in advance in order to determine whether it is in fact the case that the media behaves this way (Rosen, 1996:191). Rosen concludes that this is indeed a problem for the theory of ideology, especially as the notion of 'benefit' is left so imprecise. How are we then to establish that the existence of A *would benefit* B? In other words, we cannot solely rely on those observed cases to confirm consequence explanation, because we are already establishing the point as unfalsifiable by virtue of our evidence and observation. Rosen (*ibid.*) concludes that if "the theory of ideology is to be tested by observation, then the scope of the conjecture must be determined in a way that is independent of the test." This is problematic since the evidence required to establish the relationship between A and B is not between 'natural kinds' (for example, lightning — thunder; fire — smoke) but between two kinds of facts, one of which is a hypothetical dispositional i.e. that the existence of A *would benefit* B (*ibid*: fn 191).

The discussion of Cohen's consequence explanation so far, according to Rosen (*ibid.*:192), has been in terms that correspond to the "empiricist account of 'induction'– the idea that theories are vindicated by the accumulation of confirming instances in the absence of unexplained contrary evidence." This is not the only way to test a theory. Another possible way is that of inference to the best explanation. Rosen (1996:192)

argues that a theory is accepted because it is agreed that there is something that requires explanation and the candidate theory does a better job than any other at explaining it. In other words, theorists have recognised that the beliefs held by the oppressed play a role in their oppression and that this is something that requires explanation. Could it be that the theory of ideology is the 'best' explanation than any other at explaining such phenomena? Rosen (*ibid.*) argues that the theory of ideology is not the only theory to explain domination in society. Hence, he does not think that inference to the best explanation will help save the theory of ideology.

An example will help to clarify this point. A leopard's spots seem to be a clear case of something that needs explanation—it is very difficult to believe that leopards just happen to have spots. Rosen (1996:192) argues that the question then is, "of the possible explanations of [the leopard's spots] available, which deals best with the phenomenon?" Rosen (1996:192) maintains that it is of course Darwin's theory of evolution. The reason why the theory of evolution deals best with the phenomena is because it answers the correlative question: *How* did it come about that leopards have spots? The theory of natural selection provides the answer in terms of genetic inheritance, differential survival, and so on. Furthermore, this explanation allows for the justification of the belief that species have the characteristics they do because those characteristics are of some benefit to them (Rosen, 1996a:215). As argued, Cohen's version of functional Marxism appeals to an analogy with Darwinism to defend functional explanation. Cohen (1978:271) argues that Darwin's theory provides a compelling account of why functional explanations apply in natural sciences. If, as Cohen claims, it is legitimate to view societies as self-maintaining, he says, we have a strong presumption in favour of the existence of the kind of mechanism that must be supposed by the theory of ideology. In other words, by viewing society this way, a process akin to the process of natural selection could be provided to support the claims made for a functionalist model of ideology and for functional explanation in social theory. Rosen would agree with Cohen if such a process could be identified, which he disputes because he is sceptical that social science has an explanation that has explanatory powers similar to that of natural selection in the hard sciences. It will be useful to turn to this account.

2.2.2. A Darwinian Model of Ideology

Cohen and other theorists have argued that functional explanation in the biological sciences is the best model on which to draw in order to defend such explanations in social science (Petit, 1996:292). Rosen argues (1996:192) that a comparison with Darwinian biology may help to clarify what sort of mechanism the theory of ideology would have to suppose. According to Rosen (1996:258), the theory of ideology is insufficient because it suffers from metaphysical difficulties, namely the 'background belief' that societies are self-maintaining. This is something of an exaggeration; it will be argued that a Darwinian/Marxist/functionalist theory of ideology can be defended without the background assumption that societies are self-maintaining systems (Wolff, 1996:238). To a large extent, Rosen's criticism of the theory of ideology is based on an assumption that the theory purports to explain the existence of ideology. If, as Rosen claims, the functionalist model does purport to explain the existence of ideology in the absence of an elaborating explanation, it will have to be rejected. Furthermore, Wolff (*ibid.*:241) argues that, given competing explanations of why domination occurs in society, the main premise of the theory of ideology is false, namely, that illegitimate societies survive only as a result of ideology. Nevertheless it will be argued that the theory of ideology, along with the theory of natural selection, does not purport to explain existence of ideological beliefs or, in the case of the latter, the existence of biological traits or characteristics, and therefore it can constitute a form of genuine explanation.

The point is that even if there is no *a priori* reason to believe that any given, stable, though illegitimate, society is supported by ideological consciousness, the possibility of ideological consciousness being a part of the explanation of the persistence of a society, and consequently, the persistence of the ideological beliefs in question is not ruled out. Wolff (1996:241) contends that ideological consciousness might be one among a number of factors that explains the persistence of illegitimate societies. Following from this, it may be argued that in other societies ideological consciousness may have no role to play whatsoever in their persistence. Wolff (*ibid.*:235) argues that Rosen overestimates the force of his objection against the theory of ideology. The theory of ideology can be vindicated since it does provide an explanation of how it is that societies generate beliefs which do not challenge their legitimacy (*ibid.*:241).

Cohen (1978:271) argues that among Darwin's achievements was an attractive theory of how the existence of a species' characteristics is explicable in terms of their benefit to the species. Rosen (1996:192) outlines Darwinian theory as having four elements:

> 1) the observation that species have certain peculiar characteristics;
> 2) the hypothesis that those characteristics further the welfare of the species in the environment in which it finds itself;
> 3) the hypothesis that the species have those characteristics precisely *because* they further its welfare;
> 4) the hypothesis that there exists a mechanism – natural selection – which ensures that, over time, species come to acquire characteristics which further their welfare.

What makes Darwinian theory convincing is the fourth element – the process of natural selection as the mechanism behind 'evolution' (*ibid.*). Or rather, as Cohen (1978:271) argues, it is the principle of genetic variation that is the mechanism behind natural selection, a concept which draws upon knowledge of genetics unavailable in Darwin's time. According to Rosen *(ibid.:* 193), Cohen argues that the idea that species have the characteristics they do because those characteristics are functional for the species, should be detached from the theory of natural selection. The role of natural selection is that it helps to explain why elements 1 through to 3 above are true. In other words, natural selection helps to acknowledge the explanatory relevance of what Cohen terms the "dispositional features" that have been emphasised (Cohen, 1978: 271).

Scientific explanations, according to Cohen, are offered in the context of a background of ontological beliefs. Rosen (1996:193) agrees with this formulation, because it is these beliefs and commitments that enable us to judge whether or not a purported explanation can be accepted as truly explanatory. For Rosen and Cohen, the 'background' beliefs behind a theory include beliefs about the nature of what is under investigation and the mechanism by which the phenomena to be explained are connected. That the theory should do justice to such beliefs is a necessary condition for what is accepted as a satisfying explanation. For the theory of natural selection, it helps to explain how it is that the functional explanation of biological phenomena can meet these conditions (*ibid.*:194). Rosen is sceptical that there is a theory akin to natural selection in social science to help explain how it is that a functional explanation of social phenomena, such as ideology, can meet the necessary conditions for what is accepted as a satisfying explanation.

Illustrating the above argument are Newton's laws of motion. Cohen (1978: 264) argues that despite their theoretical economy and predictive success, they were not regarded as explanatory because, although structurally sound, they were materially inadequate for explanation. The reason for this was, for example, that "the presuppositions of early modern physics ... included a principle forbidding action at a distance" (*ibid.*). Once the restrictive presuppositions were abandoned, it could be argued that Newton's laws were explanatory (*ibid.*).

Cohen (*ibid.*) therefore argues, by analogy, that the structural and material aspects of functional explanation may be distinguished. Even if the material aspects of functional explanation are not set out this does not undermine the account of the structural aspects. Cohen (*ibid.*) says that the background for an *elaboration* of the claims he is making and which enables him to assume a mechanism akin to the theory of natural selection "is a conception of species or societies or economic units as self-maintaining and self-advancing." Rosen is sceptical that there is any reason to believe that societies are self-maintaining and self-advancing. He (1996:194) asserts that Cohen's example from Newton illustrates this. He questions, "if it is the case that the background beliefs condition what we require from an empirical explanation, what is to govern our background beliefs themselves?" Rosen, in his discussion of functional explanation, argues that a discussion about what lay behind the adoption of the theory of evolution can assist in understanding the adoption of the theory of ideology.

According to Rosen (1996:194), there were various reasons why it took so long for the theory of evolution to be developed or, alternatively, accepted. These reasons are closely linked to the philosophical debates surrounding the metaphysics of causality. Rosen (*ibid.*) explains that Kant highlighted the problem that the discovery of evolution presented, which had to do with accommodating two contending ideas (*ibid.*). One idea was that one had to reject the doctrine of preformation -- the idea that whatever structured product emerges from a biological process of generation, must have been prefigured or preformed in the parent that gave rise to it. Another idea -- that 'lifeless' matter can give rise to what is structured and self-maintaining – also seemed to be problematic. According to Rosen (*ibid:*195), Kant argued that the theory of evolution contradicts what philosophers believe about causality. The theory of evolution seemed to be arguing that life began from what was essentially lifeless and was then able to ensure that it could become structured and self-maintaining. It is possible to understand

Darwin's breakthrough as a philosophical one because he was willing to ignore the received view about the nature of causal processes which had prevented his predecessors from accepting the phenomenon of evolution (*ibid.)*. Rosen is unlikely to disagree with Cohen that there might be something deficient about our current views of the nature of social processes that like the opinions of Darwin's predecessors are preventing us from accepting a phenomenon that would enable us to understand how ideology works.

There are important parallels between the theory of ideology and Darwinism (*ibid.*:195). As was explained, Rosen's *(ibid.*:186) main argument is that the theory of ideology does not merely claim that certain beliefs exist in society that maintain the social structure but that those beliefs are there *just because* they maintain the social structure. Similarly, in Darwinism, certain traits exist *because* they further the welfare of that species. It is the theory of natural selection that allows for such claims. Hence, when it is claimed that giraffes have long necks for survival it is claimed that long necks are held to be functional because they aid in survival and that the disposition to aid in survival is regarded as offering an explanation as to why long necks are found in giraffes. Petit (1996:292) contends that the "picture of things become a plausible hypothesis under a paraphrase in terms of the mechanics of natural selection." Rosen (1996: 195) argues that the next question regarding both the theory of ideology and Darwinian theory is concerned with how those beliefs or traits come to be there. For Darwinism, as we have noted, the answer is by natural selection – genetic inheritance, differential survival, and so on. Can this then be the case for social theory? Cohen (1978 264) says that it can and claims that it is not necessary to identify a process akin to natural selection to support the claims made for functional explanation in social theory. Therefore, even in the absence of the explanation of the mechanism behind the theory of ideology, the observation of "provocative correlations between the requirements of living existence and the actual endowments of living things, correlations ... to suggest the thesis that they have those endowments because they minister to those requirements," is still possible, according to Cohen (*ibid.*). It is possible to identify the role that beliefs play in the support or promotion of the social structure of which they are a part and furthermore to assume that what is identified is explained by its advantages and is not merely a beneficial accident for the social structure.

An investigation into Cohen's argument helps to elucidate such claims. If it is legitimate to see "societies or economic units" as self-maintaining, which is how Cohen views them, then we shall have a strong presumption in favour of the existence of the kind of mechanism that must be supposed by the theory of ideology. Cohen also argues that a "satisfying elaboration provides a fuller explanation and locates the functional fact within a longer story which specifies its explanatory role more precisely" (*ibid.*:271). Furthermore, Cohen concedes that in social science such 'elaborating theories' are absent, but this does not undermine the explanatory role of functional explanations. Cohen (*ibid.*:286) argues that "it would be a mistake to refrain from taking those explanatory steps which are open to us, just because we should prefer to go farther than our current knowledge permits." Rosen does not find this problematic. He argues that we do not have to limit our explanations to cases where we can support them by means of an elaborating explanation (Rosen, 1996:196). For example, the explanation of why after spending six months taking a Xhosa course my spoken Xhosa has improved does not have to be provided with an explanation of the *mechanism* (assuming that there is one) which lets human beings to improve linguistically. It would seem that we could, as Cohen argues, use just the same reasoning in the case of society. For example, we could by analogy outline the main elements of the functionalist model of ideology in a similar way to the four elements of Darwinian theory. The crucial point is that society is viewed as a species. This 'organic' analogy supports the idea of society as a self-maintaining system.[28] The four elements would be as follows:

1) the observation that societies have certain peculiar characteristics, for example, ideological beliefs.
2) the hypothesis that those characteristics further the welfare of the societies in the environment in which a society may find itself, for example, the particular type of economic base.
3) the hypothesis that the societies have those characteristics precisely *because* they further their welfare.
4) the hypothesis that there exists a mechanism which ensures that, over time, societies come to acquire characteristics which further their welfare.

[28] The implication of this is that one could view society as having, similar to an organism, a 'natural purpose'. The various parts making up the organism are then assumed to play a role in this purpose. Thus the hypothesis that there must be a mechanism similar to natural selection that explains how it is that societies have the characteristics they do.

It is therefore the fourth element that Cohen wants to distinguish from the three above, and in the absence of knowing what the mechanism is, it is still possible to acknowledge the explanatory relevance of the above three dispositional features (Cohen, 1978:271). In other words, according to Cohen (*ibid.*:286), functional explanation can be rationally hypothesised even in the absence of an *elaboration* of the explanation.

Rosen (1996:197), on the other hand, disagrees with the stronger claim that Cohen makes, namely, that societies have the capacity to operate in ways which enable them to maintain themselves. Rosen does agree with Cohen that "we do not – should not – limit our explanations to cases where we can support them by means of an elaborating explanation" (Rosen, 1996:197). For example, it is often the case in biology that the mechanism that gives a certain trait its function may not be known, yet it is assumed that it must obtain, given that survival is the point of reference (Becker, 1988:867). What Rosen finds problematic is that there is no reason to accept the 'background belief' that societies are self-maintaining and self-advancing. Rosen disagrees with Cohen's assumption that societies operate in a similar way to organisms. The implication of this for the theory of ideology is that if societies are not like organisms then there is no point of reference (such as survival) with which to locate the mechanism in social science. In other words, in the absence of the view of society as self-maintaining we cannot hypothesise, as Cohen claims, that beliefs play a systematic role in the maintenance of illegitimate societies. For Rosen, the background belief does not belong to "an unchanging heritage of human thought about society but made its appearance within the relatively short period from Herder and Schiller to Hegel" (Rosen, 1996:258). On this basis he contests the theory of ideology's claim that illegitimate societies have a *systematic tendency* to produce ideological beliefs (Wolff, 1996:240).

2.3. Missing-Mechanism Argument

Why does Rosen disagree with Cohen? Rosen's critique of functional explanation will be referred to as the missing-mechanism critique of functional explanation (Petit, 1996: 291). As noted, the biological model of functional explanation suggests that the aim of functional explanation in social science is to explain why certain social traits are to be found in this or that society or institution, just as the biological analogue explains why certain traits are to be found in this or that species or population (Petit, 1996:293).

Rosen (1996:196) argues that if societies *do* develop beliefs that serve social interests as and when those interests require such beliefs, then why should we make our acceptance of that fact dependent on an account of how they do it? As argued, Rosen agrees with Cohen's line of reasoning, that it is possible to hypothesise functional explanations in the absence of elaborative contexts. However, Rosen (*ibid*:197) contends that Cohen is "too sanguine about this as a defence of the claims of Marxist social theory." Rosen argues that it is not just that we happen to lack, as yet, a fully satisfactory account of the elaborating explanation for the functional claims, but we also do not even have a clear idea of what such an explanation would look like. The second criticism of functional explanation in social science maintains that it is very difficult to provide a satisfactory account of the mechanism for the functional claims (Rosen, 1996:258).

For the sake of argument, Rosen says he is willing to concede that certain beliefs might exist *just because* they maintain the social structure. An obvious question is: How do they come to be there? Rosen *(ibid.:*192) holds that what is required of explanations is not just that they 'fit' the phenomena, but that the kind of entities the theory postulated should be plausible, and likewise, so should the mechanism that connects them. How should we understand the functionalist theory of ideology's claim that the function of ideological beliefs enters into the explanation of why those beliefs are held? The focus of the rest of this section will be on the second element of the functionalist explanation – that A should have come about *because* it is good for B.

Rosen claims that this second condition is not just about the persistence of A but that it explains the very existence of A. With good reason, he (*ibid.*:186), questions why the second condition should be ascribed to Marx. He argues (1996a:214) that if the theory of ideology only explained persistence then there would be something lacking, "It would simply be a happy accident (from the point of view of the existing social structure) that it should happen to produce the ideas that it needs." For Rosen (*ibid.*), the second condition must therefore, be true. Only if the ideas that help to sustain society are there because they help to sustain it, can the ideas in question be viewed as a systematic part of the way that unequal societies are able to maintain themselves. An important requirement that assists in justifying functional explanation is the identification of the mechanism that will ensure that something *will* function in the required direction. In short, there must be some sort of mechanism that explains how it is that ideological

beliefs serve to legitimate society. Rosen (1996: 189) argues, however, and Cohen concurs, that for the second element Marxism has the least evidence on its side. Nevertheless, this is not enough to warrant a rejection of the functional explanation as such. A discussion of two possible mechanisms will be provided to illustrate why functional explanation can be vindicated.

It is fairly straightforward to establish a mechanism in the case of a purposive actor. For example, railways are built to transport goods. The transport of goods is something that people want or need for their benefit. It is therefore possible to provide a functional explanation of the existence of railways. The goal of railway building and human goal-directed action is the point of reference that helps to explain the existence of railways. Becker (1988:867) argues that it is the goal and the need or want behind it that are the "*point of reference* of intended functions." Furthermore, "this point of reference is "the *explanans* in functional logic" (*ibid.*). What establishes the relation between Fact 1 (railways exist), and Fact 2 (railways benefit society) is the further elaboration – the intended needs of the individuals. The *mechanism* that ensures that functional requirements are met in the above explanation is provided by human goal-directed action (*ibid.*).

A second possible mechanism has been postulated by Marxists namely, the overt and deliberate manipulation of beliefs. For example, Thandi holds a belief *x* that helps support the ruling minority. The fact that she holds this belief goes some way to explain why she holds it. The 'point of reference', using Becker's terminology, is an external agent, Thabo who deliberately sets out to instil belief *x* by whatever means are available in the population at large because he believes it to have the effect of supporting the ruling minority (Wolff, 1996:239). Marx also articulates this view and argues, "The ideas of the ruling classes are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas'. He claims:

> the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.[29]

However, the theory of ideology, as set out, does not purport to provide a functional explanation by looking at intended functions. It claims to ascribe objective functions to social entities. In other words, the external agent is the social and economic institutions, structures, entities that make up an oppressive society. It is difficult to

[29] *The German Ideology*, 64.

believe that such a conspiracy could exist. It simply cannot be the case that everything called an ideological belief could be instilled into the individual in this way (Wolff, 1996:23). Elster (1986:108) argues that we would have to believe that men are merely 'puppets of history', simply and uncritically accepting beliefs that are against their interests to hold. On the contrary, it is difficult to deny that people – simply and uncritically – do accept beliefs that are against their interests. The conjecture, Rosen (2000:6) argues, "is why on earth those ideas *should* then be accepted by those who lose out."[30] Marx, and other advocates of this explanation, fails to address the above problem of identifying the point of reference of objective functions.

Becker (1988:867) asserts that in order for a functional explanation to hold in the absence of intended functions, an 'objective' mechanism needs to be identified. Becker (*ibid.*) argues that objective functions must show the same logical pattern as intended functions. In biology, functional explanation is tolerated because it connects fairly obviously with the theory of natural selection. Becker (*ibid.*) contends that there is no manifest intentional logic in organisms, but that we can establish an analogy to intentional logic. Organisms have a relatively fixed structure and, like elements of a machine, the different parts of an organism perform specific tasks. This is empirically testable on almost all examples of a given species. What is important is that the functions are necessary for the survival of the organism. Becker (*ibid.*) therefore concludes that in biology the survival of an organism is the point of reference. Is it possible in social theory to provide a similar analogy?

Rosen (1996:197) argues that it is not possible because there is a fundamental dissimilarity between human beings and societies. This is, however, a matter of dispute within the social sciences, between methodological individualism and sociological holism. Elster (19986:23) and Rosen (2000:6) argue that societies and the way they operate are open to dispute in a way human beings are not. Furthermore, we do not have a commonly agreed 'folk sociology' to match 'folk psychology' by which to explain people's everyday beliefs and actions. Rosen (*ibid.*) maintains that this is a question, once more, of what is to be counted as an explanation. On the one hand, explanations should be formulated in a way that is appropriate for the objects in question, on the other, any ideas about the nature of the objects themselves should respond to the

[30] Emphasis added.

evidence available about the way they behave. Rosen (1996:197) therefore questions the relationship between ontology and evidence.

Rosen (1996:199) concludes his discussion of the functionalist model of the theory of ideology by arguing that the model set out to provide an account of ideology that is secular and materialist in its ontological commitments. In addition, it supports the claim that Marxist social theory is scientific in the same way that natural sciences are. However, unlike Darwinism, Rosen (*ibid.*) argues that the 'conception of societies as self-maintaining and self-advancing', the base-superstructure account of ideology assumes, is not supported by a plausible elaborating explanation nor is the confirming evidence for the theory sufficiently compelling for us to be justified in adopting that conception of society in its absence.

2.4. Defending the Functionalist Model of Ideology

Rosen's critique of the functionalist model as set out above is valid. The theory of ideology can nonetheless be vindicated and considered a genuine explanation. If the theory of ideology were claiming that it explains the existence of ideological beliefs, i.e. that those beliefs exist *because* they help to support or stabilise the society in question, then it would have to be abandoned because it would require a further elaborating explanation of the mechanism behind the existence of the trait (Pettit, 1996:298). As Rosen, Elster, and to an extent Cohen maintain, in social science such elaborations are mostly not available. Rosen and other critics of the functionalist model of the theory of ideology have held that there is no reason in social science to accept the organicist view of society. Nevertheless, one could say that ideology can be seen in an alternative functionalist light as set out above. It will be argued that this alternative makes the theory of ideology immune to the missing-mechanism complaint (Pettit, 1996:294). The alternative would be that ideological beliefs exist and are *functional for,* but are not *functionally explained by,* the social system. In that case, the first background belief of the theory of ideology holds that illegitimate societies maintain themselves through false consciousness on the part of their citizens is true while the second background belief which states that the first is true because societies are self-maintaining systems, would be false. The implication of this would be a less ambitious theory of ideology; one that claims that the functional role of the belief need not enter into its causal genesis, but nevertheless explains its persistence. This argument can be summarised as follows: Oppressive societies *do* depend upon some form of false consciousness but there may

be no systematic explanation of why individuals come to hold beliefs that are against their interests. In agreement with Rosen, the functionalist model of the theory of ideology cannot claim that societies have a *systematic tendency* to produce ideological beliefs. In other words, societies do not, necessarily, produce the consciousness required for their preservation. Contrary to Rosen and Elster, this does not rule out ideology as being a necessary condition for the preservation of oppressive regimes. However, it does rule out the claim that ideology is an indispensable part of the reason why such societies can survive.

What does it mean to say that something is *functional for* but not *functionally explained by* the social system? As Cohen (1978:282) argued, one could identify an institution or trait that may serve a function but it is a fallacy to suppose that one has *explained* the institution or trait by its function. It is exactly on this basis that Rosen dismisses the theory of ideology. He claims that it intends to explain existence and that the theory of ideology is committed to the view that it cannot be simply a happy accident (from the point of view of the society) that ideological consciousness should happen to produce the effect that the society in question needs. It has to be the case, according to Rosen, that the second condition of the theory of ideology is true, i.e. that the ideas that help to sustain society are there because they help to sustain it. But, it is not clear why we should necessarily assume that the theory of ideology claims to explain the existence of the phenomena in question. As Wolff (1996:239) argues, Rosen fails to explain why the theory of ideology needs to be so ambitious that the functional role of the belief is part of its causal genesis.

Rosen also mistakenly attributes the same type of explanation to Darwinian theory. Darwinian biology does not purport to explain the existence of a trait or characteristic. The Darwinian account, as we have seen, provides the explanation of how the function of a trait features in the explanation of that trait but at no point does it purport to explain the existence of the trait. Meyerson (1991: 31) argues that the occurrence of the first trait, for example, the long neck in a giraffe is *not* explained by its advantages, since mutations of traits do not arise in response to an organism's needs, but satisfies them, when they do, by luck. Darwinian theory serves to identify a characteristic that now plays a systematic role in the survival of the organism in question.

Thus, according to Meyerson (*ibid.*:32), Marxism is correct in its claims that the usefulness of the beliefs of the dominated are not accidental, even in the absence of the knowledge of *how* their usefulness explains them. In addition, Marxism is entitled to this claim and is therefore still explanatory, as it has identified a phenomenon that has a systematic tendency to support illegitimate societies. It does not, as argued, have to explain the existence of ideological consciousness, as Rosen claims. Even if the existence of ideology is not illuminated by the function it serves, the functionality of ideology will still enter into the explanation of why it is so pervasive in a given oppressive society. Pettit (1996:299) argues that a functional explanation that avoids the missing-mechanism argument is explanatory because there is a phenomenon in society that warrants explanation and it is explained in terms of the function it serves. In this case, the point of reference is the fact that in oppressive regimes, the majority accept the rule of the few even when it is so plainly against their interests to do so. What is of interest to a social scientist is the great variety of phenomena in society, "which are more or less passing ephemera and which ... are deeply embedded in society" (*ibid.*).

Pettit (*ibid.*:294) provides an analogy to make sense of the functionalist explanation that is immune to the missing-mechanism complaint:

> Imagine a set-up in which a ball rolls along a straight line—this, say, under Newton's laws of motion—but where there are little posts on either side that are designed to protect it form the influence of various possible but non-actualised forces that might cause it to change course; they are able to damp incoming forces and if such forces still have an effect they are capable of restoring the ball to its original path. The posts on either side are standby causes of the ball's rolling on the straight line; they are virtual causes of the straight rolling, not factors that have any actual effect. But they can still be of explanatory relevance. (*ibid.*)

It is clear that the posts cannot explain the emergence of the straight course of the rolling ball. Pettit (*ibid.*) argues that it is Newton's laws that provide the full explanation of the ball's actual rolling. According to Pettit (*ibid*:295) the posts do not explain why the ball rolls but could feature in an explanation of why the ball continues to roll straight. This is because not only does the ball roll in a straight line in the actual scenario but the posts help to explain why, given various possible contingencies where forces might disturb the ball, it does in fact continue to roll straight (*ibid.*). The posts, explains Pettit (*ibid*:300), represent phenomena that are not merely incidental or contingent; they represent an important feature of the above scenario and thereby play an explanatory role in the explanation of the ball's behaviour.

Pettit (*ibid*:295) contends, by analogy, that we can identify the same kind of phenomena in social science. Functional explanation need not explain the emergence of ideological consciousness but rather why it persists within a given social system. Hence, once we have identified a particular phenomenon in a given society and it is agreed that this phenomenon seems to withstand various contingencies and remains characteristic of the society, we must be able to find an explanation for why it persists. Pettit (1996:296) argues that the explanation could appeal to the fact that the phenomenon serves an important function.

One could argue, for instance, that the fact that nearly all societies have some sort of religion is something that requires explanation. Cohen (1978:281-2) argues that it is not necessarily the case that a society has a religion *because* it requires one. For example, a prophet visits ten godless societies in the hope they would adopt her religion. Of the ten societies, only one adopts the prophet's religion. The reason why it does so is because the people of that society liked the look of her. Subsequently, the other nine societies perish while the newly religious society survives. It is clear from this example that the surviving society did not adopt the religion because it needed it. However, the reason why the society persisted could be because the religious beliefs of the people were functional for the survival of that society.

And so it may be possible to save the functional model of the theory of ideology. The modified functional model of the theory of ideology now allows us to make the crucial distinction between explaining the persistence of a trait or institution from explaining its presence or indeed its emergence (Pettit, 1996:297). Rosen's criticism no longer holds because the theory does not assume that the existence of ideology has been functionally explained. Rather, its persistence has been explained. In addition, it is not necessary to have a conception of society as self-maintaining in order to explain how oppressive societies survive, and ideological consciousness can still play an explanatory role in understanding relations of domination. Cohen (1978:286) argues that functional explanation has intellectual validity and value even if it is said to raise more questions than it answers. Cohen (*ibid*:283) concedes that often social scientists make the mistake of believing that if one is explaining the function of something one is *ipso facto* explaining its existence. Cohen agrees with Elsters' concern about fictitious explanations. Furthermore, social scientists often identify interesting functions associated with something but they fail to make the further claim concerning whether

what they have identified explains *why* something is as it is. This is, therefore, a critique of the work of social scientists rather than of functional explanation; hence it does not, as Rosen claims, render functional explanation non-explanatory.

3. Conclusion: Towards A Micro-Foundational Account of Ideology

In conclusion, there is no reason to accept the background belief that societies are self-maintaining. However, this does not render the theory of ideology, as reformulated, non-explanatory. As was argued, Rosen ascribes invalid ambitions to the theory of ideology. It is the case that the theory of ideology contains no satisfactory elaborating explanation to support this conception (regarding self-maintaining societies) equivalent to the account of natural selection to be found in evolutionary biology. However, as previously defended, it does not have to. In light of this it may not be possible to explain how it is that ideological beliefs come to exist, but it is possible to explain why they persist, and their persistence helps in this explanation. This is a significant research programme, despite those who argue that functional explanation is non-explanatory because it allows for a greater understanding of the (more or less) necessary features that a society displays. The theory of ideology, as set out here, cannot escape its own historical background as Rosen has argued. Nevertheless, it does provide the means with which to understand deeply embedded social phenomena. It does so, I would argue, at the level of the whole, namely, society. I would argue that the theory of ideology as formulated here is a macro-foundational account of ideology. It provides the social theorist with a way of understanding a wide range of social phenomena, including ideology, in terms of the part they play in the totality (James, 1984:84). It does not, as argued here provide an account of ideology at the level of the individuals who make up that totality. It does not explain social phenomena in terms of the properties of individuals (*ibid.*:108).

It may, therefore, be argued that the theory of ideology is not the *only* explanation available of how oppressive societies survive. Another possible explanation could be that the rule of the many by the few is not so much a matter of ideological consciousness but rather is the failure on the part of the many to take effective collective action. The next chapter will examine the so-called alternative explanations of domination, in particular those provided by Scott, Elster and Fromm. It will be argued that rather than being *alternative* explanations, these explanations provide an

elaboration of the explanation provided by the theory of ideology, thereby locating the claims made by the theory of ideology within a broader context.

Chapter 3. An Integrated Theory of Ideology

1. Towards an Integrated Theory of Ideology

I have argued, in the previous chapter, that it is not necessary to have a conception of society as self-maintaining in order to explain how certain oppressive societies are able to reproduce the beliefs, desires and so forth necessary to sustain themselves and, that ideological consciousness, as defined, can still play an explanatory role in understanding this process. Although the theory of ideology contains no satisfactory elaborating explanation of the mechanism to support its functional claims I have argued that a functional explanation does not necessarily have to do so. Thus, there was no reason to reject the theory of ideology on this basis. In fact, it was argued that the theory could be vindicated and provided the means with which to understand deeply embedded social phenomena. Rosen (1996:259) disagrees that this can be the case in the social sciences[31]. In light of Rosen's criticism of the functionalist theory of ideology, as understood by him, he argues that it is necessary to look for explanations other than the theory of ideology. In the previous chapter I showed how Rosen's critique arises as a response to the background beliefs necessary to sustain the theory of ideology. The existence of rival explanations other than the theory of ideology further undermines the supposed necessity of accepting these background beliefs. In this regard Rosen's argues that if Reich's[32] question is a genuine one and if the theory of ideology were the only plausible answer to it, it would be reasonable to allow for the assumptions on which the theory depends. The fact that reasonable and plausible alternatives exist, I would argued, undermines the validity of the assumptions and the necessity for embracing them.

---

[31] I argued in the previous chapter that Rosen agreed with Cohen, in principle, that functional explanation can be rationally hypothesised even in the absence of an elaboration of the explanation. Rosen is skeptical that this can apply in the social sciences as it does in the natural sciences because in the absence of the claim that societies are self-maintaining entities there is no reference point from which to locate the mechanism in social science. In other words Rosen questions the validity of functional explanation in social science in general.

[32] In Rosen (1996:1) "Why [do] the majority of those who are hungry [*not*] steal and why the majority of those who are exploited [*not*] strike [?]"

The two main premises of the theory of ideology can therefore be questioned; as to whether or not it is, in fact, the case that coercive societies

3) persist in virtue of false consciousness on the part of the citizens and that
4) this false consciousness persists in response to the 'needs' of the society in question?

Rosen's (1996:260) critique of the theory of ideology challenges both these claims. He argues that the ontological commitments of the two claims, that individuals suffer from ideological consciousness and that societies are self maintaining, go beyond what can be justified according to the explanatory standards of the social sciences. On the basis of this criticism he suggests that we should abandon the theory of ideology and consider alternatives to it. I do agree with Rosen that the revised theory of ideology has to identify the mechanism(s) that explains how it is that ideological beliefs serve to legitimate society. I will argue, contrary to Rosen, that the alternative explanations far from undermining the theory of ideology help to justify it by providing an explanation of the mechanism that ensures that, over time, oppressive societies acquire ideological consciousness which furthers its welfare. This chapter provides a critical account of four alternative explanations to the theory of ideology. The aim will be to argue two things. One, that, far from being alternatives, they really dovetail with and enhance the explanatory power of the theory of ideology. And two, that they can be employed in a revised application of the theory of ideology as the one suggested at the end of the previous chapter. I will show that these alternative explanations provide a micro-foundational account of ideology and thereby providing an elaboration of the macro-foundational claims made by the revised theory of ideology defended in the last chapter. I will argue that it is because these explanations serve to strengthen the theory of ideology that they should not be considered alternative explanations but rather elaborating explanations allowing for the formulation of what I will term an integrated theory of ideology.

In this chapter it will be argued that these competing explanations, which claim to be exhaustive, do not render the theory of ideology irrelevant. Rather I would argue these alternative solutions are in fact examples of the way in which the functional claims made by the theory of ideology may be elaborated. The importance of these elaborating explanations consists in providing what the theory of ideology as it is conventionally understood could not provide, namely an explanation of the mechanism that accounts for the fact that illegitimate societies persist *by virtue of false consciousness* on the part

of their citizens and, the fact that this false consciousness persists *in response to the 'needs'* of certain oppressive societies. It will be argued, that the various mechanisms discussed in this chapter allow for an integrated theory of ideology, by which I mean a theory of ideology that contains both a macro- and micro-foundational explanation of domination. In addition it will be argued that the integrated theory of ideology allows for a comprehensive understanding not only of how society sustains itself but also of the mechanism that accounts for how individuals embrace the beliefs necessary for the society to do so. These elaborating explanations provide a micro-foundational account of how the ideological beliefs in question serve the 'needs' of certain oppressive societies.

Why should a micro-foundational account be provided? This is because the theory of ideology, as defined in the conclusion of the previous chapter, is a macro-foundational explanation of domination. It does not represent a complete answer to the puzzle of domination because it does not explain how the individual members of an oppressive society come to hold ideological beliefs. A micro-foundational account of ideology will provide an explanation of why the ideological beliefs are formed at the level of the individual members of the society in question (Paprzycka, 1998:78). Rosen is correct in his criticism of the revised theory of ideology because it does not provide an explanation of the mechanism of how false consciousness contributes to the maintenance of oppressive societies at the level of the individual.

The aim of this chapter is to supplement the revised understanding of the theory of ideology as presented in the last chapter with an account of the mechanism at the individual level. This will leave us with an integrated theory of ideology that contains both a micro-, and macro-foundational explanation of domination. It will be argued that the micro-foundational accounts provided are just as incomplete as the purely macro-foundational account of theory of ideology presented in the previous chapter. The functionalist explanation of the theory of ideology should be extended to include micro-mechanisms that explain the claims made by the theory (Bohman, 1991:196). Despite the critics of the theory of ideology, the "micro-mechanism must also be related to macro level structures and forces [in order] to show how they become conditions of participation in social life" (*ibid.*). It will be argued that an integrated theory of ideology such as the one proposed here will provide critical insight into understanding relations of domination.

1.1. The Debate: Methodological Individualism *versus* Methodological Holism

Before examining the way in which an account of how individuals come to hold the beliefs they do can supplement a revised functionalist explanation, it is important to discuss briefly the debate within the social sciences around methodological individualism and methodological holism. Part of the criticism against the functionalist model of the theory of ideology was that the functional claims made by the theory were problematic in the absence of an explanation of the connection between the belief system and the oppressive society. As argued, this led Rosen to reject the theory of ideology claiming that there were competing explanations that usurp its entire explanatory worth. Part of the reason why Rosen rejected the theory is because the functionalist model of the theory of ideology does not provide a micro-foundational account of how false consciousness contributes to the maintenance of oppressive societies. In agreement with Rosen the functionalist model of the theory of ideology presented in the previous chapter lacks a satisfying elaboration of its functional facts. Rosen is mistaken in the claim that this renders the theory of ideology non-explanatory. Rather, in my opinion, a satisfying elaboration should be provided to offer a fuller explanation of the puzzle of domination. The reason why Rosen, Elster and other critics of the theory of ideology argue in favour of micro-foundational accounts is because they help to articulate the mechanism that ensures that, over time, the individuals within an oppressive society acquire ideological consciousness[33]. However, to do so does have implications for the debate on what sort of entities a theory takes to be its basic elements (Rosen, 1996:5). In this section I want to consider these implications in the context of the debate between methodological individualists and methodological holists.

Advocates of the theory of ideology have argued that the solution to the puzzle of domination is to be found at the level of the structure of society. In other words, that there is something about an oppressive society that assists in the production of 'false consciousness'. Furthermore, that this 'false consciousness' forms part of the explanation of why the society in question persists. It has been argued that the entities that the theory of ideology takes to be basic are supra-individual entities for example, 'society'. It is understood that society is an entity that is *more than the sum of its parts*—in this case the parts are human beings (Strauss, 2002:98). It was argued that the

[33] The beliefs of the individual members according to an integrated theory of ideology will also assist in furthering the society in questions welfare.

solution to the puzzle of domination lies in 'society' and that there are certain social facts which cannot be explained in terms of, or 'reduced to' facts about the individuals who make up those groups. However, critics of the theory of ideology have argued that the entities invoked by the theory are problematic. Rosen (1996:258), for instance, argues that there is no reason to accept the belief that societies in someway maintain themselves.

Elster (1986:103) argues that the theory of ideology is a "set of macrosociological generalisations about the causes of stability and change in societies." An advocate of methodological individualism, he argues that Marxist social science has by and large been in favour of methodological holism, to such an extent that "Marxist social analysis has acquired an apparently powerful theory that in fact encourages lazy and frictionless thinking" (Elster, 1982:453). The debate surrounding individualism *versus* holism in social science is unlikely to reach resolution for as Rosen (2000:5) states, the problem is a "philosophers' bugbear." In order to defend the revised theory of ideology, it is important to address the implications that this debate has for the theory. The most important of these is the assumption that only facts about individuals should be considered explanatory. In other words, an advocate of methodological individualism maintains that *no* explanations are possible except those framed exclusively in terms of individuals. Hence, the theory of ideology, by providing an explanation in terms of "wholes" (social entities such as institutions or associations, societies and so forth), will by virtue of that fact not be considered explanatory (Lukes, 1994:452).

Elster (1982:453) defines methodological individualism as "the doctrine that all social phenomena (their structure and their change) are in principle explicable in terms of individuals – their properties, goals, and beliefs." Thus the solution to the puzzle of domination for Elster would lie in the individual. Watkins (1994:442) similarly argues that the "ultimate constituents of the social world are individual people who act more or less appropriately in the light of their dispositions and understanding of their situation." Proponents of methodological individualism argue that it is not possible to understand large-scale phenomena until it is possible to provide an account of them based on statements about the dispositions, beliefs, resources, and interrelations of individuals (*ibid.*). Therefore, when a social scientist sets about trying to understand phenomena in society, he or she should look at the "nuts and bolts, the cogs and wheels" of that society (Elster, 1986:23). In addition, Elster (*ibid*:22) argues that methodological

individualism is an acceptable form of reductionism, because it enjoins social scientists to explain complex phenomena in terms of their simpler components.

Contrary to Lukes[34], Elster maintains that the doctrine of methodological individualism does not have to be linked with individualism in the ethical or political sense. According to Elster (1993:7), methodological individualism implies neither an atomistic perspective, nor egoism, nor rational choice, nor the innate character of desire, nor, finally, political individualism. The doctrine is therefore not incompatible with the view that individuals have goals that involve the welfare of other individuals and that individuals often have beliefs about supra-individual entities that are not reducible to beliefs about individuals. Finally, "many properties of individuals, such as 'powerful', are irreducibly relational, so that accurate description of one individual may require reference to other individuals" (Elster, 1982:452). Elster concludes that methodological individualism is also compatible with any political or normative orientation. Therefore, the assumption that individuals are rational and selfish is not part of the doctrine, although compatible with it. In addition, it does not have to extend into what goes on inside the people's heads. For example, the assumption that individuals suffer from false consciousness is not necessarily a part of the doctrine but could be compatible with it (Elster, 1986:23).

Methodological holism, in contrast, is the view that in social life there exist wholes or collectives, statements about which cannot be reduced to statements about the individual members (Lukes, 1994:21). Watkins (1994:442) argues that, according to methodological holism, "social systems constitute 'wholes', at least in the sense that some of their large-scale behaviour is governed by macrolaws which are essentially sociological," and hence are not to be explained at the level of the interacting individuals. It is apparent from the discussion so far that the persistence of false consciousness is closely tied to the functioning of the oppressive society in question. An advocate of methodological holism studies social institutions, societies, and so forth in order to understand human action. Lukes (1994:453) is critical of the claims made by advocates of methodological individualism, in particular the claim that any theory that purports to explain social phenomena at the level of the "whole" is not explanatory. Lukes therefore rejects the claims made by Elster and Watkins.

---

[34] Lukes (1994:453) argues that methodological individualism claims that individuals exist independently of, for example, groups and institutions.

In order to defend methodological holism, Lukes (*ibid.*) argues that it is important to examine the two main assumptions made by methodological individualism. The first is that there are facts about individuals that we can have knowledge of and that only a theory that takes these facts about individuals into account is considered an explanation. The question to ask of methodological individualism is what is meant by "facts about individuals", and secondly what is meant by "explanation"? Lukes (*ibid*:454) argues that it is not obvious what constitutes a fact about an individual. He argues that the 'facts' about individuals that methodological individualism assumes range from the non-social (e.g., genetic make-up, brain-states) to the social (e.g., voting). Why this questions the plausibility of methodological individualism will be made clear when we investigate what the doctrine means by "explanation".

Methodological individualism claims to be the only doctrine that makes social phenomena intelligible in terms of what they would consider to be a valid explanation. Lukes (*ibid*:456), similar to Cohen[35] (1978:253), argues that 'to explain' means quite simply to "make what was unintelligible intelligible." Both theorists argue that methodological individualism, by claiming that no explanations are possible except those framed exclusively in terms of facts about individuals, is arbitrarily ruling out (or denying finality to) most ordinarily acceptable explanations (Lukes, 1994:456). For example, most social scientists refer to the 'bank' without having to refer to the individuals that make up 'the bank'. Furthermore we can talk of a 'cultural group' without having to refer to the individual members of that group. Indeed, Lukes (*ibid.*) maintains, "a whole methodological tradition (from Dilthey through Weber to Winch) holds this to be the characteristic mode of explanation in social science." The main critics of methodological holism are in fact opposed to certain sorts of explanations in the social sciences. Lukes (*ibid*:457) argues that critics of methodological holism are against "holism", "organicism" and "historicism". The rejection of these doctrines does not entail a rejection of methodological holism as such nor, as Lukes argues, does opposition to them entail an acceptance of methodological individualism (*ibid.*). Lukes (*ibid.*) argues, rightly, that explanations of social phenomena can be provided "in terms which do not refer to individuals" furthermore, that it may be impossible to describe social phenomena in any other way. In addition this is not to reject an explanation of social phenomena in terms which does refer to individuals. It would seem that proponents of methodological

[35] A discussion of Cohen's defence of what constitutes a genuine explanation is provided in the previous chapter, see page 9.

individualism and of methodological holism are in fact providing explanations that are complementary because they are explaining similar phenomena but at different levels of analysis, namely at the level of the individual or at the level of society. It would seem, in my view, that the debate between methodological individualism and methodological holism should be dissolved into a discussion of the nature of differing though complementary explanations of social phenomena.

1.2. Dissolving the Debate

To conclude, the theory of ideology is an explanatory tool for understanding social phenomena because it recognises that there are differences between individuals and societies (or institutions) that requires an explanation. Contrary to Elster, Watkins and other advocates of methodological individualism, the theory of ideology does not have to claim that methodological holism displaces methodological individualism in social science. Watkins (1994:442) argues that the two doctrines "are exhaustive." This is not the case. Both advocates of methodological holism and of methodological individualism have an overarching interest in understanding the mechanisms which operate in the social world. This is, in my opinion, what unifies both schools of thought. What then separates the two schools of thought is what they choose to investigate in the social world. As social scientists they have "their eyes ... fixed on different features of the landscape" (James, 1984:178). As a result, the entrenched opposition between the two approaches can be transcended and seen as complementary. An explanation of the beliefs, actions and intentions of individuals can inform an explanation of the constraining properties of social wholes and *vice versa* (*ibid*:176). As will be argued in the following chapter, the alternative solutions to the puzzle of domination do not necessarily render the theory of ideology's solution invalid. Instead, it will be argued, that the alternative solutions provide for a more holistic understanding of how oppressive societies persist. In fact, an ideal explanation would be one that mapped out the relations between different factors down to and including individuals, thereby providing a critical theory of society that accounts for the parts played by individuals in social organisation and change (*ibid*:109). As Cohen (1978:286) argues, an explanation at the level of both the individual and of the social whole (be it an institution or society) "provides for a fuller explanation and locates [the theory of ideology] within a longer story which specifies its explanatory role more precisely." It should be clear that what the critics of the theory of ideology have argued as alternative explanations are in fact better

understood as complementary explanations. From the perspective of a concern with the theory of ideology these elaborating explanations are, I would argue, a reply to the plea for the mechanism explaining the connection between the belief system and oppressive society that the theory of ideology proposes[36].

2. The Plea for Mechanisms

It was argued in section 2.5 of the previous chapter that the theory of ideology is committed to the view that it cannot be simply a happy accident (from the point of view of society) that ideological consciousness should happen to produce the effect that the society in question needs. In addition, it was argued that the theory of ideology was entitled to this claim because it has identified a phenomenon, i.e. ideological consciousness, that has a systematic tendency to support illegitimate societies. In other words ideological consciousness plays an explanatory role in understanding relations of domination. Finally, it was argued that the theory of ideology did not have to provide a further explanation of the mechanism that ensures that, over time, the society in question acquires ideological consciousness which furthers its welfare. Cohen (1978:286) argues that the theory of ideology is still explanatory even in the absence of an elaboration of its functional claims. However, Cohen (1978:287) does concede that an explanation of the mechanism will provide a fuller explanation and locate the function of ideological consciousness within a longer story that specifies the explanatory role of ideological consciousness more precisely. The theory of ideology without an elaboration of its explanation merely provides a macro-foundational account of ideology. An account, it could be argued from the point of view of the methodological individualists, that is clearly lacking. Rosen, Elster and other critics of the theory of ideology are correct, in my view, when they argue that this account is incomplete and must be complemented by an account of the actions and attitudes of individuals in order to *explain* what is going on. The theory of ideology as defined so far does not provide an explanation of why or how it is that the individual comes to hold beliefs that are not in his interests to hold.

Elster (1993:11), an advocate of methodological individualism, argues that an explanation of why the oppressed collude in their own oppression cannot limit itself to tracing the effect beliefs and desires have on individual actions. He claims that it is

[36] I would argue that from the perspective of a methodological individualist the revised theory of ideology should also be considered to be supplementary to his or her analysis of individual behavior.

important to understand the mechanisms by which self-defeating desires and beliefs are formed. He argues that the Marxist theory of ideology suffers from "the usual pervasiveness of ill-founded functional explanations" (Elster, 1985:460). As argued previously, Elster asserts the need for micro-foundations in an attempt to explain collective human behaviour. He argues that it makes no sense to talk of social institutions as if they were "monolithic, since essentially they are collections of human beings" (1993:8). As a result, Elster (1985:462) is critical of the view that ideology can be understood in functional terms as some kind of entity that functions in such a way as to provide legitimacy for another (questionable, according to Elster) entity, namely society. Elster, on this basis, rejects the theory of ideology because it fails to provide a satisfactory account of the mechanism for the functional claims made by the theory.

Elster (*ibid*:463) does not deny that individuals may hold beliefs that function in such a way that assists the oppressive institutions in society but he does not think that there "is any scope here for *explanation."* Elster (1993:2) holds this view because he does not consider that there is a need for the construction of general theories such as the theory of ideology, historical materialism or the theory of economic equilibrium. He argues, erroneously, in my view, that such theories aim to establish general and invariable propositions which remain an "illusory dream" (*ibid.*). According to Elster (1999:4) the antonym of a mechanism is a *black box.* To provide an example, it has been argued by some theorists that the theory of ideology claims that false consciousness contributes to the persistence of oppressive systems and evidence has been adduced for a strong correlation between the two phenomena. Elster (1999:5) argues that in order to accept this law like generalisation a glimpse inside the black box is required in order to know *how* false consciousness contributes to the maintenance of oppressive societies. This changes the focus of Reich's question from *why* are the many oppressed by the few to *how* has the many allowed itself to be oppressed by the few.

Keeping these criticisms in mind, four elaborating explanations have been identified that explain a variety of mechanisms of how it is that ideological beliefs are formed. It is not necessary to assume that there is a *single* mechanism explaining how ideological beliefs are formed (Paprzycka, 1998:81). The first mechanism that will be examined, in the next section of this chapter, is provided by Scott (1990). He argues that it is the structure of the interactions between the oppressed and the oppressors that reveals how it is that the oppressed come to play a role in their servitude. Scott's

explanation is complemented by the second elaborating explanation, which is known as the game-theory elaboration. According to this account it is due to a coordination problem on the part of individuals that they are prevented from effectively overcoming relations of domination.

The third micro-foundational account arises out of a critique of the game-theory elaboration. Elster argues that game theory limits itself to tracing the effects of beliefs and desires on individual action and thereby on social processes without considering the way in which those beliefs and desires are formed. In other words rational choice explanation overlooks the way in which the formation of preferences can result in *distorted* beliefs and desires that affect the strategic behaviour of an individual. Elster (1985, 1989) argues that there are a number of such possible mechanisms that distort desires and beliefs. Erich Fromm provides the final elaboration that will be discussed. He argues that in order to understand how it is that an individual comes to participate in his own servitude, one has to understand the psychological makeup of that individual. Fromm's account, although micro-foundational, illustrates how such an account can be accommodated within a macro-foundational account of ideology. He argues that an account of how an individual may become oppressed must be located within a longer story about the overarching structural forces and relations constraining and directing that individual. It will be concluded that the achievement of Fromm's account has been to enrich and extend our original theory of ideology allowing for an integrated theory of ideology.

2.1. Scott's Reply: The Public and Hidden Transcript

Scott, in his book, *Domination and Arts of Resistance* (1990) argues that much of the debate about power and ideology has centred on how to "interpret conforming behaviour by the less powerful (for example, ordinary citizens, the working class, peasants) when there is no apparent use of coercion." Scott (1990) is therefore trying to answer a question similar to Reich's: "Why...does a subordinate class *seem* to accept or at least to consent to an economic system that is manifestly against its interest?[37]" Scott (*ibid*:72) claims that that the theory of ideology, as set out in the previous chapters, is "fundamentally wrong." He argues that theories of ideology begin with several assumptions, any of which might be plausibly contested. The assumption he addresses

[37] Emphasis added.

first is the view that the subordinate group do suffer from ideological consciousness. Secondly, that it is relatively disadvantaged and thirdly, that the subordinate group is not directly coerced. The second and third assumptions, without denying that they are problematic and for the sake of argument, will be accepted here. However, the first assumption, that subordinate groups suffer from ideological consciousness requires further defence. Scott (1990:72) rejects this assumption because he argues that there are too many examples where this "voluntary servitude" on the part of the ruled does exist.

I would argue that Scott is too hasty in his rejection of the first claim made by the theory of ideology namely, that oppressive societies persist in virtue of false consciousness on the part of citizens. It will be argued, contrary to Scott, and as discussed in chapter one, that the scope of false consciousness consists partly of what was termed 'practical false consciousness'. These are disorders in the way in which we respond to and act within the world. Given the definition of false consciousness provided, it will be recalled that if the way in which an individual responds to and acts within the world functions in support of relations of domination then that individual is considered to display false consciousness. Hence, even though Scott claims that individuals are not deluded about their situation, they in fact display false consciousness because they fail to take steps to overcome their oppression. In other words, what leads Scott to conclude that individuals are not quiescent is his failure to take into consideration 'practical false consciousness' in his account of ideology. A brief discussion of Scott's critique of the theory of ideology will be provided in order to show how he fails to take into consideration that the way in which individuals act and respond in illegitimate societies can be considered ideological.

Scott (1990:75) argues that the notion of ideological domination has become almost orthodoxy, "one encountered again and again in the literature on such issues." The claim made by the theory of ideology, is that ideology operates to conceal or misrepresent aspects of social relations that, if apprehended directly (by both the oppressor and oppressed), would be damaging to the interests of the elite in addition to being damaging to the society in question. Scott, contrary to Miller[38], argues that if one were to accept the explanation provided by the theory of ideology, the theory seems to claim some superior knowledge of what the social reality is of which the subordinate

[38] See page 16 of Chapter one.

groups should have knowledge. Scott is sceptical that there is such superior knowledge. In addition he questions if there is a need for it. Heath (2002:363) similarly argues that it is prudent for social scientists to be sparing in their ascription of false consciousness because it allows "one to engage in social criticism while minimising the tendency to insult the intelligence of the people on whose behalf the critical intervention has been initiated." In agreement with Scott, Heath argues that the vast majority of oppressive practices are not reproduced because people have false consciousness but because they have an interest in not disturbing the relations of domination. Hence, he argues that there is a need on the part of critical theory to provide an alternative explanation of the persistence of oppressive practices.

According to Scott (1990:72), there are two broad theories of false consciousness. The first is what he terms the 'thick version'. A dominant[39] ideology "works its magic by persuading subordinate groups to believe actively in the values that explain and justify their own subordination" (*ibid.*). Certainly theorists like Fanon (1986) and Biko (1987) have argued that this was the case with colonialism. Fanon (1986:27) viewed racism as being the ideology of colonialism and that it assaulted the very personality of the colonised. This assault occurs to such an extent that the black man, in response to white colonial society, becomes dominated by his own mind, and that his striving to be white affirms his inferiority (Fanon, 1986:27). For Biko, this was the only way to understand why some black South Africans participated in and to a certain extent defended the Apartheid regime.

The second version of false consciousness that Scott discusses maintains that ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable (Scott, 1990:72). Scott (*ibid.*) argues that in contrast to the thick theory, which claims consent, the 'thin' theory of false consciousness "settles for resignation." This view was defended by Guess (1981:14) and Miller (1972:443) in the first chapter. The former argued that an individual who settles for resignation is making an 'objectification' mistake and the latter argued that this resignation could be considered an example of the distortion of *eternalisation*. The argument presented by the two theorists is that a form of consciousness is ideological if it involves treating relationships or characteristics that are historical and contingent as if

[39] The term 'dominant' for the purposes of the argument presented is being used very loosely, because it may be the case that false consciousnesses is the *failure* to form an adequate, shared system of beliefs (Rosen, 1996:2).

they were fixed in the nature of things. Marx too was an advocate of this argument. He claimed that some of the vulgar economists in their discussion of capitalism represented it as a "primordial condition"[40]. To put it crudely, the economists viewed capitalism as being the 'natural' and 'eternal' pattern of economic life.

Scott is critical of both versions of the false consciousness argument and consequently of the theory of ideology as presented[41]. He (1990:72) rejects the thick version of ideology by arguing that the evidence against it is pervasive enough to render it untenable. He is too quick to dismiss it, but for the sake of argument, an analysis of his critique of the theory of ideology will be presented. Scott, does concede that the thin version of false consciousness, in its most subtle form, is "eminently plausible and, some would claim, true by definition" (*ibid.*). Thus, cautious of his rejection of the theory of ideology Scott gives a detailed account of why the theory of ideology is so persuasive, so that he may prove that he is not committing the straw man fallacy.

According to Scott (*ibid*:73) the thick version of false consciousness claims that within an oppressive society there are institutions such as schools, the church, and the media that exercise a near monopoly over the "means of mental production" (Tucker, 1978:64). Thus, Scott argues, this monopoly "secures the active consent of subordinate groups to the social arrangements that reproduced their subordination", for example Marx's adage that, "the ideas of the ruling classes are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas." This thick version faces two daunting criticisms. The first criticism was addressed in the previous chapter, namely that it is not clear why the subordinate groups should accept beliefs that are against their interests. Scott asserts that there is compelling evidence that subordinate classes in oppressive regimes have not been ideologically incorporated to the extent that Marx and other advocates of the theory of ideology claim. This may be the case, however Scott is not taking into account what, to him might seem to be an absence of false consciousness, could suggest the presence of ideological consciousness. It can be argued that the failure on the part of subordinate classes to form an adequate, shared system of beliefs, values or practices is itself a from of ideological consciousness. Rosen argues that just because there is an apparent absence of false consciousness within the subordinate classes this does not necessarily

[40] In Tucker, R. 1978 (2nd ed) *The Marx-Engels Reader* p.g71

[41] The theory of ideology defended so far, I would argue amounts to a theory of false consciousness that incorporates elements of both this thick and thin description of ideology.

contradict the theory of ideology in the sense at issue here because "the very absence could itself be ideological" (Rosen, 1996:3).

According to Scott, there is a more damaging criticism of the thick version. He argues that "there is no warrant for supposing that the acceptance of a broad, idealised version of the reigning ideology prevents conflict – even violent conflict" (Scott, 1990:74). This too could be applied to the absence of a broad ideology amongst the subordinate groups. However, as was argued in the previous chapter, the adapted theory of ideology refuted the claim that societies do, as a rule, produce the consciousness required for their preservation. In other words, the adapted theory of ideology need not be so ambitious. What it does claim is that under certain circumstances a collection of beliefs, desires and values can be identified as deeply embedded phenomena that help to stabilise the society in question. Consequently the theory of ideology does not have to claim that where there is false consciousness there is necessarily an absence of conflict. On the contrary, it was argued that false consciousness is a product of the material conditions of certain oppressive societies. Cohen (1982:489) argues, rightly, that the theory of ideology is *fundamentally* concerned with the forces and relations constraining individual behaviour and that a certain amount of conflict can take place without undermining these overarching forces and relations.

I have argued that in order to understand society a theoretical framework is required that gathers a wide range of evidence (Miller, 1972:447). Thus, conflict may still occur and perhaps a minimum level of conflict is encouraged by society and might be necessary for it in order to sustain itself and legitimate its oppressive nature. The basic features of the oppressive society have not changed and it could be argued that conflict in this sense does not signify dissent as much as the perpetuation of relations of domination. Scott (1990:77) would not disagree because he argues that some of the most striking episodes of violent conflict have been "accommodated within the prevailing social order." Yet, I would argue that it is more than just about accommodating conflict; it is about oppressive societies actively allowing or even encouraging it in order to give the appearance of change. An example would be Marx's analysis of the conflict between the capitalist and labourer over wages and the working day. As a result of the conflict between the working classes and the capitalist classes, the Ten Hours' Bill, for example, was passed. Marx[42], did not deny that this was a success for the working classes. He

[42] In Tucker, R. pg 517

did maintain however, that the passing of the bill was in the interests of the capitalist *system*. In other words, the basic features of the capitalist system had not changed. Scott (1990:2000), in his critique of the theory of ideology, argues that the fact that these supposed 'falsely conscious' subjects are quite capable "of taking revolutionary action" counts against the theory. However, individuals may be 'falsely conscious' and still take action (violent or otherwise). What would be disputed is that such action is 'revolutionary action' as Scott maintains. Marx[43] argues that what is required is the "emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude...because the emancipation of the workers contains universal emancipation." In other words, workers not only have to fight for better working conditions, they need to change them. It would seem therefore that only violent action that fundamentally changes the system, overturns the social order, is deemed revolutionary.

Scott (1990:78) concedes that even if one were to grant that ideological consciousness exists and contributes to the quiescence of subordinate groups, it is highly questionable whether such ideological consciousness has prevailed. Scott maintains that the problem with the false consciousness thesis is that "it is difficult to explain how social change could ever originate from below." Yet, the theory of ideology need not rule out conflict from below. In fact it is these very acts of conflict amongst the oppressed that will eventually lead to fundamental changes in the oppressive society in question. Scott's' reply to this could be that the theory of ideology then becomes unfalsifiable. It cannot be the case that subjects can suffer from false consciousness, which assists in the maintenance of the oppressive society to which the subjects belong, and at the same time be able to challenge this very society that assists in the persistence of that false consciousness. Scott (*ibid.*) therefore concludes that "everything fits too neatly. Ideology always pre-exists and pre-empts any authentic criticism."

Elster (1986:91), in agreement with Scott, argues that the explanation provided of the Ten Hours' bill is a clear example of Marx committing the "twin mistakes of methodological holism and unsupported functional explanation." For Elster (*ibid*:33) it is problematic to assert that the behaviour of individuals can be explained by the beneficial consequences of certain features of the society in which those individuals live. Elster maintains that the above example does not explain why the individual worker or the

[43] In Tucker, R. p.g.80

individual capitalist *should* prefer the passing of the Ten Hours' bill. How are we then to understand why oppressive regimes persist even in the face of resistance on the part of the oppressed? One possible answer to this could be that ideological domination defines the prevailing conditions under which the oppressed find themselves living as being inevitable. Scott (1990:74) argues that this is a thin theory of ideology "which makes far less grandiose claims for the ideological grip" on the oppressed.

The thin version of false consciousness does not appear to be as problematic as the thick version. Scott (1990:75) argues that it is not difficult to believe that an untouchable in eighteenth-century rural India would believe that his circumstances are a mere fact of life. According to this argument ideological consciousness is seen as accomplishing a way of understanding for the subordinates of "what is realistic and what is not realistic and to drive certain aspirations and grievances into the realm of the impossible, of idle dreams" (Scott, 1990:75). The claim is not that the fated condition of the untouchable is loved by the untouchable, only that it is here to stay. This line of reasoning does not have to involve an explanation of how it is that subordinate classes come to hold beliefs that are in the interests of the ruling classes or that the subordinate groups buy into the ruling classes' ideology.

Scott (1990:75) argues that as convincing as this thin version is, it is not "compatible with the degree of distaste for, or even hatred of, the domination experienced." He (*ibid*:80) argues that the thin version is mistaken in assuming that the subordinated groups are not able to perceive a counterfactual social order. For example, millenarian movements espouse a belief in the coming of a new world, and subordinate groups not only view their situation as hopeless they also believe there is a better life for them (Howard and Dunaif-Hattis, 1992:563). Without ever having set foot outside a stratified society, subordinate groups can and have imagined the absence of the distinctions they find so onerous (Scott, 1990:81).

Scott (*ibid*:77) therefore concludes that much of the criticisms against *Ideologiekritik* are fatal. It is not the case that individuals are deluded about their situation or their interests. Furthermore, that the conforming behaviour by the less powerful is not a result of false consciousness. As argued, Scott does not necessarily agree with the assumption that subordinated groups are in fact quiescent. He argues that throughout history there are examples of the pervasive, sustained resistance on the part of the ruled. He therefore argues that an alternative explanation is required for an

adequate analysis of power relations. Scott (*ibid*:70), in his explanation of why the rule of the many by the few exists, maintains that oppressed groups have good reasons to help sustain the appearance or at least not to contradict the relations of domination. In my opinion, even though the oppressed group may have good reasons for their continued servitude, Scott fails to address the more important question of why the relations of domination continue in the first place.

Is There Such a Thing As The 'Official Story'?

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* Scott makes the case for why social scientists need to move "beyond apparent consent and...explore the realm of the hidden transcript" (Scott, 1990:16). He (1990) claims that relations of domination generate, what he terms, public and hidden transcripts. Resistance on the part of the ruled can occur both in the public transcript and the hidden transcript. Using the metaphor of a stage he argues that what happens on and off stage between the ruled and the rulers is very different. Scott presents the public transcript as a performance in which the subordinate group and the forces of power tacitly conspire. An example is that of the peasant resistance to Christian tithe. Scott (1987:440) argues that the peasants did not willingly paid the tithe or that they were deluded about their exploitation. On the contrary, the struggle over the tithe "was a long-drawn-out, silent, and undeclared war of evasion, fraud, concealment, dissimulation, non-compliance" (*ibid*:441). But if one were to go backstage, the peasant discourse around the payment of tithe would be very different from the 'official story' or public transcript. In the face of a ruling elite the peasant paid his or her tithe, however not without taking as many steps as possible to evade (all) or part of the tithe.

According to Scott (1990:77) then the public transcript misrepresents the subordinate's true intentions behind a mask of deference, requiring the rulers to perform the role of mastery. The public transcript thereby represents how the dominant group would *like* things to appear, but it is an appearance in which the ruled apparently endorse their subordination. Scott (1990) argues that a peek backstage presents a different performance, one that is contradictory to the public transcript. Outside of the surveillance of the rulers, the ruled have a hidden transcript, for example within the slave quarters they are free to discuss amongst themselves their hatred for their master. This also applies to the masters, outside of the watchful eye of the ruled. They too maintain hidden transcripts. It is important to note, according to Scott (*ibid*:27), that the hidden

transcript represents discourse that is ordinarily excluded from the public transcript of subordinates by the exercise of power. It is therefore the "practice of domination, then, [that] creates the hidden transcript" (*ibid.*). Scott has two main claims that inform his analysis of oppression in society:

> 1) that elites have a vital interest in ensuring appearances appropriate to their form of domination;
> 2) that subordinates have good reasons to help sustain those appearances, or at least not to openly contradict them (*ibid*).

In other words, just as the subordinates perform in public so do the elites. Scott argues that the discrepancies revealed to us by looking back-stage enable the theorist of domination to "judge the impact of domination on public discourse" (*ibid*:5). In order to understand the extent of the impact of the power of the elites in any given oppressive society over the subordinates the theorist only has to look at the "script and stage directions" of the elite which are of "deference, subordination, and ingratiation" constantly acting in accordance to the requirements of the ruler (*ibid*:28). Hence a convincing performance will require on the part of the subordinate both the suppression or control of feelings and a subservient demeanour thereby masking his 'real'[44] feelings and behaviour. Contrary to the theorists of ideology Scott (*ibid*:71) argues that in explaining repressive settings a theory of false consciousness is not required. Scott, however, does not consider that the performance of the ruler and ruled both on and offstage can be considered ideological. This because, as argued, the way in which individuals act can be deemed ideological because acting in this manner has the effect of promoting or stabilising relations of domination. In accordance with the definition of ideology presented in chapter one certain types of behaviour can be considered a form of false consciousness firstly because actions are a form of practical false consciousness and secondly, because consciousness does not exits in itself; it is embodied practically in our actions and if our actions do not challenge relations of domination then our not doing so counts as a form of false consciousness[45]. It is here that a macro-foundational account of ideology may prove advantageous for Scott's account. Scott's account of why it is that individuals act out this oppressive performance although I would argue it is consistent with a thin version of ideology he fails to

[44] This assumes that the hidden transcript can be ever accessed. For example, Scott (1990:16) argues that "many, perhaps most, hidden transcripts remain just that: hidden from public view and never "enacted"."

[45] This is consistent with the definition of ideology presented in chapter one, where the definition shifted from the epistemological (not knowing) to the ethical (relating to the way in which beliefs intersect with power).

appreciate the effect the sustaining of a hidden transcript has on the relations of domination. The integrated theory of ideology provides an explanation of how it is that individuals are able to play out these power relations at the level of the whole, namely they do so because such behaviour assists in the maintenance of an illegitimate social system.

According to Scott (1990:90) the reason for the attractiveness of the theory of ideology is because it is a reading of the official transcript. He argues that *Ideologiekritik* has in fact merely explained the official transcript and made sense of it via false consciousness. If Scott's (*ibid.*) analysis is correct and there is a "public façade of unity, willing compliance, and respect", then a reading of the social evidence will indeed represent a confirmation of the status quo in ideological terms. Thus Scott (*ibid.*) explains,

> just as subordinates are not much deceived by their own performance there is, of course, no more reason for social scientists and historians to take that performance as, necessarily, one given in good faith.

Heath (2000:364) similarly argues that although the theory of ideology seems to be explanatory, it is in fact highly problematic. It is problematic because of the way in which a theorist of *Ideologiekritik* interprets the individuals he or she is studying. He argues that the way in which individuals understand what each other says is by way of interpretation. Furthermore, the meaning that Joe ascribes to Susan's utterances "depends in a crucial way upon the set of beliefs" that Joe takes Susan to hold true (*ibid.*). For example, when Joe talks about meeting Susan for lunch tomorrow, (Thursday) Susan can only figure out what Joe is referring to by assuming that she shares a belief with Joe that today is Wednesday. If it is thought that they both believed that today was Monday, one could start to think that Joe meant Tuesday when he said "Thursday" (*ibid.*). Heath argues that the way we understand one another is, or should be, constrained by the "principle of charity." This principle holds that one ascribes the most "reasonable set of beliefs to that person, which is to say, the one that maximizes the number of true beliefs the person is thought to hold" (*ibid.*). From the point of view of the hearer, the requirement of charity is therefore, an interpretation of the speaker that is consistent with the highest level of agreement between the speaker and the hearer. Accordingly, "to interpret someone is to interpret that person charitably—if you are not interpreting them charitably, then what you are doing simply does not count as interpretation" (*ibid.*). The implication of this argument for *Ideologiekritik* is that if one is

interpreting individuals from the assumption that they can suffer from false consciousness, you are no longer interpreting those individuals charitably. Hence an interpretation of the individual's 'mistakes' by the theorist can *only* count as evidence for their false consciousness (*ibid*:365). An example of this can be found in early ethnographic accounts, which often claimed that the cultural groups that were being investigated were "pre-logical" cultures. For example, Lucien Levy-Bruhl found that the 'natives' that he was studying "generally believed false things" (*ibid.*). Heath (*ibid.*) argues that if Lucien Levy-Bruhl had interpreted the members of the culture he was studying charitably he would have come to a more reasonable interpretation of the 'natives'. Furthermore, he argues that if critical theorists do not suspend the assumption that people are by and large reasonable and that their beliefs are predominantly true, theorists would be able to come closer to what people *really* mean. In the case of Lucien Levy-Bruhl he would have been able to distinguish between "expressions that were meant literally and those that were meant metaphorically or figuratively "and which Levy-Bruhl was so quick to dismiss as irrational or illogical (*ibid.*). Heath's thesis, it could be argued, further strengthens Scott's argument. For example, had critical theorists interpreted subordinates more charitably they would have been able to contemplate the possibility of a hidden transcript, as opposed to just assuming that the official story was *the* story.

The arguments presented by Scott and Heath suggest that, rather than having uncovered a massive all-encompassing ideology, critical theorists have "simply failed to understand what it is that people are doing" (Heath, 2000:365). Both Scott and Heath argue that for critical theory to remain credible it has to find a way of advancing radical social criticism without appealing to ideology. It is not clear why radical social criticism has to give up the notion of ideology. The account of ideology presented thus far covers not only the beliefs and desires that individuals hold, but also the way in which individuals respond to and act in the world. As argued, this also includes the effect produced by maintaining a hidden transcript namely it that of sustaining relations of domination. This is because the 'ideological' is identified as having a particular function in the service of relations of domination. Heath, together with Rosen and Elster, rightly in my opinion, argues that closer attention needs to be paid to the structure of interaction between the oppressed and the oppressors. But, Heath (*ibid*:366), erroneously in my opinion, argues that the error that critical theorists have made is to "mistake the outcome

of a collective action problem for an effect of ideology." Contrary to Heath, I would argue that one of the possible effects of ideology is that it can bring about a collective action problem amongst the oppressed because their failure to act collectively has the effect of sustaining relations of domination and in that sense is still ideological. But, Rosen would disagree with the above claim and offers an alternative explanation, the coordination problem account. Rosen (1996:260) claims that the compliance argument's explanation of why the ruled fail to act against their oppressors is because their compliance is a result of poor coordination and not an irrational acceptance of oppression. The coordination problem account, in my view is problematic because it leaves out too much in its explanation of domination. Contrary to Scott and Rosen the effect of for example, sustaining a knowing hidden transcript and (or) the lack of coordination on the part of the oppressed, still leaves space for a theory of ideology because in both examples relations of domination are sustained. I will argue that both Scott and Rosen's accounts fail to acknowledge that there is a connection between the fact that the oppressed fail to act collectively and the (consequent) fact that otherwise illegitimate societies persist because of the failure to coordinate on the part of the oppressed.

2.2. The Coordination Problem

Few would dispute that the balance of power should ultimately rest with the majority, but perhaps critical theorists have been too hasty in assuming that the majority can be collectively mobilised. Elster (1986:199) in wanting to determine what is living and what is dead in the philosophy of Marx argues that "the theory of ideology is not particularly well and alive, but I believe it can and should be resurrected". The way in which he believes that the theory can be resurrected is that it "must have micro-foundations." An advocate of methodological individualism, Elster (22), argues that in order to understand human behaviour a social scientist should frame his or her explanations in terms of individuals. One way of doing this is to employ rational-choice explanations and game theoretic explanations in particular.

Marxism and Rational Choice

Weldes (1989:353) argues that the development of "'rational-choice' Marxism" has been a response to the supposed crisis that Marxist theory is facing. Elster, Heath and other proponents of "rational-choice" Marxism claim that Marxist theory needs to be recast in terms of "state-of-the-art methods of analytical philosophy and positivist' social

science."[46] The nature and success of this project, however, extends beyond the focus of the present discussion. Suffice it to say that within the context of Marxist theory the move toward the individualistic pole reflects the tension that pervades not only Marxist theory but also the social sciences particularly the tension between individualistic and holistic ontologies and modes of explanation (Weldes:354). It is important to look at the coordination explanation of oppression.

Game Theory: A Solution To The Puzzle of Domination?

Game theory, Elster (1982:452) argues, "is invaluable to any analysis of the historical process that centres on exploitation, struggle, alliances, and revolution." Social theorists need to take into account that there could be a difference between what is rational for the individual and what is rational for a group of individuals (Rosen, 1996:260). It was argued that the theory of ideology explains the rule of the many by the few as a matter of false consciousness and that this false consciousness persists because of the nature of the oppressive society in question. It was argued that a functional explanation could be provided without it being the case that all illegitimate societies have a systematic tendency to produce ideological beliefs. Thus, oppressive societies do not, as a rule, produce the consciousness required for their preservation. Yet, it was argued that the theory of ideology considered false consciousness a necessary but not sufficient condition for the survival of oppressive regimes.

What Elster (1985:29) finds problematic is the view that theorists can understand 'societies' as having behavioural patterns that have certain 'stabilizing' consequences or at least do not have destabilizing effects. For Elster, the main problem with the theory of ideology is that it does not distinguish between the way individuals act and collective action. He maintains that it is possible to conclude that if an individual acts in a way that she knows to be in her interest she acted for the sake of that interest. However, Elster (1982:459) argues:

> when a group of individuals act in a way that is to their collective benefit, we cannot conclude that they did so to bring about that benefit[47].

---

[46] Roemer, *Analytical Marxism*, 2-3

[47] This could also apply to the detriment of the group. In other words, if one were to replace 'benefit' with 'detriment' in the quote presented it could be applied to the view that is espoused by the theory of ideology.

If Elster's analysis is correct, he is arguing that the theory of ideology gives an intentional explanation [48]both at the level of the individual, and at the level of supra-individual entity, what he refers to as 'sub-intentional causality' and 'supra-intentional causality (Elster, 1985:24). An example would be where the victims of colonialism, for their own interests, came to believe in racist ideology. These beliefs also produce the unintended consequence (on the part of the victims) of supporting the 'needs' of the colonial system. In other words, Elster (*ibid.*) argues that "individuals are as it were, caught between the psychic causality that shapes their aims and desires and the social causality that thwarts and frustrates them" and furthermore that the reason that their desires and aims are so thwarted is potentially explained by the benefit it has for the social system in question. Contrary to Elster, the integrated theory of ideology does claim that individuals are caught between the complex relationship of their aims and desires and the social structures within which they live. This complex interplay has the effect, in the case of oppressive social systems of maintaining relations of domination. I would argue that this account does not seem problematic because, as argued, the beliefs and actions of the individuals represent a phenomenon that is not merely incidental or contingent but represent an important feature of the particular social system and thereby plays an illuminating role in the explanation of the nature of that social system.

However, in case of the victim of colonialism, Elster (1985:25) thinks that the validity of the above argument depends on the presence of some reward that the individual agent can internalise and that motivates him to action, even if it brings about the consequence of his further subjugation. Elster, rejecting the theory of ideology's explanation on the basis of the reasons outlined so far, turns to rational choice explanation and game theory in particular to account for human behaviour that seems to be self-defeating. Elster, Rosen, and Heath argue that although it may be in the oppressed groups' interest to engage in collective action that would bring about a change in their oppression they simply do not. The explanation is not due to some form of false consciousness on their part, but rather that it might be as a result of rational risk avoidance preventing them from action (Wolff, 1996:237). Elster (1985:10) argues that game theory, which he considers to be a sub-variety of rational action, explores the

[48] It is clear that the theory of ideology can be construed as a form of intentional explanation for it is trying to provide a means with which social scientists can make sense of human action. See Elster 1985 *Making Sense of Marx* pg 8-18 for an explanation of intentional explanation.

strategic behaviour of individuals. An example of how the strategic behaviour of individuals provides for an explanation of domination will be provided.

The Example: "Let's Talk about Bantustans" [49]

Elster (1986:29) argues that game theory enables critical theorists to understand "three kinds of interdependencies that pervade social life." Game theory is an important branch of rational choice theory and stressed the "*interdependence of decisions*" (Elster, 1982:464). In a 'game' there are several players or actors and each actor must adopt and action or a strategy. In addition, the individual actor has to take into account that when he has chosen a strategy he may obtain a reward[50] that depends on the strategies chosen by him and others. The rewards are as follows:

1. the reward of each depends on the rewards of all;
2. the reward of each depends on the choices of all, through general causality;
3. the choice of each depends on the choices of all, through anticipation and strategic calculation (Elster, 1986:29).

These interdependencies represent "conceptual possibilities and not necessities" according to Elster. Therefore it is not the case that we will observe each kind of interdependency in each case of social action. What is important to note is that whatever action the individual takes will be dependent on what others will do. In order to understand the domination of some groups by others both Elster and Heath claim that game theoretic explanations are the most suitable. For Elster (1986:29) "game theory has analysed numerous forms of social interaction ... the most prominent among them, the so called Prisoner's Dilemma." The prisoner's dilemma is the classic example of understanding how collective action problems may arise in situations where agents want to pursue their own goals and projects (Heath, 2000:367). However, game theory does entail assumptions that are by no means uncontroversial or even accepted. Without going into too much detail, the main assumptions are that actors strive to maximise their rewards without regard necessarily of the effect this has for fellow actors. For instance, an actor is assumed to want to bring about a situation that he prefers to situations that he does not. This maximising behaviour is closely associated with the assumption that individuals act rationally, that is they act *rationally* when they act in a ways that *best*

[49] Heading taken from an Article written by Steve Biko in *I write what I like* 1987 Heinemann: Oxford

[50] A 'reward' can be understood in two ways, firstly that is signifies a material benefit for the actor or secondly, that it covers everything in the situation of value to the actor, including (possibly) the benefits that may occur for other actors (Elster, 1982:464).

meets the realisation of their plans or desires (Elster, 1985:9). In other words, "to act rationally is to choose the best action" from the perspective of the individual's desires or plans (Elster, 1986:26). Rather than retell the anecdote of the prisoner's dilemma. I shall illustrate the logic through the (perhaps controversial) example of the anti-apartheid movements' resistance to the establishment of the Bantustans.

Consider the implications for the apartheid movement of the support of the Bantustans by some members of the anti-apartheid movement. Let us assume that the anti-apartheid movement had the choice either, to support their establishment or to oppose it. We can assume, rightly, that it would be better for the all the members of the struggle to oppose the establishment of the Bantustans, because then they can successfully press for the removal of the Bantustans and the system supporting their establishment. Let us assume also, that the individuals that make up the anti-apartheid movement are solely motivated by personal material gains[51]. It would seem that it would be rational for each activist to potentially support the establishment of the Bantustans, if it can bring about benefits for them regardless of what others do, for example posts in these Bantustan governments, financial remuneration and so forth. If the majority of activists oppose the establishment of the Bantustans then the individual activist can get the benefits of resistance without the risk and costs involved if he were to participate. It should be obvious that if all the individual anti-apartheid activists acted in this way the outcome would be worse for all than it could have been had they been able to cooperate. This is often referred to in the literature on game theory as the 'free-rider' problem.

The possibility of 'free-riders' (those who benefit from collective action without contributing to the costs) significantly changes what is rational for the individual. For example, if Thandi is rational and motivated by her own aims and desires and if Thandi attributes this same rationality to her fellow comrades, it will not be possible for Thandi to assure herself of the conditions required for it to be rational to act against the establishment of the Bantustans. This is because Thandi cannot be sure that her fellow comrades will not sit back and let her risk her life. Hence Thandi could question whether it would be rational for her to continue to take action. Even though the entire anti-

[51] This assumption is problematic for game theory because it assumes an individualism that is at odds with the view that individuals can be concerned with not only their own welfare but the welfare of others too. It is clear that this assumption clashes explicitly with the values of an African humanism that informed the struggle.

apartheid movement would prefer the downfall of the apartheid system, the fact that the individual activist would prefer that his fellow comrades rather than he risk action against the apartheid regime, provides a reason why the activist should doubt whether other activists have sufficient reason to participate in collective action. Consequently, it would not be reasonable to attribute irrationality to the individual, for example Thandi, who decides against taking action against the apartheid regime.

In this way Elster, Rosen and Heath argue that mutually beneficial collective action may fail to take place, for reasons other than 'false consciousness' or a failure of rationality on the part of the individuals (Rosen, 1996:261). In addition, Heath (2000:366) argues that from the standpoint of critical theory the agents have a hard time getting out of collective action problems, even if they realise – as Biko did – that they are engaging in collectively self-defeating behaviour. This is because the mere recognition that the outcome is not in their interests does not change the incentives that each individual has to act in a way that contributes to it. If I, as an activist, am benefiting from the establishment of the homelands, even if I realise that this is not conducive to the 'struggle', it does not mean that I will gain the benefits from the 'struggle' if I stop supporting the continuation of the Bantustans. This example also shows that it would be possible to explain the behaviour of those activists (for example, Kaiser Matanzima, the leader of the former Transkei, Gatsha Buthelezi, the former Zululand leader, and Lucas Mangope, the leader of the former Bophuthatswana) who colluded with the apartheid regime as not being deluded by assuming that one would prefer to have the benefits of opposition to the apartheid regime without bearing the risks. Furthermore, the example also illustrates that it is not unreasonable that the colluders preferred to do so. This is, of course, contrary to Biko's (1978:85) analysis. He argued that they were acting as "mere pawns in a white man's game". However, as Heath argues, had Biko interpreted Buthelezi, Mangope and Matanzima more charitably, he would have possibly come to a better understanding of their behaviour as not as the result of some delusion on their part, but simply as a result of their strategic choices.

Simple as the presentation of this model has been, it does seem to illuminate how the rule of the many by the few occurs, and does so in an empirical way, too. Heath (2000:367) argues that from the outside coordination problems may look as if people are deluded about where their interests lie; that they are in the grip of some ideology. But on closer examination the oppressed may turn out to be quite rational. In fact, asserts

Heath, the oppressed "may even join the critical theorist in lamenting the sad consequences of their own actions." In addition, Rosen (1996:262) argues that game theory can also help to explain why action can and does take place. He reasons that on the assumptions of game theory individuals will act against a regime on the basis of their assessment of others' willingness to act. Consequently, "the most obvious indicator of others' willingness to participate is participation itself" (Rosen, 1996:261). For instance, once the action taken against an oppressive regime begins to bear fruit, the willingness of the individuals' participation may increase. Rosen (1996:262) argues that the history of the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe (and the dismantling of the apartheid regime) is a good example of this. Rosen explains that when

> a small group of dissidents became successful at the point at which others joined their demonstrations and the demonstration became too large for the authorities to repress (or to be prepared to repress - it was not purely a technical matter) effectively (Rosen, 1996:262).

However, one does have to question how the whole process starts in the first place. Indeed, as Scott (1990:78) argues, what has been remarkable in history (for example, the three centuries before the French revolution) is that the oppressed were seized by a sense of the possibility of overthrowing their oppressors and furthermore acted on it, often with tragic results. Scott, concludes that what has to be explained is the opposite of that for which the theory of ideology purports to account. In a word, why is it that subordinate groups have so often believed that they can act against their oppressors? Rosen (1996:262) agrees, maintaining that according to game theory those people who are willing to engage in political action (where it seems in the initial stages that such action would not be successful in practice) are in fact engaged in action that can only be deemed 'irrational'. In other words, it is the irrational behaviour of the very few that brings about the possible success of the political action of the many. But the question posed by the theory of ideology is still relevant because it is still necessary to know what allows for relations of domination to remain relatively stable prior to the 'irrational' actions of the few. Game theory explanations of domination are problematic because they fail to take into account a number of factors that may influence the preferences of individuals. This is because game theory explanations take preferences as simply "given" and make the satisfaction of desires the decisive criterion (Elster, 1985:13). It may be the case that there are mechanisms in place that pre-empt or distort choice to such an extent that an individual may not be able to perceive his situation adequately to enable him to take action.

Critique of Game Theory explanations of Domination

In sum, both Scott and advocates of game theory claim that social critics must wean themselves from their attachment to the concept of ideology and pay greater attention to the structure of social interaction and the practical mechanisms through which undesirable interaction patterns are reproduced. Thus, contrary to the theory of ideology the few are able to dominate the many because of a coordination problem that helps maintain *prima facie* illegitimate societies without supposing that the oppressed are suffering from false consciousness. Scott's account, convincing as it may seem, fails to take into account that the failure to act falls under the scope of practical false consciousness because the failure to act plays a vital role in the maintenance of oppressive social systems. It may be difficult to claim that all individuals are deluded about their servitude but Scott fails to provide a satisfactory account of how or why it is that knowingly or unknowingly the beliefs, attitudes, values, and emotions of the oppressed assists in the acceptance of oppressive or otherwise illegitimate social orders. This is because he fails, in my opinion, to acknowledge that to act in a way that does not challenge the official transcript can be considered a from of false consciousness, firstly because consciousness does not exist in itself; it is embodied practically in our actions and if our actions do not change relations of domination then our not doing so counts as a from of false consciousness. Hence, contrary to Scott, his enlightened peasant is suffering from false consciousness because, as Scott has claimed, he holds beliefs, desires and attitudes that allow for the continued existence of given relations of dominance.

According to Elster (1985:466) in order to overcome the criticisms of game theory explanations one has to look to cognitive psychology. Elster's account, in my view, provides an explanation of why a combination of the 'official story' and game theory does not represent an adequate response to the question of domination. He (1993:34) does not deny that individuals' failure to act collectively may be part of the explanation for why relations of domination persist. What these explanations are missing, according to Elster, is an adequate account of the mechanisms by which desires and beliefs are formed. He argues that such an account is important because knowledge of the way in which distorted beliefs and desires are formed, for example wishful thinking or sour grapes, can help to explain the actions of individuals. It will be argued that Elster's account, although illuminating, is also an inadequate response to the question of

domination because it does not take into consideration the need for a macro-foundational account of ideology. One theorist who was aware of the need to complement a micro-foundational account of ideology with a macro-account was Erich Fromm. In his account of how an individual may come to volunteer in his own servitude, Fromm argues that one cannot discount the influence of the social structure on the individual. In other words an account of just the behaviour of individuals or of the way in which beliefs and desires are formed as presented by Scott, Elster and Game theory will not be as informative without an account of the overarching forces at play (Cohen, 1982:489). In agreement with Cohen (1982:489) these accounts help to explain the "vicissitudes" of oppression; however, the theory of ideology is fundamentally concerned not with behaviour or the formation of beliefs, "but with the forces and relations constraining and directing it." Hence, a macro-explanation is still required to highlight the relevance of these elaborating explanations. Therefore, it will be concluded that an integrated theory of ideology is necessary.

2.3. Elster's answer to the plea for mechanisms

Elster's account of how it is that the many accept the rule of the few will now be addressed. It will be argued that part of the critique of Elster's account can be applied to Fromm. This is because both authors do not provide an account of "necessary false consciousness." It will be recalled that Elster does not have a conception of society as being the type of entity that 'could' produce what it needed. The implication of this for the theory of ideology is that there is no systematic explanation for the persistence of false consciousness. However, it will be argued in agreement with Elster that false consciousness is not a sufficient condition for an oppressive regime, but contrary to Elster, that it is a necessary one. Hence, an account of ideology will be provided that explains false consciousness functionally (as a result of the 'needs' of a particular society) or in some other way systematically as the result of the structure of society.

In his analysis of the self-defeating behaviour of individuals, Elster divides forms of false consciousness along two axes (Rosen, 1996:263). The first axis is that there are cognitive and motivational states of consciousness. This is similar to the second mode of false consciousness discussed in chapter one of this thesis. Elster (1993:20) maintains that desires and beliefs can be *distorted* and on this basis can be criticised because of the way in which the individual came to hold those beliefs. Elster (1993:12) defines distorted beliefs and desires as those "whose operation would be unacceptable to the

subject were he aware of it." The second axis is that the formation of the cognitive and motivational states can be explained by referring either to cognitive or motivational mechanisms. Although Elster identifies a number of mechanisms[52] that may explain how it is that the oppressed come to play a role in their servitude, or in game- theoretic terms fail to act collectively, for the purposes of this discussion, two of the mechanisms will be discussed. The first mechanism for false consciousness that Elster suggests is that of "wishful thinking" and the second "sour grapes."

WISHFUL THINKING

The first motivational mechanism for cognitive change that Elster (1985:466) discusses is what he calls "wishful thinking." This is clearly a disorder of the system by which individuals perceive, judge and reflect upon nature, society, and themselves (Rosen, 1996:31). In the terminology of the first chapter of this thesis it is cognitive false consciousness that is cognitive in origin (*ibid.*:263). Elster argues that wishful thinking comes about when an individual is faced with a set of beliefs that cause psychic discomfort. In order to reduce this discomfort the individual may adapt his beliefs to his desires. For example, Thandi may feel a great sense of psychic discomfort as a result of her desire to be a writer and her belief or suspicion that she does not have the ability to be a writer. Elster (1999:20) argues that there are a number of ways Thandi could deal with the tension she feels. First, she could try and modify her world to enable her to become a writer. Secondly, she could accept the fact that she will not be a writer. Finally, Thandi could change her beliefs so that she acquires a firm belief that she is in fact a writer (*ibid.*:21). In other words, Thandi could wish that her belief about being a writer were true. Elster argues that wishful thinking is something that is, very broadly speaking, reasonable because it has benefits for the person who engages in it (Rosen, 1996:267). For example, Thandi no longer feels tension or dissonance between her desires and beliefs because by 'wishing' that she is a writer she has restored harmony or consonance (Elster, 1999:20). It is hard to deny that individuals do wish to believe that the world is as they would like it to be. On this basis Scott's (1990:27) analysis of the hidden transcript is possibly mistaken because he may just be interpreting the wishful thinking of the subordinates. For example, the peasant, who in the privacy of his own home, discusses his hatred for his master could merely be articulating the way he

[52] For a discussion of the various mechanisms see Elster, 1985 Ch.1 and Elster, 1999: Ch.1

wishes he felt about his master in an attempt to reduce the cognitive dissonance of thinking otherwise. It is therefore possible to accuse Scott of making the same error that he ascribes to theorists of ideology, namely, that he has "simply failed to understand what it is that people are doing" (Heath, 2000:365).

It is apparent then that wishful thinking although valuable in reducing short-term tension may have undesirable and different long-term consequences (Elster, 1999:21). One could argue that the peasant may have the false belief that he hates his master when in fact he is merely refusing to accept the reality of his miserable situation. Elster (*ibid.*) argues that wishful thinking usually, although not necessarily, produces false beliefs about the world and acting on these beliefs can have bad consequences. For example, one could argue that a bad consequence would be the continued subjugation of the peasant. As a result, Elster (1985:476) argues, that the mechanism of wishful thinking helps to explain how ideas arise and take root in the minds of the persons holding them and, in addition, explains how this can have widespread social consequences.

Rosen (1996:266) is sceptical of the assumptions that Elster makes regarding the mechanism of wishful thinking. According to Rosen, wishful thinking is not as obvious as Elster seems to think. Rosen (*ibid.*:267) claims that Elster fails to make the distinction between Thandi wishing that her belief about being a writer is true from Thandi being willing to believe it without good evidence, or indeed at least in the face of good evidence to the contrary. The reason Elster fails to make this distinction, according to Rosen, is because he believes Elster is making the following inference:

> If it is true that we have strong reasons for wishing that a belief *p* is true, then we have strong reasons for believing *p* whether it is true or not (Rosen, 1996:267)

Rosen (*ibid.*) is justified when he argues that this inference is invalid. It is not clear that merely because in an attempt to reduce psychic discomfort an individual benefits *just* from thinking that what he desires obtains, even when what he desires does not in fact obtain. To put it differently, the reason Thandi wished to be able to write was the benefit she would derive from the fact that she could write, if indeed she could. Rosen (*ibid.*) argues that if wishful thinking is to be understood in terms of the apparent benefits that it brings to the believer, surely its benefits will be the *benefits of belief*, rather than the benefits of whatever would make the belief true. This provides a further criticism of the mechanism of wishful thinking (*ibid.*).

Rosen (1996:268) argues that Elster does not successfully explain the process of wishful thinking. He argues, however, that individuals may daydream that a state of affairs exists. It is not clear why the individual has to actually believe that the desired state of affairs does exist. Rosen (*ibid.*) argues, that "it is not obvious why a desire for fantastic satisfaction requires us" to take the extra step of actually *believing* that it exists. For example, Susan has a fantasy that the boy she loves has the same feelings for her too. It is not clear why Susan has to believe that it *is* the case that he loves her. "Why should we delude ourselves for the sake of satisfaction when we might have that satisfaction *without* confusing imagination and reality?" (*ibid.*) However, part of the phenomenon that the theory of ideology is trying to explain is the apparent belief by the oppressed that their situation is good, acceptable or at the least, intelligible (*ibid.*). The mechanism of wishful thinking, as explained by Elster, does seem to provide an explanation of how it is that individuals may come to believe that their situation is acceptable in that they wish it to be so.

SOUR GRAPES

There is, according to Elster (1985:466), another way in which individuals may respond to their discomfort. They may change their desire to the extent that they no longer want to desire it. This is the second motivational mechanism that Elster identifies, known as "sour grapes" (*ibid.*). The name comes from the fable about the fox and grapes. According to Elster, the phenomenon the fable refers to represents something of significance for social science. This is the "ability of individuals to affect their own immediate motivational states in response to underlying motivations" (Rosen, 1996:265). In the fable the fox, on coming across a delicious bunch of grapes, is motivated to obtain them, however, they are out of his reach. The unpleasant state he finds himself in, the wanting of the grapes, induces within him a motivation to cease wanting them. This is different from wishful thinking because the fox does not wish that he has the grapes but in fact changes the motivation he has towards the grapes by no longer desiring them (Elster, 1985:466).

Elster rightly, in my opinion, insists that this phenomenon poses an important problem for the social choice theories discussed earlier. This is because game theory explanations take preferences as simply "given" and make the satisfaction of desires the decisive criterion (Elster: 1985:13). Hence, the collective action problem, discussed in the compliance argument, may be the result of a process that pre-empts choice. For

example, rational choice theory only takes into account the individual preferences that the individuals themselves hold. This, however, is not very informative, if people adjust their preferences to what they *believe* they can achieve. Hence, the slave who desires freedom, on seeing his achievement of it as impossible, may choose to love his servitude. This is because due to sour grapes he no longer desires freedom. In fact, Elster (*ibid.*:115) argues that sour grapes may make people content with what little they can get. This will clearly be to the benefit of other people, who can get away more easily with exploitation and oppression. Elster argues, contrary to the theory of ideology, that just because an individual resigns himself to his servitude does not mean that the resignation was induced by those who benefit from it. Critical of the functionalist explanation within the theory of ideology, Elster (*ibid.*:116) maintains that the mechanism of sour grapes involves a strictly endogenous causality as opposed to the exogenous explanation by the theory of ideology.

In other words, the reason why individuals suffer from false consciousness, if we are dealing with sour grapes, is not that it is good for the social system but rather because it is good for the subjects. Elster does concede that this is not to say that the nature of the social system is irrelevant for the belief and desires created in the subjects. However, he argues that any beneficial effect of false consciousness of the form sour grapes or wishful thinking is merely a side effect. As Elster maintains, "side effects may be known and welcome and yet have not explanatory power." Elster (1985:116) concludes that the purposive explanation provided by the theory of ideology – that false consciousness assists in the maintenance of oppressive regimes and therefore persists because it benefits the oppressive regime – is implausible because false consciousness is essentially a by-product of the way in which individuals adjust their beliefs and desires to reduce psychic discomfort.

Rosen (1996:266), rightly, criticises Elster's analysis of the implications the mechanism of sour grapes has for the theory of ideology. He argues that 'sour grapes' is insufficient to provide an alternative to the theory of ideology as an account of why the many accept the rule of the few. As argued by Elster, sour grapes is an adaptation of one's desires to "*force majeure* – that of the prisoner who adapts to the locked cell by failing to value his freedom". However the question the theory of ideology is addressing is not: Why do the majority of those who are oppressed abandon their appetite for freedom?, but, Why do they fail to notice that they could collectively obtain their freedom

by overthrowing the ruling minority? or, as Rosen (1996:266) argues, "why does the prisoner fail to notice that the cell door is open?" Part of the explanation of why the prisoner fails to notice is because firstly there is something about the structure of the personality of modern man that makes him susceptible to fear freedom and consequently, susceptible to domination. Secondly, there is something about the social structure that allows for such susceptibility. Fromm's account of oppression does not just stop at a psychological account of domination, he also takes into consideration the nature of the social system. He argues that ideological consciousness is specific to certain forms of society which it helps to maintain, and alludes to the fact that the explanation of why the beliefs persist is because of the function that they play in society. As a result he provides a richer account of domination than Elster does, because Elster fails to take into consideration that one of the reasons why individuals suffer from ideological consciousness is because of the function such consciousness plays in maintaining an oppressive social system.

2.4. The Fear Of Freedom: Fromm's mechanisms of escape

Fromm (1943:1), sets out to understand why it is that although the history of modern Europe and America has been the effort of men to gain "freedom from the political, economic and spiritual shackles", it has in fact resulted in these very same men establishing new systems "which denied everything that [these] men believed they had won in centuries of struggle". In a word, why is it that the many accept the rule of the few when it is clearly against their interests to do so? Although much of Fromm's analysis is about understanding how it is that Fascism, and in particular Nazism, came into being his account can nonetheless be understood as an explanation of domination regardless of the type of political system in question.

Fromm (1943:3) argues that in order to fight oppression "we must understand it." According to him (*ibid.*:4) the only way to do so is to take into consideration the role that psychological factors play in the social process. Although he does not use the concept 'false consciousness' it is clear that the disorders he describes in his account of the psychological factors, namely the masochistic and sadistic strivings that exist within individuals, fall under the scope of 'practical false consciousness'[53]. He argues that it is

[53] In chapter one it was argued that disorders of the way in which individuals respond to and act in the world, for example destructive emotions or desires, or desires and emotions that are deemed 'inappropriate' are considered to fall under 'practical false consciousness'.

the complex interplay of these strivings that provides the mechanisms with which to understand the "*authoritarian character*" which enables some men to become masters and others slaves. This 'authoritarian character' is understood as a personality structure which is the human basis for relations of domination (*ibid.*:141). Fromm (*ibid.*:140) uses the term 'character' in the same dynamic sense as Freud. This means that 'character' refers not to the general behaviour patterns of an individual, "but to the dominant drives that motivate behaviour." Fromm (*ibid.*:239) explains that it is these dominant drives that he is interested in when explaining collective behaviour and he argues that although there are differences between individuals he is only interested in "that part of their character structure that is common to most members of the group" (*ibid.*). Fromm calls this the "*social character.*" For Fromm, it is a way to understand group behaviour.

Fromm's analysis of domination can best be explained by using the analogy of a pyramid. At the top of the pyramid is the individual character. In investigating the individual's character the political theorist or social psychologist aims to understand the whole of the traits which in their unique configuration form the personality structure of this or that individual. The centre of the pyramid is the social character. Here the theorist aims to understand the unique character configurations of the individuals that lead to a common character trait. Fromm (*ibid.*:239) argues that "the social character is necessarily less specific than the individual character." The base of the pyramid is the structure of society itself. In order to comprehend the authoritarian character and consequently the social character, an understanding of the structure of society is crucial. Fromm (*ibid.*:252) argues that in order to make sense of oppressive regimes such as Nazi Germany we should understand of the complex interplay of these three aspects of the pyramid.

Fromm argues that, in order for domination to be overcome, man has to master society and subordinate the "economic machine" to the purpose of ensuring human happiness. It is only by actively participating in this process that man will be able to overcome what drives him into despair namely "his aloneness and his feeling of powerlessness" (Fromm, 1943:238). By overcoming his fear of freedom man will realise that it is only freedom defined, "as the active and spontaneous realisation of the individual self" that will give him victory over all kinds of oppressive systems (*ibid.*). In order to understand whether Fromm's conclusion is legitimate it is important to provide a brief discussion of how the relationship between the individual character and the social

character in relation to the social structure can result in the establishment of oppressive regimes.

Fromm provides a complex analysis of what he terms the "authoritarian character" which he argues is crucial to understanding how it is that the many are ruled by the few. It can be argued that Fromm's explanation of the authoritarian character is an explanation of a "disorder of identity"[54]. In chapter one, it was argued that the scope of false consciousness not only includes beliefs, desires and so forth but the individual himself. The theory of ideology claims that the self could be thought of as suffering from false consciousness when the individual has a distorted conception of himself and his place in the world. Fromm's account of the disorders of identity is not unique. Rosen, in his discussion of the emergence of the political concept of false consciousness, argues that the idea that the individual can have a distorted conception of himself can be found in the writings of Plato, St Augustine, Rousseau, and even Marx.

In his historical overview of the emergence of the political conception of false consciousness, Rosen (1996:54) argues that from the theories of Plato, to St Augustine, to Rousseau and finally to Marx, there were significant developments in the conception of false consciousness. Plato and St Augustine both provided an explanation of false consciousness as the "failure of humans to act in a self-directed way (*ibid.*). Rousseau is an important theorist in the history of the *political* concept of false consciousness, because, he explicitly makes the connection between false consciousness and the maintenance of oppressive regimes. Rosen (*ibid.*) in fact claims that Rousseau is the first author to have raised the "idea that in false consciousness the self itself may become 'lost'" and thereby suffer from a disorder of identity.

It is difficult to deny that Fromm's discussion of the authoritarian character is similar to Rousseau's account of *amour-propre*. Rousseau, in "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality" in *The Social contract and Discourses,* defines the concept of *amour-propre* as being a distinctive kind of emotional attitude acquired in society which leads "each individual to make more of himself than any other, causes all the mutual damage men inflict on another" and furthermore "turns man's mind back upon itself, and divides him from everything that could disturb or afflict him" (Rousseau, 1973:66-68). According to Rousseau (*ibid.*:89), the result of *amour-propre* for the individuals is that they could no

[54] See chapter one, "Disorders of Identity."

longer live a good and natural life but instead "ran headlong to their chains, in hopes of securing their liberty." Rousseau (*ibid.*) therefore concludes that these chains,

> bound new fetters on the poor, and gave new powers to the rich, which irretrievably destroyed natural liberty...and, for the advantage of a few ambitious individuals, subjected all mankind to perpetual labour, slavery, and wretchedness

In a similar vein, undoubtedly influenced by Rousseau, Fromm (1943:148) argues that the authoritarian character is unable to "stand alone and to fully express his own individual potentialities." Instead, the individual's sado-masochistic strivings result in his wanting to get rid of his individual self, resulting either in the individual wanting to renounce his individual integrity by submitting to a greater power than he or, that he renounces his individual integrity by dominating others. Fromm (*ibid.*:15) argues that certain[55] men either submit to domination or become dominators as a result of the "very essence of the human mode and practice of life." According to him man needs to be related to the world outside him and furthermore has a strong need to avoid aloneness. As he (*ibid.*) explains:

> To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death. This relatedness to others is not identical with physical contact. An individual may be alone in a physical sense for many years and yet he may be related to ideas, values, or at least social patterns that give him a feeling of communion and belonging.

According to Fromm, an individual may live among people and yet not feel like he belongs with others. This lack of relatedness, Fromm (*ibid.*) argues, is what he calls "moral aloneness" and that it is as "intolerable as physical aloneness." Thus an individual will do anything if it connects him with others and provides refuge from the thing he fears the most, isolation. Rousseau (1973:99), contrary to Fromm, argues that what drives men to servitude is not the fear of isolation but rather their secret desire to be recognised by others. Rousseau (*ibid.*:80) argues that this need for recognition was the unfortunate result of both the natural inequalities of man and that of living in society. As Rousseau (*ibid.*:104) says, "social man lives constantly outside himself, and only knows how to live in the opinion of others." Rousseau's victim of false consciousness is not afraid of freedom or isolation but rather is dependent on others because it is in their judgement of him that he can know of his own existence (Rosen, 1996:83). Rosen

[55] Fromm (1943:149) argues that although the sado-masochistic strivings are common to all men we can consider only certain individuals and social groups as typically sado-masochistic. Fromm would therefore claim that the majority of individuals living under Nazism would be considered as suffering from the traits that make up the authoritarian character.

argues that "in other words, lacking true, independent identity, civilised man adopts a false identity that he draws from others." Still, Rousseau does argue that civilised man suffers from certain psychological problems namely restlessness, anxiety, vanity, and importantly, the need to dominate, (*ibid.*).

How do individuals then find refuge from their fear of freedom or alternatively, seek their identity from others? Fromm, (1943:116) claims that is it through a number of "psychological mechanisms of escape." Like Rousseau, he argues that in order to understand psychological problems one must understand their social and cultural background. In addition, Fromm argues that one "cannot understand social phenomena without the knowledge of the underlying psychological mechanisms" (*ibid.*). In a word, to use Rousseau's maxim, "society must be studied in the individual and the individual in society." Fromm (1973:116) claims that once one is able to understand what is going on in the individual and show how the individual supposedly escapes aloneness and powerlessness, an explanation of domination will be provided.

Mechanisms of Escape

It is the sado-masochistic strivings of the individual that result in the individual wanting to "*get rid of the individual self, to lose oneself*," in other words, *to get rid of the burden of freedom"* (Fromm, 1973:130). It is worth noting that Fromm does not claim that once the individual has submitted to another that he then comes to love his servitude. On the contrary, he argues that the individual can have an immense hatred for his master. Scott, as was argued, claimed that the fact that there was so much hatred and contempt on the part of the oppressed meant that it could not be the case that they were suffering from false consciousness. However, it can be argued that Fromm's account of false consciousness shows how it is possible for an individual to suffer from false consciousness – in terms of a disorder of identity – and at the same time feel resentment or hostility towards his oppressor. Fromm, (*ibid.*:142) does claim that it may be the case that the slave feels hatred towards his master but will repress the feeling of hatred and replace it with blind admiration, to avoid suffering. Again, contrary to Scott and Rosen, Fromm provides an explanation for how it is that the oppressed may come to actively participate in their own servitude. It does not seem counter-intuitive that an individual, in his desire to avoid the pain of moral isolation, would seek to find refuge in feelings of love and admiration for his oppressor.

There are three main mechanisms that may result in the individual escaping his freedom and thereby finding himself as either the oppressor or the oppressed. Fromm (1943:121) maintains that these mechanisms of escape are the result of the insecurity of the isolated individual. In other words, once the individual "faces the world outside himself as a completely separate entity ... he has to overcome the unbearable state of powerlessness and aloneness" (*ibid.*:120). Fromm does not argue that the individual is doomed to either being a slave or a master. In fact, he (*ibid.*:121) maintains that the individual has two courses open to him. The first course may result in the individual becoming one again with himself without giving up the independence and integrity of his individual self and thereby becoming one with his fellow man and nature. The individual then relates himself "spontaneously to the world in love and work, in the genuine expression of his emotional, sensuous, and intellectual capacities" (*ibid.*:120). It is apparent that Fromm, like Marx and Rousseau, had a particular understanding of how it is that man should be in the world. The second course open to the individual, Fromm argues, is for him to "fall back, to give up his freedom and to try to overcome his aloneness by eliminating the gap...between his individual self and the world" (*ibid.*:121). This second course, unlike the first, does not reunite the individual with himself, his fellow man, or nature, because he has more or less completely surrendered his individuality and the integrity of his self. Fromm (*ibid.*) argues that in this latter course the individual is able to make his life possible by avoiding the 'fear of freedom', although "it does not *solve* the underlying problem", namely the individual's feeling of separateness. How does the individual then assuage his unbearable anxiety? Fromm argues there are three mechanisms of escape that are significant for an understanding of certain social phenomena. The mechanisms of escape that will be briefly discussed are firstly, 'authoritarianism', secondly, 'destructiveness' and finally, 'automaton conformity'.

The three mechanisms and the resulting character traits are culturally significant and thereby provide the necessary means with which to analyse social phenomena. The first mechanism of escape from freedom that Fromm examines is that of authoritarianism. The outcome of this mechanism is the development of the 'authoritarian character'. He argues that the individual, due to this mechanism, gives up his own individual self and seeks to fuse himself with somebody or something outside himself in order to "acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking." Fromm (1943:122) argues that the more distinct forms of this mechanism are to be found in the

individual's striving for submission and domination. The individual escapes freedom either by finding somebody to whom he can surrender his freedom or alternatively to find somebody over whom he can dominate. Fromm (*ibid.*:130) argues that both these kinds of escape exist within the individual and make up the masochistic and sadistic strivings respectively. Although the differing strivings produce very different results for the individual involved, Fromm (*ibid.*:133) asserts that in both cases they are a means to the aim of "forgetting one's self."

The second way in which individuals may escape their feeling of powerlessness in comparison to the world outside themselves is by destroying it. This is the second mechanism of escape that may assist in the bringing about of relations of domination. Destructiveness, Fromm (1943:154) argues, is different from the authoritarian mechanism because the latter tends to strengthen the atomised individual by either submitting to a power outside themselves or by the domination over others. Destructiveness, on the other hand, strengthens the individual by removing anything that threatens the individual (Fromm, 1943:154). He (1943:156) argues that there is a close relationship between how much an individual is able to realise his sensuous, emotional, and intellectual potentialities and the destructive mechanism. For him (1943:158) "destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life" and thus the thwarting of the individual's life plans results in the need to destroy all that prevents the individual from expressing himself fully. It is difficult to deny the amount of destructiveness that has occurred and is continuing to occur in the social world. Marx's account of alienation clearly influenced Fromm – particularly the view that the individual will suffer from false consciousness because he has lost touch with all human specificity and has become separated from himself and his life activity (Ollman, 1971:134). Hence, according to both Marx and Fromm an individual, due to the suppression of individual expansiveness, leads a corrupted life by creating inauthentic beliefs, needs, and desires. In fact, Fromm maintains that it is the result of the mechanism of destructiveness that Nazism found support in the lower middle classes in Germany. Fromm (1943:159) argues that Nazism could successfully appeal to these destructive strivings in those individuals who felt their existence was threatened and their life interests were being thwarted. However there is, according to Fromm (*ibid.*), another mechanism that does not result in either the individual renouncing his individual integrity or by destroying others. This third

mechanism of escape is entitled 'automaton conformity' which Fromm (*ibid.*:160) maintained is of the "greatest social significance."

Fromm (1943:160) likens this mechanism to that of the camouflage mechanisms found in chameleons or moths. Like the chameleon individuals, due to their fear of aloneness and powerlessness, seek to become indistinguishable from their surroundings. According to Fromm (1943:160) the person gives up his individual self and becomes "an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around him." This results in the individual no longer feeling alone and anxious but the price he has paid is high, "the loss of his self" (Fromm, 1943:160). Why does Fromm consider this mechanism to be of great social significance? He explains that it contradicts the 'normal' rationalist understanding of individuals, namely that to be rational individuals are thought of as being able to select their actions so that they further their long-term interests (Rosen, 1996:17). As Rosen argues (1996:18) this is closely linked to the rationalist conception of the self which is the view that an opposition exists in human beings "between the desires which they have and their capacity to deal with them." Fromm (1943:161) argues that proponents of modern individualism have been mistaken to believe that individuals are free to think, feel, and act as they please. On the contrary, Fromm argues that this belief is not only erroneous but is an 'illusion' and a dangerous one at that. This is because, according to Fromm (1943:160), "it blocks the removal of those conditions that are responsible for" relations of domination. He argues that an individual may well believe that his beliefs, desires and so forth are his own, and in some cases they will be, however it is possible, as a result of the mechanism of escape, that an individual may hold beliefs and desires that have been adopted from the outside. In other words, the individual may 'think' he subjectively experiences those beliefs and desires and so forth as his own, when in fact they have been induced from the outside.

The implications of this mechanism, if it is a plausible account, would be that an individual could hold beliefs that are contrary to his interests and yet believe that they are in fact his own beliefs. Thus, contrary to Scott and Heath, the social theorist cannot take the beliefs and desires of the individuals as being *their* beliefs and desires. This account is similar to that of Fanon, Biko, and Marx that individuals may come to hold beliefs that are contrary to their interests and yet serve the interests of others. It can be argued that Fromm provides the mechanism that explains the connection that underlies the relation between the *explanans* (theory of ideology) and *explanandum* (domination).

Elster is therefore too quick to dismiss the possibility of explaining how it is that individuals come to hold beliefs that are contrary to the interests of the individuals who hold them and at the same time beneficial to another group. Fromm's account of the mechanisms of escape are by no means uncontroversial particularly his discussion of how it is that feelings and thoughts can be induced from the outside and yet be subjectively experienced by the individual as being his own. It is difficult to deny, however, that Fromm does provide an illuminating account of how it is that individuals come to participate in their own oppression. That said even Fromm (1943:253) acknowledges that we cannot make sense of these mechanisms without an understanding of the social conditions that may give rise to the need for escape.

Fromm's rich account of the way in which the economic, psychological and ideological factors interact enriches the theorist of ideology's understanding as to why it is that individuals allow themselves to be dominated by a power outside of themselves. Furthermore, an understanding of how it is that the oppressed may volunteer in their own oppression. However, it is difficult to see how this account is exhaustive in its explanation of domination in society. It does provide an elaborating account of how the behaviour of individuals may contribute to relations of domination. Indeed, Fromm (*ibid.*) in his account of the relationship between the psychological motivations of individuals and the nature of the social structure argues that one cannot discount the influence of the social structure, on the individual. In fact, Fromm (*ibid.*) concludes that the "social character results from the dynamic adaptation of human nature to the structure of society". It should be clear that an account of *just* the behaviour of individuals will not be as informative without an account of the overarching forces and relations constraining and directing that behaviour (Cohen, 1982:489).

3. Conclusion: An Integrated Theory of Ideology

In conclusion, the elaborating explanation provided by Scott, Elster and Fromm provide "a fuller explanation and locate the functional fact within a longer story which specifies its explanatory role more precisely" (Cohen, 1978:286). The 'functional fact' is the role beliefs play in the maintenance of oppressive regimes and that this function helps in the explanation. In agreement with Rosen, the theory of ideology cannot escape its own historical background, yet it still provides the means with which to understand deeply embedded social phenomena. Furthermore the theory of ideology as presented

in chapter two does not provide such knowledge without an elaboration of its explanation.

In sum, there is no reason to accept the background belief that societies are self-maintaining in order to provide a functionalist account of ideology. It is, however, hard to dismiss the background belief that illegitimate societies maintain themselves through false consciousness on the part of their citizens (Rosen, 1996:262). It is the case that the theory of ideology contains no satisfactory elaborating explanation to support its functionalist claims. This, however, does not mean the theory of ideology should be abandoned. The mechanisms discussed in this chapter do provide elaborations of the explanation provided by the theory of ideology, thereby locating the claims made by the theory of ideology within a longer story. It may be argued that theorists such as Fanon and Biko have made use of such explanations to make sense of why domination occurs in their societies. The next chapter will examine these explanations. In light of the discussion so far, it will be argued that such explanations provide, contrary to Rosen, an understanding of why domination occurred (and still occurs) in African society.

Chapter 4. The Frame-work Applied

1. The Puzzle of Domination: An African Perspective

Rosen (1996:272) in his conclusion to *On Voluntary Servitude* argues that the problems the theory of ideology seeks to explain remain unresolved. He does not believe that the theory of ideology can cope with them. The African continent has not escaped the puzzling though frequently observed feature of political life: "namely, that those who are maltreated – oppressed, exploited, even enslaved – do not always reject that treatment" (Rosen, 2000:393). It is difficult to claim that there should be anything unique about the African experience because "human history is a history of the domination of the members of dominated groups" (Levine, 1998:304). Hence, even though the African continent has immense untapped mineral wealth, millions of acres of untilled farmland and untold human potential it is marred by state-sanctioned violence, corruption and outright oppression (Ayittey: 1998:6). In many African countries, individual security has been greatly threatened, for example, the genocide in Rwanda and Burundi, mutilations in Sierra Leone, state-sanctioned violence in Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Sudan. In post-colonial Africa, with few exceptions, authoritarian politics has dominated. For the majority of Africans the euphoria of the liberation struggle, the calls for independence and freedom and the promise of 'paradise' have now turned into a "starvation diet, unemployment, and a gun to the head" (Ayittey, 1998:7). Despite vast changes in the political landscape of Africa it would seem that past dreams of freedom and social and economic equality have not become a reality. The levels of poverty and inequality throughout the continent seem to be increasing rather than decreasing. The question that has to be asked is: How has the majority of the African population allowed itself to endure such oppression?

In order to understand Africa's current problems it is necessary to confront the effects of colonialism "which to this day defines, in all spheres of life, the situation of the present" (Serequeberhan, 1998:9). The effects of colonialism that we are concerned with in this chapter result in the question: Did African theorists argue that the nature of colonialism was such that it enabled the minority, the colonisers to oppress the majority, the colonised? What will be investigated here are the explanations of colonial oppression provided by two scholars, Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko. It will be argued, especially in the case of Fanon, that the explanations of domination they provided are

applicable to an analysis of how it is that the majority of the colonised are ruled by the minority of colonisers. The universality of Fanon and Biko's insight is in part due to their understanding of western philosophy and its intellectual history. In the foreword of *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, Harris and Johnson ask "is it possible for Fanon to speak to us about the relationship of oppression?" [56]. I would argue that Fanon and Biko can and do provide important insights into relations of domination not only in Africa but also across the globe. Harris and Johnson (1996:xvi) argue, fittingly in my view, that "the reality of Fanonism, the reality of colonialism, the legacy of foreign domination and the pervasiveness of anti-black racism are realities of today". Hountondji argues that a true description of the face of contemporary Africa "must include a mention of the bare hands of men and women so exploited and mystified that they make themselves active accomplices of their executioners" (Coetzee, 2002:547). I argue that the explanation of domination that both Fanon and Biko provide is important because their explanation still speaks to the oppression with which people are faced today.

Remembering Fanon and Biko

It is valuable to speak of Fanon and Biko[57] today because oppression continues to be ever-present. What social thinkers for millennia have tried to do is understand the dynamics and consequences of oppression for both the masters and the slaves. The project of understanding oppression has also been accompanied by a particular understanding of how the individual should be in the world. In other words, this 'ultimate human project' aims to restore the integrity of the individuals, allowing them to become one with their fellows and the natural order. Theorists of domination, such as Rousseau, Marx, Fromm, Fanon and Biko had a vision of individuals relating "spontaneously to the world in love and work, in the genuine expression of his [or her] emotional, sensuous and intellectual capacities" (Fromm, 1943:120). Marx's polemic against oppression focuses centrally on the idea that relations of domination, such as those brought about by capitalism, not only betray the inviolability of the human individual but also prevent the realisation of people's true nature (Coetzee, 2002:547). It is because oppression occurs not only between so-called races but also between people of different gender,

[56] This question could also apply to the work of Biko.

[57] See the reference list for a more complete list of biographical sources. More recent biographical sketches of Fanon, include Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White (1996:1-5), Alessandrini (1999:2-4) and Hansen (1999; 49-102). For recent brief biographical sketches of Biko see the Introduction, (Biko, 1987:1-2) also http://africanhistory.about.com/library/biographies/blbio-stevebiko.htm (07.08.2004) and http://www.sbf.org.za/ (07.08.2004).

age, physical size, income, nationality, religion, education and within sexual relations that this is of such abiding importance (Dane, 1994).

Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko both experienced the brutal effects of domination. Despite this, and probably because of this, they tried to provide an explanation of why it was so pervasive in their societies. Fanon (1967:12) argued that "every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time". Fanon and Biko do belong to their time. Yet, they are connected through their works on domination to the present.

The names Steve Biko and Frantz Fanon have become closely linked as they both became part of a larger struggle for freedom. Despite being born twenty-one years apart and on different continents, they shared a concern for colonialism, racism, and political development in Africa. Fanon is the author of four books; *Black Skin, White Masks (Peau Noire, masques blancs.* 1952*), A dying colonialism* (*L'An V de la révolution algérienne.*1959*), The Wretched of the Earth (Les Damnés de la terre.* 1961*)* and, *Toward the African Revolution (Pour la révolution africaine.* 1964*),* Through them he became a towering figure in African philosophy and twentieth-century revolutionary thought. His influence is clear in the selection of writings by Biko, *I Write What I Like* (1988). The questions that these two philosophers, critical theorists and revolutionaries posed are relevant across academic disciplines and political doctrines (Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting and White, 1996:1). Although their subject matter is African this does not limit its relevance to that continent (Jinadu, 1986:9). In this chapter it will be argued that Fanon and Biko are able to supply a powerful critique of domination because they provide it within the framework of an integrated theory of ideology.

2. The Framework Re-Stated: What is Ideology?

I have argued that the usefulness of the term ideology lies in its capacity to discriminate between ideological consciousness and non-ideological consciousness in terms of their effects in social life. It was claimed that the type of explanation provided by the theory of ideology was a functionalist one. According to this account, oppressive societies, *by their very nature*, engender a particular ideological consciousness. In addition, the beliefs, desires, interests, perceptions and actions of individuals perform their ideological function in a number of ways, for example, the individual's belief that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable, or when the individual in an attempt to reduce cognitive dissonance believes that she loves her master, as is the case with the mechanism of wishful thinking discussed in the previous chapter. Contrary

to Rosen (1996) and Elster (1985), it is not necessary to conceive of society as self-maintaining in order to provide a functional account of ideology. In Chapter Two it was argued that the functionalist theory of ideology is a macro-foundational explanation of domination. It was claimed that the theory has intellectual validity because it provides a social theorist with the means to understand the operation of a phenomenon like ideology at a holistic or social level. The functionalist theory of ideology, it was said, is correct in its claims that the usefulness of the beliefs of the dominated are not accidental, in spite of the absence of an explanation of *how* their usefulness explains their existence. I agree with Cohen (1978:283) that the macro-foundational account is valid even in the absence of an explanation of the theory of ideology's functional claims. Rosen is correct in his criticism of this explanation of domination because the content, history and social effects of ideological consciousness cannot be *fully* explained in terms of their role in promoting or stabilising relations of domination (Shelby, 2003:179). It was because of this criticism that the functionalist explanation of the theory of ideology was extended to include micro-mechanisms explain the claims made by the theory. The previous chapter presented a number of micro-foundational accounts of ideology that help to explain the possibility of mechanism(s) of ideological-belief formation. However, it was concluded that the micro-foundational accounts of ideology would not be as informative in the absence of an account of the overarching forces and relations constraining and directing individuals' behaviour and in that sense should be read as elaborations of a revised theory of ideology. We need an integrated account of ideology to explain both the psychological motivations of individuals and the nature of the oppressive society in which they find themselves. Hence, the conception of ideology presented can be summarised this way: (1) Ideological consciousness benefits some oppressive social entity or structure (2) it has been formed according to a poor mechanism (3) it persists because it promotes or stabilises the entity or structure in question, and (4) its wide acceptance can be largely explained by accounts[58] of how individuals come to embrace ideological consciousness.

Thus, adapting the theory to include a micro-foundational account of ideology serves to strengthen the theory rather than undermine it. Contrary to Rosen (2000:393), the solution to the puzzle of domination offered by an integrated theory of ideology is indeed explanatory. The reason why Rosen was too quick in his dismissal of the theory

[58] This micro-account of ideology can contain more than one of the mechanisms discussed in chapter three, indicating how complex the social can be.

of ideology is because he did not take into account the fact that it could be expanded to account for the mechanism that ensures that, over time, the society in question acquires ideological consciousness which furthers its welfare. As a critical theory, the integrated theory of ideology is, I believe, crucial for understanding and resisting the forms of oppression that exist in the world today. It enables social scientists not only to describe and explain past social phenomena but also to make certain predictions about the future (Taiwo, 1996:256). It will be argued that Fanon's almost prophetic insights into the future landscape of African politics is indebted to an integrated theory of ideology, of the kind explained and defended in the previous chapters. In order to show the explanatory power of the integrated theory of ideology it is crucial that one moves from high-level theoretical abstraction to concrete social analyses[59]. In an effort to defend the theory of ideology and *Ideologiekritik,* I shall in the remainder of this chapter offer a critique of the social analyses provided by Fanon and Biko. I would argue that in their role as social scientists, Fanon and Biko established insightful connections among complex social phenomena, provided a powerful interpretation of them, identified various trends and tendencies and finally directed those interested to future possibilities.

Fanon and Biko provide a similar solution to the puzzle of domination in terms of an ideological critique of the social system in which they found themselves. The notion of 'ideology'[60] in both authors' work, it will be argued, is similar to the account defended so far. As will become apparent, both Fanon and Biko effectively use an integrated theory of ideology in order to make sense of the world. As will be shown, Fanon and Biko's perceptions were fairly accurate - partly due to their profound understanding of the nature of colonialism, which was informed by the integrated theory of ideology. By working within the framework of such an integrated theory of ideology, Fanon and Biko did not limit their explanation of domination to a macro-foundational account of ideology. I will argue that Fanon and Biko peered into the black box and provided a micro-

---

[59] In a similar fashion Shelby (2003:179) argues that to show the explanatory power of the Marxist theory of ideology in particular, one should move from high-level theoretical abstraction to concrete social analyses.

[60] Though Fanon and Biko never directly define ideology, it should be noted that they use the term in two distinct though related ways (Gibson, 1999: 360). The first is in the positive or laudatory sense. For example, Fanon argues that Africa is in great danger because it lacks an ideology. The second is in the negative or pejorative sense, as when Fanon (1967:14) says that his main concern is to show to the black man (and white man) that his beliefs, perceptions, desires, attitudes and actions prevented him from seeing how he voluntarily participated in his own servitude. As argued in chapter one, the theory of ideology would not consider a form of consciousness ideological unless it benefited or promoted an *oppressive* social order. It is the second sense in which Fanon and Biko use the term 'ideology' that is of interest here.

foundational account that explains how the victims of racism come to hold ideological beliefs. Hence, the explanation of oppression provided by their integrated theory of ideology can be considered genuine because it makes clear, for the social theorist, why certain phenomena perform the functions that they do[61]. In conclusion, I will disagree with Rosen to say that the integrated theory of ideology counts as a good explanation.

4. Fanon and Biko's *Ideologiekritik*

It was argued that an analysis of the theory of ideology is essential because it engages one in the debate about the very nature of knowledge and one's conception of society. The discussion so far has not shied away from participating in this debate. It is clear that both Fanon and Biko investigated and theorised not only social institutions and practices but also the beliefs people have about their societies. Guess (1981:2) argues that the main aim of a critical theory such as the integrated theory of ideology is to give us a kind of knowledge of society which in itself enlightens and emancipates us[62]. It is difficult to deny that as critical theorists, Fanon and Biko engaged in the debate about the nature of knowledge and one's conception of society, employing in the process the main assumptions of the integrated theory of ideology in their explanations of domination. The first of these assumptions was that the oppressed suffer from a form of false consciousness that prevents them from seeing the true nature of their oppression.

3.1. Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko: A micro-foundational account of ideology

In my view Fanon and Biko's ideological critique of colonial, post-colonial and neocolonial society includes a micro-foundational account of ideology. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) Fanon argues that "reality, for once, requires total understanding". To understand the reality of colonial and post-colonial society, according to Fanon (1967:10), one has to examine not only the nature of society but also the individual who "brings society into being". It is only by applying "sociodiagnosis", Fanon (1967:11) argues, that one can hope to understand the complex nature of domination in society. The manufacture of racist ideologies is a sophisticated process which operates at two levels. It operates, firstly at the level of society which has to be viewed in its totality and secondly, at the level of the individuals that make up the society. For example, Biko

---

[61] In chapter two, it was argued that 'to explain' means "quite simply, to make clear, so that to explain why is to make clear why, to explain what is to make clear what, etc" (Cohen, 1978:251).

[62] A discussion of the three central theses is provided on page two.

(1967:88) asserts "the system derives its nourishment from the existence of anti-black attitudes in society". In order to overcome the oppressive nature of such attitudes, Fanon (2001:27) says that the whole social structure must be changed. This change can only happen, according to Fanon (2001:27) and Biko (1967:49), once a change has occurred in the consciousness of the men and women who are oppressed. Their reason is that what allows for the continuation of relations of domination is the manifestation of oppression in the very minds of the oppressed. I would argue that Fanon and Biko, by employing a micro-foundational account of ideology, identify the mechanism(s) of how the victims of racism come to hold ideological beliefs. Fanon and Biko recognise that the consciousness of the oppressed plays a crucial role in the continuation of their servitude. Part of Fanon and Biko's critique involves an explanation of the dehumanising effect that racial ideology has on both the colonised and colonisers. In particular, both authors provide an account of the mechanism(s) that allow the victims of racism to play a role in their own servitude.

3.1.1. Fanon and the Mechanism(s) Of Psychological Oppression

With his training in psychiatry and his personal experience of racism, Fanon was greatly preoccupied with and deeply distressed by a puzzling feature of colonialism: it seemed that black people idolised their oppressors, namely white people (Ranuga, 1986:182). The explanation he said, could be found at *both the level of the individual and the nature of the social system.* Fanon's writings were aimed principally at showing the oppressed the role they played in their own subjugation revealing to them, in the vocabulary of this study, *the mechanism that enables the reproduction of their oppression*. He gives a detailed account in *Black Skins, White Masks* of what colonialism looked like from inside the skull (Dane, 1994:76). His (1967:10) analysis of the black man is psychological and he looks, in a similar fashion to Fromm, to the personality structure of the oppressed in order to understand their oppression. Both Fromm and Fanon explore the inside of the black box and explain that it is a complex interplay between the psychological factors and the personality structures of individuals that results in them contributing to the maintenance of oppressive societies. Fanon (1967:10) characterises the colonised as having an inferiority complex deeply ingrained within their souls. The result is that the victims of racism, "become their own oppressors; they come to exercise harsh dominion over their own self-esteem" (Bartky, 1990:22). In other words, the oppressed become their own "chief supervisors" in the discipline of their

submission (Kotzin, 1993:17). Colonialism distorts the colonial subject's psyche, rendering him incapable of being human and resulting in "psychic alienation". Although Fanon does not use the concept 'false consciousness' it is clear that the disorders he describes, the 'psychic alienation' of the black person, fall under the third mode of false consciousness discussed in chapter one, namely, distortions of identity[63]. Fanon (2001:200) argues that the racist ideology of colonialism amounted to the systematic negation of the colonised, denying them all attributes of humanity. The question Elster (1985:466), Scott (1990) and other critics of *Ideologiekritik* would ask is: How does racist ideology achieve this? Fanon (1967) provides the answer, I would argue, by way of a detailed micro-foundational account of ideology which reveals such mechanisms. Fanon starts from what is basically seen as a type of methodological individualism: he demonstrates, at the level of the individual, how in reaction to white colonial society the individual becomes dominated by his or her own mind (Jinadu, 1986:126). Fanon's political psychology[64] does not limit itself to tracing the effects of beliefs and desires on individual action and thereby on social processes. It also explores the mechanisms by which such desires and beliefs are formed.

Fanon argues that the assault on the personality, culture and even history of the colonised is an integral part of the exercise of colonial rule (McCulloch, 1983:36). Fanon's critique of the effects of colonialism on the colonised is based on his contention that political and socio-economic structures powerfully condition and influence the behaviour of the individual (Jinadu, 1986:42). He (1970:37) argues that racism did not come about by accident but is the result of "the shameless exploitation of one group of men by another". Fanon, in my view, provides an explanation of an additional mechanism[65] for false consciousness that of "inferiority". I would argue that the mechanism of inferiority to be both a cognitive and motivational mechanism and therefore has elements of the mechanisms of "wishful thinking" and of "sour grapes" as discussed in the previous chapter. In the oppressive colonial system individuals find themselves in an unpleasant state, the wanting of recognition, which induces within them a motivation to adapt their beliefs to their desires (cognitive change) and a

---

[63] In chapter one it was argued that the self can be thought of as suffering from false consciousness when an individual has suffered a 'loss of identity' and is unable to remain with him- or herself in otherness (Rosen, 1996:40).

[64] See Elster (1993) for a detailed discussion of political psychology as an intellectual discipline.

[65] It was argued in the previous chapter that there can be a number of mechanisms that may explain how it is that the oppressed come to play a role in their servitude. In the last chapter two mechanisms for false consciousness were identified and discussed namely "wishful thinking" and "sour grapes".

motivation to change their desires and beliefs. Thus, it is possible for Fanon (1967:11) to argue that those who are prey to racism come to suffer an inferiority complex that "is the outcome of a double process: – primarily, economic; – subsequently, the internalisation – or, better, the epidermalization – of this inferiority. " Similar to the mechanisms of wishful thinking and sour grapes, the cognitive and motivational mechanism of inferiority is a key mechanism for producing compliance within colonialism.

In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) Fanon describes how the black man and woman come to internalise this feeling of inferiority. Here Fanon is concerned with the possible mechanisms that "*distort* desires and beliefs, broadly defined as those whose operation would be unacceptable to the subject were he [or she] aware of it" (Elster, 1993:12). I see Fanon's psychoanalytic interpretation of the 'black problem' as similar to Fromm's reading of the psychological mechanisms of escape. Fanon argues that one of the reactions of black people to the racist ideology of the occupying power is to run away from their own individuality and to annihilate their own presence (Kruks, 1996:127). Echoing Fromm (1973:130), Fanon (1970:38) says that individuals actually *want* to get rid of their individual selves. They might do this by giving up their own individuality and becoming an "automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around" (Fromm, 1943:160). In the words of Fanon (1970:39):

> having judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his language, his food habits, his sexual behaviour, his way of sitting down, of resting, of laughing, of enjoying himself, the oppressed *flings himself* upon the imposed culture with the desperation of a drowning man.

One of the ways the oppressed can fling themselves upon a culture is to proclaim their "total and unconditional adoption of the new cultural models" (Fanon, 1970:38).

According to Fanon (1967:44), the black woman and man's dream of salvation consists of "magically turning white". For Fanon, it is the encounter with the white world that creates their neurosis, and their need to become indistinguishable by skin colour drives them to seek accommodation with the culture of Europe through the adoption of its values, language and custom (Macey, 2000:192). I would argue that Elster's (1985:466) account of the first mechanism for false consciousness (wishful thinking) can in part explain why individuals might adapt their beliefs to their desires. Here, in order to reduce the psychic discomfort that they as black people experience in the 'white' world, they might come to believe that they wish to be white.

One of the ways in which the black person can achieve this is by marrying a white man or woman. Fanon (1967:63) argues that what is in the mind of the man of colour is that "by loving me she [the white woman] proves that I am worth[y] of white love" and that he is "loved like a white man". Similarly, the woman of colour by loving the white man demands nothing "except a bit of whiteness in her life" (Fanon, 1967:42). The man of colour, according to Fanon (1967:66), wants to prove to others that he is a man and that he is their equal. By achieving this 'whiteness' people of colour no longer feel tension or dissonance between their desires and beliefs, because by 'wishing' that they were the white person's equals they have restored harmony or consonance (Elster, 1999:20). However, Fanon (1967:66) warns that we should not be misled: it is not the white person that needs to be convinced of the fact that the man of colour is their equal but the person of colour. Fanon (1967:81) holds that this "quest for white flesh" is a false desire that impedes the oppressed from understanding their real situation. It would seem, contrary to Rosen's (1996:268) critique of Elster's mechanism of wishful thinking, that Fanon also assumes that the individual might, for the sake of satisfaction, confuse imagination and reality. Yet, for Fanon the dreams of the colonised are "not what Freudian analysis calls the fulfilment of repressed wishes, usually of a sexual nature, but a reaction to the real frustrations of their lives" (Macey, 2000:474).

Unlike Elster (1983: 147), Fanon employs the assumptions of an integrated theory of ideology and argues that there is a systematic and explanatory correlation between the belief systems of individuals and the maintenance of oppressive societies. As will be seen in the discussion of Fanon's critique of negritude, Fanon gives an account similar to Elster's (1999:466) second motivational mechanism, that of "sour grapes". Fanon argues that people of colour, having discovered that they cannot become recognised as white and experiencing psychic discomfort induces within themselves a motivation to cease wanting to be white. The mechanism of sour grapes will become more apparent once Fanon's critique of negritude has been set out. For Fanon, there are mechanisms that bring about ideological consciousness because of the benefits such consciousness provide for the dominant group in society. In sum, the mind of the oppressed works in a way that is beneficial to the oppressors and this in itself provides an explanation of those mental states.

Fanon's insights into the mechanisms of oppression make him a "worldly philosopher" and such insights, I argue, can be used in illuminating the dynamics and consequences not only of racial oppression but also, for example, religious and sexual oppression (Dane, 1994). Fanon sought to understand what the processes were which forced the black person to want to become white. It is here that Fanon is most influential. In his account of oppression and drawing on Hegel, Marx and Jean-Paul Sartre, Fanon demonstrates how all identity is relational (Trotter, 1999:38). Like Hegel, with his account of the master—slave dialectic, Fanon too argues that both the racist and victim of racism engage in a battle for recognition and ultimately self-knowledge. The outcome of this battle, Fanon (1967:12) declares, is a "massive psycho-existential complex". It is only by analysing this complex, Fanon argues, that one can hope to destroy it. Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1948) influenced Fanon very much as is evident in *Black Skin, White Masks* where he discusses the demand for recognition through the trope of racial identity (Ahluwalia, 2003:343). Ahluwalia (*ibid*) argues that what Fanon learnt from European existentialism was the "basic concept of nonbeing".

In answer to his question "What does the black man want?" Fanon argues that the black man wants recognition. As a result of the colonial world in which black people live, they discover that they are each merely "an object in the midst of other objects" (Fanon, 1967:109). In an oft-quoted passage, Fanon (*ibid*: 110—13) describes the lived experience of being black and of being objectified by the 'Other':

> "Look, a Negro!" It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile. "Look, a Negro!" It was true. It amused me. "Look, a Negro!" The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement. "Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible ... On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object ... my body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recoloured, clad in mourning in that white winter day.

For Fanon the process of becoming an object, of becoming a black man in relation to the white man is played out in three stages (Ahluwalia, 2003:344). The first stage consists in being sighted by the white child who draws Fanon's attention to his 'corporeal schema' by replacing it with an 'epidermal schema'. This leads to the second stage where Fanon is aware that the child's gaze is a racially saturated one that makes Fanon nauseous. Ahluwalia (2003:344) argues that it is Fanon's nausea that brings on the third stage which forces Fanon to recognise that the gaze traps, injures and turns

him into a condition of nonbeing. Obviously, objectification never actually turns the individual into an object. Objectification is not the turning of people into things but rather the attempt to *pretend* that they are things and, "more importantly, forcing them to accept that pretence, at least in relation to the oppressors" (Schmitt, 1996:39).

Scott (1990:27) argues that the practice of domination has the effect of making it possible for the oppressors and oppressed to 'act' out the relations of domination. To illustrate this, Scott (*ibid*:70) argues that both the elites and the subordinates have good reasons to help sustain the pretence or at least not to contradict it openly. With the "script and stage directions" being in the hands of the master, the slave performs as required (*ibid)*. Hence, the slave constantly acts in accordance with the wishes of the ruler by "deference, subordination, and ingratiation" (*ibid*:28). In reaction, Fanon makes one aware of the need to break out of this play and to be a person among other persons (Ahluwalia, 2003:345). According to Fanon the exposure of the black man to white culture induces an inauthentic identification with whiteness (Kruks, 1996:128). This explains why the Antilles Negro is so fond of speaking French: he is searching for his identity within the parameters of the identity denied to him by the white man. To wear European clothes, to speak French or English *like* the French and English and to marry them is to become whiter, to gain a feeling of "equality with the European and his achievements" (*ibid*:25). However, the pretence of objectification cannot be maintained indefinitely and is constantly in danger of being disrupted by reality (Schmitt, 1996:38).

The black man's problem becomes one of authenticity (Kruks, 1996:127). The black man is enslaved by his inferiority because he has internalised it. He holds himself in this inferior position because he cannot retrieve his authentic self. Fanon (1986:20) argues that the mechanism of inferiority effects the further self-division of the black person when he becomes divided from his fellow black people. Fanon (1967:17) holds that the black man behaves not only differently with a white man but also with other black men. This relationship with other black men can become distorted to the extent that many Antilleans simply do not think of themselves as black. For Fanon (*ibid*:20), this explains why middle-class Antilleans never speak Creole except to their servants. Fanon argues that man in racist capitalist society leads a corrupted life – a life of alienation and economic estrangement, the result of which is the creation of inauthentic beliefs, needs and desires that then require satisfaction. These needs, however, are not real in that

they are constructs of broken relations between man and nature and the subsequent distortion of who man really is.

Fanon's account is important because by identifying the mechanism that accounts for how individuals embrace the beliefs they do he shows the role the oppressed play in their domination. By striving to be white, he maintains, the man of colour has "internalised white Negrophobia" (Kruks, 1996:129). The restructuring of consciousness is essential in order to overcome oppression yet, merely attaining decolonisation will not be enough to bring about the decolonisation of the mind. Hence, in order to overcome oppression in society, one has not only to address the mind of the oppressor and oppressed alike, but also the "radical re-ordering of society" (Gibson, 1999:11).

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) Fanon recognises that decolonisation could merely entail "quite simply the replacing of a certain 'species' of men by another 'species' of men". His accurate analysis of the newly independent African countries leads him to maintain that unless the fight against oppression is a revolutionary one, decolonisation will just mean "the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are the legacy of the colonial period". Fanon strives for a revolution that will not only free black people but also white people (Ahluwalia and Zegeye, 2001:459). Sartre, in the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth,* argues that Fanon draws the white man's attention to his own ideological consciousness that he too has to be "decolonised: that is to say that the settler which is in every one of us is being savagely rooted out". Sartre (1948:54) argues that it is the oppressor who makes the oppressed. For example, it is the anti-Semite who makes the Jew. Fanon, clearly influenced by Sartre's phenomenology, argues that both the black person and the white person are products of the racial Manichaeism of the colonial world. Fanon argues that colonisation is a violent process and has a corrupting effect not only on the colonised but also the colonisers. The claim is that the logic of colonial rule inevitably dehumanises the colonisers (Jinadu, 1986:25).

One of Fanon's claims is that "Fascism and Nazism were internal manifestations of practices inherent in colonialism" (Jinadu 1986:25). In fact it is my contention that Fanon considered, like Sartre (2001:33), the violent structure of the colonial situation to be global in its reach. Hence I would argue that the revolution cannot and should not occur only in the former colonies. For Fanon racist ideology is a systemic disease that

requires systemic treatment. Working within the framework of what is described here as an integrated theory of ideology Fanon was able to move from a micro-foundational explanation to that of a macro-foundational account of domination. This is something that Fanon would not have been able to do had he adopted a more traditional Marxist theory of ideology. This is because he would not have been able to peer into the black box thereby limiting him to an account of just the structure of the colonial situation. It is Fanon's use of an integrated theory of ideology that enabled him to articulate a vision of liberation that Steve Biko would find attractive.

Biko remains, I would argue, one of the most important black theorists in South Africa and across the globe. Biko agrees with Fanon on the importance of giving an account of how the individual comes to play a role in his or her own servitude. He argues that for black South Africans to overcome their oppression they needed to free themselves of their psychological inferiority complex. Indeed what made Biko's ideas new and so powerful was that he presented an alternative to the lived experience of the oppressed. He did this by locating the possibility "for change *within the subject of the oppressed*, and not simply within the South African economy or in the hierarchy of the system" (Turner and Alan, 1986:22).

3.1.2. The Black Consciousness of Steve Biko

The revolutionary ideas of Fanonite politics found their way into the minds and hearts of the victims of oppressive and racist colonial regimes (Ranuga, 1986:186). One such "victim" was Steve Biko who played an invaluable role in the anti-apartheid movement and is considered the father of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in South Africa (Biko, 1987:2). Ranuga (1986:186) claims that the writings of Fanon on the struggles of the oppressed "was effectively harnessed and transformed into a potent force" by Steve Biko. Along with the BCM, Steve Biko has been credited with helping black people in South Africa overcome the racist ideology which had for centuries hampered them in their political thinking and action especially in their struggle against white domination (Ahluwalia and Zegeye, 2001:460). Xolela Mangcu, the executive director of the Steve Biko foundation describes the various factors that influenced Biko's political development and argues that Biko was a voracious reader. Quoting Barney Pityana, Mangcu (2004) maintains that Biko's black consciousness was moulded by a diversity of intellectual forces, "from the liberation history of South Africa, the Pan-Africanism of Kwame Nkruhmah, the African nationalism of Jomo Kenyatta, the

negritude of the West African scholars like Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire and others in Paris". Thus, BC promoted by Biko was to prove "the most comprehensive critique as well as the most comprehensive alternative to the prevailing racist value system of what Biko called the totality of the white-power structure" (*ibid*:3).

Steve Biko also had an explanation of why the black man was oppressed in his own country. In *I Write What I Like* (1988) Biko draws on Fanon to take us into the mind of the black person and explains the role apartheid played in producing "a number of people who are not aware that they too are people" (Biko, 1998:65). Racism, according to Biko, had produced false images of the black person in terms of culture, education, religion, and economics. The importance of BC for Biko was that it enlightened black people on the terrible role they played in their own servitude:

> At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realization by the blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters. (Biko, 1987:82)

This "psychological feeling of inferiority" on the part of the blacks and "superiority" on the part of the whites, argues Biko, was "deliberately cultivated by the system". Biko (*ibid*:28-29), like Marx, Reich and Fanon, observed a puzzling feature about the society in which he found himself namely that the black person was awed by the "white power structure" and seemed to find "solace only in close identification with the white society". He argues that in response to white domination the "black man *(sic)* has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity" (*ibid*:29). He argues that the reason why the black person bears the yoke of oppression is because the black person suffers not only economic poverty but also spiritual poverty. Quoting Fanon, Biko (*ibid*) argues that,

> the colonialists were not satisfied merely with holding a people in their grip and emptying the Native's brain of all form and content, they turned to the past of the oppressed people and distorted, disfigured and destroyed it.

For Biko this was the first truth that the black person (and white person) had to understand in order for emancipation to occur. Biko (*ibid*:144) identified this spiritual poverty in the anti-apartheid student organisations, in particular the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). In an interview, Biko (*ibid*:144) explained that when he entered university in Durban in 1966 he and his friends, after some analysis, discovered

an anomaly in the NUSAS situation. NUSAS was meant to be multiracial organisation fighting oppression but was in fact overwhelmingly white with a white leadership (Ahluwalia and Zegeye, 2001:460). Biko (1987:144) and his friends articulated the anomaly thus: "Whites were in fact the main participants in our opposition and at the same time the main participants in the opposition to that oppression". The implication of this was that black people were not participating actively in shifting political opinion. Biko argued that because the "arena was totally controlled by whites", organisations such as NUSAS were "concentrating mainly on problems which were affecting the white student community" and not the black student community. The black student community, according to Biko (1987:68), had to take control of their own liberation and to "become more and more conscious of the self". The only way to become more consciousness of the self, according to the BCM, was for black people to discover *what it was that lent them so easily to denigrate themselves* (Ahluwalia and Zegeye, 2001:460). This was, for Biko and his friends, their call for a black consciousness on the part of the oppressed. For Biko (1987:48), being black was not a matter of pigmentation but rather it is a "reflection of a mental attitude". Hence it can be argued that for Biko it is the victims of racist ideology, regardless of skin pigmentation, who required BC. He therefore calls on those sympathetic whites to take on the notions of BC and to address white racism. According to Biko (1987:25), white racism is the problem, and the white population must see themselves as equally oppressed by white society. Thus Biko (*ibid*:23) calls on white people, so-called white liberals in particular, to "concern themselves with the real evil in our society – white racism". Once black people have been made aware that they suffer from false consciousness it is important for them to understand that they suffer from it because it contributes to the maintenance of the oppressive society within which they live. As a result, it is important to shift the focus from looking inside the black box to the context in which the black box exists.

As a result, Biko and his fellow students formed the South African Students Organisation (SASO). One of the aims of this organisation was to enlighten and free the victims of racist ideology. It is clear that for Biko, unlike Scott (1990:78) and Heath (2000), the oppressed are relatively quiescent. The reason they are, Biko and Fanon say, is because their beliefs, ideas, and desires prevent them from, as Rose would put it, "behaving as their interest would otherwise dictate" (1996:1). The consciousness that Biko and Fanon describe is ideological because it conceals or misrepresents aspects of

racist society that, if apprehended directly (by both the victim of racism and the racist), would be damaging to the interests of those benefiting from racist ideology, and damaging to the society in question. Working within the framework of an integrated theory of ideology Biko (1987:29) argued that the only way to change racist society is if the victims of racism become conscious of the role they play in the maintenance of racist society. For the black person to become conscious, Biko (1987:29) argues,

> the first step ... is to make the black man *(sic)* come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity; to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth.

This, according to Biko (*ibid*), is the definition of black consciousness. The main assumption behind BC is that, once aware of their ideological consciousness, the oppressed could no longer be unconscious of themselves and remain in bondage nor aspire to whiteness (*ibid*). Hence, one of the main projects of the BCM was to elevate black people from their position of servitude by fashioning positive self-concepts, thereby shedding any and all inferiority complexes (*ibid*:51). Biko (*ibid*:68) argues that "thinking along lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man *(sic)* see himself as a being, entire in himself" and no longer as, in Marx's terms, "an appendage of the [racist] machine" (Tucker, 1978:479). Thus, the philosophy of BC expresses the need to "rewrite the history of the black man" (Biko, 1987:30). Part of this rewriting, involved for Biko and other proponents of BC the acceptance of the black person's 'blackness'. Acceptance of one's blackness entails being proud of one's history, language, culture and value system (*ibid*:145). One way of achieving such pride, according to Biko (*ibid*:52), is by "rejecting false images of ourselves [the black person] in terms of Culture, Education, Religion, Economics".

Drawing on Hegel and Sartre, Biko (*ibid*:51) argues that "since the thesis is a white racism there can only be one valid antithesis", the positing of BC and negritude as an authentic value. Sartre (2001:118) argues that BC and negritude movement is the "moment of separation or negativity" within the dialectic. For the victims of racism, he argues, the only way to overcome racial differences is to become conscious of themselves. Sartre (2001:118) refers to this moment of separation as an "anti-racist racism." In order for black people to understand their oppression it is important that they become aware of their 'race' given that they are oppressed "within the confines of [their] race and because of it" (*ibid.)*. In order for the person of colour to break the vicious cycle of domination he or she must first destroy the Truth of those oppressing them. Sartre

argues that within the dialectical law of successive transformation this anti-racist racism will destroy itself because it is not an ultimate end but a means. Sartre (2001:137) argues that the negative moment allows for the preparation of the synthesis "or the realisation of the human in a raceless society". For Senghor (in English & Kalumba, 1996:49) negritude would contribute to the building of the "Civilisation of the Universal" in which the dialectic is resolved and there is worldwide civilisation that is based on equality and justice and devoid of excessive materialism. Similar to Sartre and Senghor, Biko argues that a non-racial society could come into existence thereby disrupting the oppressive functioning of capitalist society once and for all.

3.1.3. Anti-Racist Racism: Negritude.

Biko, influenced by Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Fanon, is clearly in favour of negritude. Negritude, according to Macey (2000:181) has a precise meaning: "the fact that the black man was seeking to know himself, that he wanted to become a historical actor and a cultural actor, and not just an object of domination or a consumer of culture". Césaire and Senghor are credited as having a profound effect on the victims of colonialism because they announced to them that it was acceptable to be "a negro" (Bernasconi, 2002:70). Thus, proponents of negritude acknowledged that within the inferiority mechanism there was another form of escape open to the victim of racism which, can be seen as the opposite of the black person's desire to be white. This anti-racist racism could become a mechanism, if it does not reach the civilisation of the universal that ensures that, over time, individuals suffer from ideological consciousness that perpetuates the oppressive functioning of capitalist society and its necessary racism. In contrast to the wish to be white the black man can seek to affirm himself as *Black* (Kruks, 1996:129). Biko (1987:92) in defence of BC and consequently certain aspects of negritude argues that black people must reclaim their past, disfigured and distorted by colonialism, yet the leading figures of the negritude movement disagreed about what it meant to assert oneself as *Black*.

The ideology of negritude certainly played an important role in the development of Fanon's political thought. However, Fanon's (1967) views towards negritude were paradoxical and this could be due to the contradictory nature of the literature on negritude (McCulloch, 1983:36). In his early writings Fanon (1967) viewed negritude as a barrier to the liberation of the victims of colonialism. In his later writings, however, Fanon (1970, 1980) became more sympathetic to negritude and conceded that it had a

progressive role to play in the struggle against racist ideology. Why did Fanon view negritude as an unsatisfactory defence against the assaults of colonial racism? I would argue that both Fanon (1967, 1980) and Biko (1987) recognised that negritude and the promotion of BC was, in Hegelian terms, the weak moment in the dialectical process. Sartre (2001:137) argues that by creating an anti-racist racism the person of colour is in fact providing an opening for revolt and liberty. The person of colour is able to do this because "he is *the most oppressed* ", he has suffered the most from his place in history (*ibid.)* One possible outcome of this suffering is that black people become conscious of the need to pursue the liberation of all. What both theorists argued for was the transcendence of negritude or BC by the synthesis or realisation of the human; they favoured a society in which there will are no races or classes, and where neither the white question nor black question nor 'woman question' will have any meaning (Macey, 2001:186).

3.1.4. Fanon's Critique of Negritude and the Anti-Racist Racism Mechanism

To want to restore their sense of self-worth and proclaim an identity would seem to be the logical response of the victim of racism. For example, Biko (1987:103) argues that having been denied beauty the black person ought to pronounce that "black is beautiful". Negritude, it would seem, is a valid response to the white world because it seeks to prove that black people do have a culture, a civilisation and a historical past (Bernasconi, 2002:72). Negritude and BC set out to challenge the black people's beliefs about themselves. Biko (*ibid*:104) argues that when you tell the black man that black is beautiful, "what you are in fact saying to him is: man, you are okay as you are." However, for Fanon (1967:16) this search for identity by the black person is problematic. As outlined in the previous chapter individuals might respond to the unpleasant state they find themselves in by changing the motivation they have towards their own desires.

The beliefs of the negritude movement, it could be argued, can be seen as an example of the motivational mechanism of "sour grapes". Once the victim of racism realises that he did not succeed in being white he induces within him a motivation to cease wanting to be white. Negritude, in Fanon's eyes, was not a satisfactory defence against racist ideology because it claims to have defined the 'black soul' or 'black essence' with marked black values (McCulloch, 1983:37). Fanon (1967:14) does concede that the person of colour "who is driven to discover the meaning of black identity" is in a better position than the person of colour who seeks to be white. But this

search for black identity is fraught with problems and can be self-defeating (Kruks, 1996:130). For example, having discovered that they could not be white, the persons of colour come to believe that they are content with what little they get from asserting their blackness, their own "essential" self – which results in people being unable to see the true nature of their situation. For Fanon (1967:14), what is often "called the black soul is a white man's artefact". This 'negro' essence of which the advocates of negritude speak is, according to Fanon, constituted by the white gaze (Bernasconi, 2002:75). Fanon (1980:25) holds that "it is the white man who creates the Negro. But it is the Negro who creates negritude." In this so-called celebration of 'blackness', Fanon argues that the black man's identity rests on a simple reversal, the re-appropriation of white stereotypes of black culture. What negritude encourages people of colour to celebrate as authentically black is rhythm, the mystical, the magical, the irrational, the emotional, the intuitive and the sexual (Kruks, 1996:130). The reasons why negritude is problematic are mainly due to its racial essentialsing. Negritude makes claims to the existence of a black soul and, that there are 'black values', a black 'situation' and a specific black 'problem'. However, such claims are readily demolished in the European cultural and political environment; because the search for a 'history' of the black man is, according to Fanon, redundant because the black people's future necessitates a coming to terms with European civilisation (McCulloch, 1983:37).

The claim being made by Fanon, I would argue, is that European civilisation did change Africa fundamentally and it is because of this that the black man must come to terms with Africa's past. Fanon's critique of the essentialism of Negritude is best understood, I would argue, from the perspective of the motivational mechanism of "sour grapes". Once the victims of racism realise that they are unable to appropriate the 'essence' of whiteness they induce within themselves a motivation to cease wanting to be white. The alternative for the victims of racism, as argued, is to define their own 'black' essence, by searching for *their* past, discovering *their* values and articulating *their* situation. Again, this search for blackness is the weak moment in the dialectic but a necessary moment because the victims of racism ought to come to realise that their blackness is as much a myth as their oppressor's whiteness. Once the victims of racism discover that there is no black or white essence, this discovery could provide the necessary rupture required to transcend the relations of domination.

As discussed, Fanon concedes that there can be positive aspects to the negritude movement, that it was necessary for the liberation of victims of racism. He (1967:129) argues that negritude has an important effect on black–white relations. It also does not offer only the people of colour sources of pride, but white people suddenly recognise the supposed essential qualities of blackness that they lack, as a non-black persons, qualities such as closeness to nature, rhythm, spontaneity and simplicity (Kruks, 1996:130). For Fanon (1967:129) a shift in the black – white relations occurs as a result of a certain reciprocity of recognition. He argues that when white people feel they have become too mechanised and detached from nature, they turn to people of colour and "ask them for a little human sustenance" (*ibid.*). Thus, Fanon (*ibid.*) comments: "At last I had been recognised. I was no longer a zero *(sic)*". This does not last long because he comments: "I had soon to change my tune" (*ibid.*). The main reason why this recognition could not last long is because the anti-racist racism mechanism remains in place. This prevents the person of colour from breaking the vicious cycle of domination because the so called qualities of the black person, qualities such as closeness to nature, rhythm, spontaneity, and so forth although, looked on in a positive manner, are still not 'civilised' or white. Essentially the person of colour is made "exotic".

It seems that this celebrated 'black culture' becomes appropriated in the eyes of the racist as a diversion, an escape, a realm of momentary relaxation from the rationalism, technology and industry that is the 'civilised' world – the world of the white is still on the side of modernity (Kruks, 1996:130). In fact, Fanon argues that it is because of this kind of thinking that African countries would turn out to be "the brothel of Europe" where the western bourgeoisies would come to the independent African states "as tourists avid for the exotic, for big-game hunting and for casinos" (Fanon, 2001:123). It would seem across the third world that the activity of the western bourgeoisie has been given the name of tourism and has been built "as a national industry" (*ibid.*). This can only serve to devalue the black experience. For Fanon, the assertion of a unique black perception can have no impact whatsoever in changing the derogatory view in which Europeans hold the proud black person (McCulloch, 1983:37).

Once realising that 'black' was a mechanism for false consciousness Fanon (1967:129 – 130) explains:

> I had the feeling that I was repeating a cycle. My originality had been torn out of me. I wept a long time, and then I began to live again. But I was haunted by a galaxy of erosive stereotypes: The Negro's *sui generis* odour ... the Negro's *sui generis* good nature ... the Negro's *sui generis* gullibility ... I had tried to flee myself through my kind, but the whites had thrown themselves on me and hamstrung me.

People of colour become hamstrung when they become prisoners of their blackness, of their past. For oppression to be overcome the people of colour must look beyond the past, beyond their colour. Hence, Fanon (*ibid*:226) argues that he will not make himself the man of any past and that he does not want to exalt the past at the expense of his present and of his future either. For oppression to be overcome, the oppressed "cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future" (Marx, 1978:597). For Fanon it is only when the oppressed begin to "refuse to accept the present as definitive" that they can begin to fashion new poetry for a new future. Fanon (1967:227) is therefore critical of the advocate of negritude's claim to the existence of 'black values'. He argues that just because he has a black skin does not mean that he comes with a particular set of values: White or black, the "skin is not the wrapping of specific values" (*ibid.*). It is clear for Fanon that by reviving the myth of black values, the proponents of negritude merely revive the myth of white values. This is because the idea of a common set of black values or qualities of personality originates from white racist ideology (McCulloch, 1983:38).

The myth of an essential 'black' soul that negritude values is problematic because it could come to represent a necessary part of the mechanism that helps maintain relations of domination. It would seem, in my opinion, that this anti-racist racism is necessary and is reflected in Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance and the celebration of *Ubuntu*. According to Fanon, advocates of negritude could potentially reinforce the stereotype of the Negro and might invent a new burden for the Negro race. The idea of a black essence or a white essence and the attempt to pursue and capture can in itself become a mechanism that serves to maintain relations of domination. Thus, for Fanon (1967), pro-black attitudes, similar to anti-black attitudes have the potential to serve an oppressive function in capitalist racist society. This represents a dilemma for proponents of negritude because they are aware that the myth of a white or black essence can become part of the very mechanism that helps to maintain relations of domination.

However, Senghor (in English and Kalumba, 1996:49) argues that the struggle for negritude does not necessarily involve a negation of whiteness to affirm blackness. Rather, he argues that negritude should, because it is born out of the unique struggle of the victim of racism, positively contribute to the building of the "Civilisation of the Universal" (*ibid.*).

In contrast to the first reaction of the black man in the face of white rule striving to be white, this second reaction (that of embracing a black identity) is problematic, as Fanon has argued. This black identity embedded in essentialist terms in the final analysis enables people of colour to participate in the maintenance of racism and ultimately their own domination. A complete preoccupation with the past, according to Fanon (1970:43), has the effect of changing nothing in the life situation of the oppressed. Fanon has been criticised for his views on negritude and has been accused of having "nothing but contempt for pre-colonial African countries" (Miller, 1990:49). The source of this criticism, however, is based on an invalid interpretation of his critique of negritude. The reason why he finds the embracing of a black history or African culture problematic is because he believes that any 'native' culture or 'traditional' African culture that may have existed prior to colonialism has in fact been destroyed, if not totally then very nearly so, by colonialism (Lazarus, 1999:170). One could thus say that Fanon is not critical of pre-colonial African culture but a "culture fabricated (almost) entirely by colonialism" (*ibid.*)[66].

It would seem that there is a tension between Fanon and Biko in terms of their conception of the role negritude and BC play in freeing the psychologically oppressed. However, I would argue that Biko, although he had a more positive account of BC than Fanon, was nevertheless aware of the need to transcend 'black' consciousness. Biko does argue that a great deal of attention must be paid to the history of black people if they are to come into consciousness. For Biko (1987:96) the black person must embrace, for example, black theatre, drama and his love of music and rhythm". Fanon (1967:120) would perhaps caution Biko against embracing a culture or history that others have compiled. For Fanon, the 'others' are the colonisers. On the other hand,

[66] The debate around the possibility of excavating, re-covering and liberating some kind of authentic African history has not been resolved and is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Praeg (2000:164) argues that this debate is caught in "an epistemological undecidability". Due to the complex nature of the movement of history it is both possible and impossible to represent Africa in "its full epistemological, ontological and historical authenticity" (*ibid.*). This is not to suggest that attempts at re-covering and liberating pre-colonial Africa from the colonial are futile, rather it admits that any discussion of the pre-colonial takes place through and against the colonial.

Biko could question Fanon's assumption that colonialism entails the total destruction of the "aboriginal society" (Lazarus, 1999:172). Lazarus (*ibid.*) argues that Fanon's assumption is legitimately susceptible to criticism because it is not the case that the "imposition of colonialism entails the death of the aboriginal society". It is difficult to dispute, that throughout Africa and elsewhere in the colonial world, pre-colonial social, cultural and ideological forms survive meaningfully today, "in the 'post-colonial' present" (*ibid.*). That said, I would argue that this does not discount Fanon's claim that colonialism changes, in a fundamental way, the existence of both the colonised and colonisers. Fanon (1967:226) holds that it is important to know the "whole past of the world". In other words, he is in favour of celebrating "human history" and is against the "negritude movement's practice of identifying only with Black history so that he can identify with a human history" (Bernasconi, 2002:73).

Biko (1987:87) is also critical of the BC approach and argues that the BC movement would be irrelevant in a colour-less and non-exploitative egalitarian society. Even though he and Fanon acknowledge the important social function negritude and BC play, they consider this function to be only transitory. According to Fanon (2001:251) and Biko (1987:98), what the victims of racism, both black and white, should do is try to find a way beyond the celebration of blackness or whiteness. Fanon (1967:226) argues that it was not because of the promise of or the existence of, a 'black world' or a 'white world' that led him to fight for liberation. What led him to action was the commitment to a world where never again would people be subjugated. Fanon's (2001:39) critique of ideological consciousness was complex and he was aware that in the decolonising context the promotion of nationhood could itself become a new form of ideological consciousness. Even 'after colonialism' Fanon (*ibid*:120) argues that oppression will continue to occur because the national middle class merely replaces the middle class of the former oppressors.[67] For Fanon (*ibid*:122), the mission of the bourgeois nationalists "has nothing to do with transforming the nation" but is the "transmission line between the nation and capitalism".

[67] Fanon (2001:120) does argue that in the underdeveloped world the national middle class never accumulates as much capital as the colonial middle class and so the national bourgeoisie do not replace the former colonisers in exactly the same way. This is because the development of the former colonies is at the mercy of the needs of international capitalism, which has blocked the development of indigenous capitalism. The result is the development of a comprador class and not a genuine bourgeoisie (Taiwo, 1996:261). Fanon (2001:122) argues that this class will step into the "shoes of the former European settlement: doctors, barristers, traders, commercial travellers, general agents, and transport agents", but they will be limited in their ability to accumulate as much capital as the western bourgeoisie.

Thus, for Fanon there is a need to draw the distinction between "real independence" and "pseudo-independence" (Taiwo, 1996:258). Taiwo (*ibid*) argues that for Fanon pseudo-independence is independence "that leaves the colonised with the many outward manifestations of independence" but the basic structure of the colonial world, its Manichaeanism, is still intact. As argued in chapter one ideological consciousness is essentially a functional matter and as a result it is possible, as Fanon did, to argue that BC and Negritude are forms of consciousness that benefit the colonial world. This is because they are specific to colonialism and consequently persist because they are beneficial for the social order. For the colonised to break free from their colonial chains in order to achieve real independence, "the total destruction of the colonial system" is called for by Fanon (1970:105). Although the struggle for independence was fought in the name of nationalism, for Fanon the struggle for real independence is "less about creating new nations than it is about new modes of being human" (Taiwo, 1996:259). Biko (1987:98) similarly argues that the only way to achieve real independence is by setting "out on a quest for true humanity". This quest for true humanity will bring about, according to Fanon (2001:252), a change in the consciousness of the victims of racism and enable the setting afoot of a *new* man and consequently a new world.

Fanon and Biko were both powerful and persuasive critical socio-political analysts. Working within the framework of what is described here as an integrated theory of ideology Fanon and Biko were able to understand how complex society is. Having looked at the function that ideology plays at the level of the individual, Fanon and Biko turn to the effect social structures and institutions have on the individual and vice versa. In other words, to understand how this 'new' person could be brought about, both Fanon and Biko asked the question: What opportunities and what constraints do structures and institutions put in the way of individuals realising their interests? (White, 1996:100). Fanon and Biko claim that the only way that individuals could realise their interests was if they could succeed in ridding themselves of "all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew" (Marx,1996:60). As argued, Fanon and Biko did not simply provide a micro-foundational account of ideology. By employing the assumptions of an integrated theory, Fanon and Biko did not consider racist ideology as a mere accident: clearly the victims of racism suffered from ideological consciousness, in part because of the beneficial effect it had on the preservation or stabilisation of

relations of domination in colonial and post-colonial society. To overcome oppression, Fanon and Biko argued a change in the consciousness of the oppressor and oppressed was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for liberation. Fanon (2001:27) and Biko (1987:49) both identified a second condition necessary for liberation: the radical re-ordering of the society that reproduces itself through the micromechanisms discussed in the present chapter and in chapter three. In other words, ideological consciousness cannot be dissolved by criticism alone but "only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations" that gave rise to such consciousness (Marx, 1996:61). The work of Fanon and Biko, as I see it, helps to illustrate the importance of linking a micro-foundational account of ideology with a macro-foundational account. This is because Fanon and Biko argue that the beliefs of the victims of racism have been formed according to the mechanisms discussed in this chapter. As both authors offer a micro-account of how the victims of racism come to embrace ideological consciousness, it is then possible to make sense of their macro-account of ideology. Fanon and Biko were aware of the operation of racist ideology within capitalist society but their explanation would have been incomplete without an explanation of how racist ideology promoted or stabilised relations of domination. The explanatory power of an integrated theory of ideology lies in its ability to provide an account of ideology at the level of both the individual and of the social whole (be it an institution or society). Fanon and Biko's analysis, as I have argued, provides an account of ideology at the level of the individual and at the level of capitalist society and its necessary racism. David Caute in *Fanon* (1970:4) argues that "one of Fanon's greatest virtues as a writer is that he constantly relates the psychological predicament of the individual to his environment without losing sight of the individual". In the conclusion of chapter three it was argued that one cannot understand the individual without a grasp of the social structure in which the individual lives.

3.2. A New History of Man: A macro-foundational account of ideology

Fanon and Biko share common ground with other theorists, notably Hegel and Fromm, in holding that individuals are not doomed to being either slaves or masters. It is clear that for Fanon and Biko individuals have another course open to them other than surrendering their individuality and the integrity of their self. The individual can become one again with himself without giving up the independence and integrity of his individual self, thereby integrating the self with others and nature in a more meaningful way. Biko

(1967:66) and Fanon (2001:79) argue that for individuals to be able to relate spontaneously with the world in love and work, in the genuine expression of their emotional, sensuous, and intellectual capacities, there needs to be an attempt on their part at changing the whole social structure. Why did Fanon (1970:18) and Biko (1987:88) believe that it is only with the creation of a new society and a new history of man that oppression could genuinely be overcome? The reason, I would argue, is because Fanon and Biko have a macro-foundational account of ideology in that they assume a functional relationship between the economic structure of society and social consciousness.

Chapter one noted that Marx claimed that ideological consciousness is a product of the material conditions in society and that ideological consciousness has two effects on the material conditions of society: it prevents the individual from seeing the 'true' nature of the society while it supports or stabilises the society in question by contributing to its legitimation. Evidently both Fanon and Biko considered racist ideology to be the product of the material conditions of colonialist society. In his discussion of racist ideology in Martinique, Fanon (1970:18) argues that questions about race are "but a superstructure, a mantle, an obscure ideological emanation concealing an economic reality". For Biko (1987:87) racist ideology was "originally introduced for economic reasons". Both Fanon and Biko maintain that in order to make sense of domination one has to take into account the structure of the social system. However, Fanon (2001:31) did maintain for the colonial situation "Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched". Fanon and Biko insist that the answer to the question of why the black man volunteered in his own servitude lies in the nature of colonialism (Jinadu, 1986:27). The reason why Fanon and Biko's account of racist ideology was successful, I believe, is because they adopted the second background belief of the integrated theory of ideology, namely that societies are systems in the sense that they regulate themselves in some way. I will argue, in the next section of this chapter, that Fanon and Biko adopted, though not explicitly, Marx's understanding of society as being a single self-differentiating totality (Rosen, 1996:26).

As outlined previously, the integrated theory of ideology explains how forms of consciousness *stabilise, promote,* or *maintain* a particular oppressive society or structure (Rosen, 1996:33). It is clear that for Fanon and Biko racist ideology brings about disorders in the way in which the individual responds to and acts within the

world.[68] Their *Ideologiekritik* aimed to show the victims of racism that they lead lives dominated by inappropriate emotions such as the desire to be white or fear of black people. They saw that racist ideology could also bring about disorders in the systems by which the individual perceives, judges and reflects upon nature, society and themselves.[69] Racism, as Fanon and Biko recognise, is exceedingly complex: it takes many forms and finds expression in various ways. Fanon's account of psychological oppression provides one explanation of how racism manifests itself in the individual. For example, he (1970:43) argues that racist ideology settled itself in the very centre of, in this case, Algerian individuals and prevented them from seeing how their behaviour contributed to the wider social system. Similarly, Biko (1987:82) argued that it was because of racist ideology that certain black South Africans considered the 'separate development' policy of the Nationalist government viable. The reason why there was support for the Bantustans was, according to Biko (1987:88), because white people had come to believe the lie that they were not equal to black people, and

> it is not surprising, therefore, that in South Africa, after generations of exploitation, white people on the whole have come to believe in the inferiority of the black man ... To make the lie live even longer, blacks have been denied any chance of accidentally proving their equality with white men.

In an account similar to Geuss's (1981:14)[70] Biko argues that the force of the beliefs of white people (and black people) depends on the believer mistaking the epistemic standing of the belief. For instance, according to Biko (1987:88) the racist misconstrues the belief that black people cannot become economists, engineers or doctors for the truth. The racist is in fact failing to recognise that the belief is self-fulfilling because black people were not given the chance to behave differently, to become economist, engineers or doctors. These beliefs have an ideological function, according to Fanon and Biko, because they prevent both the oppressor and the oppressed from seeing the role they play in the maintenance of relations of domination. The implication of this is the failure on the part of the victims of racism to address the source of their oppression – the economic structures of racist capitalist society. The victims of racism as a result of rational risk avoidance may refrain from taking action against racist capitalist society. To illustrate, both white and black people may join Biko in lamenting

---

[68] See section 2.1.1.2. of chapter one.
[69] See section 2.1.1.3. of chapter one.
[70] *Ibid*

the sad consequences of their own actions. For example, black people may express anger at their failure to become doctors and white people may express their regret that black people are unable to become doctors yet the situation remains the same that black people do not become doctors or engineer. In addition white people continue to believe that black people are unable to become doctors or engineers. The result of this coordination problem is the continuation of the economic structures. Fanon and Biko come to this conclusion because they view the relationship between the economic structure of society and social consciousness to be a functional one. For example, Fanon (1967:108), argues that Mannoni failed to see that the "dependency complex" of the Malagasy came about after the arrival of white colonisers to Madagascar; he rejects (*ibid*:84) Mannoni's claim that the inferiority complex of the colonised "antedates colonisation" and is the result of some complex that was latent in the Malagasy from birth. Thus, Fanon (1967:100) argues that once the victims of racism are "brought into consciousness" it is important to turn their attention towards the "real source of the conflict – that is, towards the social structures" that is effectively sustained by these beliefs. In fact Fanon is highly critical of Mannoni because he argues that Mannoni, in the 225 pages of his study of the colonial situation, failed to understand "its real coordinates". In order to "not lose sight of the real", Fanon (*ibid*:83) maintains that racism exists because it reflects an economic situation and vice versa.

Chapter two suggested that the best way to understand this functional relationship is by analogy with an organism. Fanon and Biko also consider the ideas of a society and its economy as elements within an organic whole (Radar, 1979:78). By viewing society in its totality, Fanon and Biko, are able to shift their focus from the behaviour of individuals to an investigation of the forces and relations constraining and directing the individual (Cohen, 1982:489). Thus, in Marxist terms, the base for Fanon and Biko plays a more decisive role than the superstructure in the maintenance of the whole – racist capitalist society. This can be seen in Fanon's (1967:87) analysis of the poor whites of South Africa:

> if the poor whites hate the Negroes, it is not, as M. Mannoni would have us believe, because "racialism is the work of petty officials, small traders and colonials who have toiled much without great success." No; it is because the structure of South Africa is a racist structure.

In agreement with Fanon, Biko (1987:50) argues that the reason "the greatest anti-black feeling is to be found amongst the very poor whites" is because of the apartheid economic system. In addition, both authors argue that these anti-black feelings play a crucial role in the continuation of the economic system.

That said, in order to avoid the criticism of reductionism that has been read into Marxism, the relationship between the base and superstructure for Fanon and Biko is also one of internal relatedness. Fanon and Biko argue that the relationship between the base and superstructure is by no means a simple one (Kennedy, 2000:525). Fanon's examination of the *Pitfalls of National Consciousness* in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) is a case in point. What gives his book its bitter edge is that Fanon, because he was deeply worried about the developments in some of the newly independent African countries, concludes that a change in the superstructure does not necessarily bring about a change in the base. Fanon (2001) realised that black Africans "were quite capable of murdering one another" and becoming new masters (Macey, 2000:453). For example, he argues that the "requirements of decolonisation could be perverted by [successor] ruling classes into a narrow concern with national consciousness" (Taiwo, 1996:259).

The 'liberation' leaders of the African continent today have, it would seem, followed the path that Fanon predicted. A change in the ideology of the people might have occurred toward one of national pride, liberal democratic values, anti-colonial sentiment and so forth, but Fanon, viewing colonialism in its totality, understood that even though the black man is now ruling there "exists inside the new regime, however, an inequality in the acquisition of wealth". The result of this acquisition of wealth, for Fanon (2001:141), is that the third-world country ruled by a "get-rich-quick middle class ... becomes not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature". Biko (1987:149) also warned that if real change did not occur, South Africa was in danger of continuing to be an oppressive society regardless of the colour of those in power:

> [I]f we have a mere change of face of those in governing positions what is likely to happen is that black people will continue to be poor, and you will see a few blacks filtering through to the so-called bourgeoisie. Our society will be run almost as of yesterday. So for meaningful change to appear there needs to be an attempt at reorganising the whole economic pattern and economic policies within this particular country.

It would seem that Fanon and Biko "had a gift of prophecy" (Taiwo, 1996). At a time when most African scholars were optimistic about Africa's newly independent states, Fanon in particular "discerned something about the nature of the colonial situation that persuaded him that ... independence would not do the trick of restoring unity to the fractured reality of the colonised" (*ibid*). The 'nature' of the colonial situation that Fanon observed was that a change in the consciousness of the people cannot bring about a change in the nature of the economic system. Fanon (2001:142), in his capacity as a global critical theorist,[71] claimed that "nothing new [had] happened since independence" because the successful liberation movements had done nothing more than "taken over unchanged the legacy of the economy, the thought and the institutions left by the colonialists".

For Fanon (2001, 1980), in his later writings, the term colonialism begins to signify a mode of domination that is global in its reach (Ahluwalia and Zegeye, 2001:466). Fanon and Biko, with a heightened sense of the global nature of oppression, argued that change could occur only with the radical re-ordering of the global economic system. Biko and, Fanon in particular, therefore rejected aspects of the negritude movement. Fanon (1967:226) wanted to identify with a larger history of oppression. This can also be seen in Biko's (1987:149) writings where he optimistically argues for a non-racial society in which there would no longer be a minority or a majority, "just people". Fanon and Biko's attention to the global nature of oppression is reminiscent of Marx's belief that for a particular society to be emancipated there needs to be "universal emancipation" overturning the global social order (Tucker, 1978:80).

Biko and Fanon were able to provide a powerful critique of colonial reality because they understood that the social character of the individual was related in a complex way to the structure of society. Jinadu (1986:126) is correct in asserting that Fanon, in part, carries out his critique of colonialism from the perspective of methodological individualism. Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) and *A Dying Colonialism* (1980) provides an explanation of ideology at the level of the individual; however, what Jinadu (1986:128) fails to acknowledge is that Fanon does not assume that the individual is the basic unit of analysis. Fanon, especially in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and *Towards the African Revolution* (1970), I would argue, also critiques colonialism from the perspective of methodological holism. As argued, contrary to Elster,

[71] See L.G. Gates, 1991 "Critical Fanonism" *Critical Inquiry* 17, 3 for a discussion of Fanon as a "global theorist".

Watkins and other advocates of methodological individualism, the integrated theory of ideology does not have to claim that methodological holism displaces methodological individualism in social science. This can be seen in Fanon and Biko's critique of racist ideology. Fanon and Biko were both, I would argue, aware that explanations of certain social phenomena can be "provided in terms which do not refer to individuals", and realised that it might be impossible to describe social phenomena in such a way (Lukes, 1994:457). Edward Said (1999:107) rightly asserts that Fanon was aware that even in the most confusing and heterogeneous of situations "a rigorous analysis of one central problematic could be relied on to yield the most extensive understanding of the whole". In both Fanon and Biko's writings, I believe they identified racist ideology as a "central problematic" that was not incidental or contingent but represented an important feature of the 'whole': colonial society. For Fanon and Biko there is a systematic and explanatory correlation between the belief system of the victim of colonialism and the maintenance of colonial (and post-colonial) societies. The reason why, for Fanon and Biko, there was an explanatory relationship between ideology and the persistence of relations of domination is because they viewed societies as being supra-individual entities that were in some way self-regulating. This can be seen in Fanon's (1967:213) discussion of Antillean society:

> Antillean society is a neurotic society, a society of "comparison". Hence we are driven from the individual back to the social structure. If there is a taint, it lies not in the "soul" of the individual but rather in that of the environment.

Fanon and Biko were aware that colonialism was a "response to the rapacious demands for raw materials by the markets of emergent capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (Taiwo, 1996:260). The end result of the imperialist domination of the African continent was to open the way for capitalist penetration. This led to the incorporation of Africa into the world capitalist economy. Africa, however, was not admitted as an equal partner; on the contrary, Western imperialism took everything from Africa and gave nothing back (Turner and Alan, 1999:116). African countries' production was subordinated to the needs of international capitalism, to producing raw materials for the world market (Taiwo, 1996:261). Fanon and Biko thus believed there was a need for making the victims of racism aware of their false consciousness; as Fanon (1967:216) asserts, "the environment, society are responsible for your [the victims of racism] delusion".

4. Conclusion: Challenging the Internal Workings of the Global Capitalist System

It is because Fanon (1980:15) was aware of the nature of global capitalism that he was able to conclude that colonial society, seen in its totality, "with its values, it areas of strength, and its philosophy" would react to the liberation movement in "a rather homogenous way". Fanon (2001:79) therefore argues that if "the conditions of work are not modified, centuries will be needed to humanise this world". However, according to Fanon, colonial society did manage to camouflage its economic nature. The way colonial society reacted was to develop a 'neocolonialist' society with a new ideological consciousness on the part of the colonised and colonisers, namely the ideology of enlightenment humanism, universalism and nationalism (Lazarus, 1999:189). Marxism, I would argue, became a theoretical tool because it provided Africa with a better understanding of colonialism as a historical process, one that may contain certain changes - for example the transition from white to black rule, the 'politics of reconciliation' between the former white rulers and the current black ones, and the development of a liberal paradigm, emphasising human rights and democracy (Coetzee, 2002:553–55). With his analysis of the neocolonial situation Fanon (1980:109) concludes, "once again the colonial world reveals itself to be complex and extremely diverse in structure". In terms of the integrated theory of ideology, it can be argued that even within the new dispensation, not much has changed, certainly not the internal workings of the global capitalist system, despite African states attaining independence. Samir claims that "independence brought no change to the exploitative mode of integration of Africa into the world capitalist system" (Coetzee, 2002:550, citing Samir). Fanon and Biko being influenced by the grand Marxist claims about macro-structures and long-term change were able to interpret and make certain predictions about post-independent Africa. One prediction was that under neocolonialism Africa would continue to reproduce the conditions under which it would remain entrapped in exploitation. Fanon (1980:43) argues that capitalism "as a whole, its history, its daily pulsation" needs to be "contested, disfigured, in the hope of a final destruction".

Conclusion: The solution to the puzzle of domination?

> *Cynics say that real life is a choice between the failed revolution and the shabby deal. I don't know...maybe they're right. But even they should know that there's no limit to just how shabby that shabby deal can be. What we need to search for and find, what we need to hone and perfect into a magnificent, shining thing, is a new kind of politics. Not the politics of governance, but politics of resistance. The politics of opposition. The politics of forcing accountability... In the present circumstances, I'd say that the only thing worth globalising is dissent.* (Roy, 2001:33)

1. A New Humanism:-A New Politics

Echoing Marx, Fanon (1967) insists that it is not enough to know the world; one has to change it. Fanon and Biko envisaged that one of the possible outcomes of the liberation struggle in the third world could be the creation of a "new man" and a "new humanity". As argued, both Fanon and Biko emphasise the importance of a restructured consciousness on the part of both the oppressed and the oppressors as a necessary precondition for a genuinely 'new' society. This shows, I would argue, the importance that Fanon and Biko ascribed to ideological consciousness in the maintenance of oppressive regimes. In addition, Fanon and Biko were also cognisant of the significance of a restructured economic system as also being a necessary precondition for a genuinely new society. Fanon and Biko are aware that the transition from one society or mode of production to another is a complex process (Nursey-Bray, 1980:142). For Fanon and Biko, in order to create this new society there must be a struggle against the political and economic structures of the old society and this must be accompanied by a struggle against the ideologies that sustained them (Nursey-Bray, 1980:140). Indeed, it is difficult to say which, of the two struggles, is the necessary prerequisite for the other. Suffice to say that for Fanon and Biko the struggle against oppression should aim *not only at restructuring society but also at reshaping consciousness.*

It should be noted that for Fanon and Biko the task for their new humanism does not necessarily entail an absolute rejection of the entire system. In *A Dying Colonialism* (1980) Fanon states that it is important to recognise "what is positive in the dominator's action" and he argues that in the process of liberation the colonised should take their destiny into their own hands and "assimilate the most modern forms of technology." In this, Fanon and Biko share common ground with other theorists, notably Marx and Che Guevara, who also were committed to the idea of creating a new man and a new society (Nursey-Bray, 1980:140).

For Fanon and Biko this new humanity, which would be brought about by the oppressed, should not be the mere mimicking of the humanism of the enlightenment. In the conclusion of *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon argues that in order to bring about this new humanism we must subject *human* history to a devastating critique and "invent and ... make new discoveries" and through that pursue the creation of a new conception of man – one "hitherto unconceived, perhaps previously *inconceivable,* that will embody the fulfilment of man's true aspirations" (Ladimeji, 1974:46). It is for this reason that Fanon (2001:252) asks the oppressed and oppressors to turn their backs on Europe: "Europe has made her encroachments ... she has justified her crimes and legitimised the slavery in which she holds four-fifths of humanity".

Sartre (2001:30) in a speech entitled "Colonialism as a system" asks his listeners to be on their guard against what might be called "neocolonialist mystification". I see Fanon (2001:142) as interpreting colonialism in the same way as Sartre and understanding that if a change did not occur in the economic, social, psychological and political structures of the societies of both the colonised and colonisers, oppression would continue albeit under a neocolonialist veil. According to Sartre (2001:31) one should be weary of any reforms brought about by the national bourgeoisie or by the former colonial bourgeoisie because both intend to maintain their hold. For capitalist oppressive societies to survive, Fanon and Sartre came to the conclusion that certain reforms could take place that would prevent real independence because, in order to maintain itself, capitalism as a "system by its very nature effortlessly destroys all attempts at development" (Sartre, 2001:42). What 'development' means, I would argue for Fanon, Biko and Sartre, is the bringing about of a new humanism that allows for the destruction of the master/slave, oppressor/oppressed and finally white/black binaries. Fanon (2001:131) in his critique of what he termed the "neocolonial" landscape argued that the decolonisation process in most of the newly independent states was merely the replacement of one form of domination by another (Ahluwalia, 2003:353). Fanon's (1967) analysis of the whole, I would argue, enabled him to provide a devastating critique of capitalism.

Fanon and Biko, influenced by Marxism, recognised the absurdity of the colonial and neocolonial world. It is because they saw how ideology functions in society that they contemplated the forming of a new society in which both the coloniser and colonised are transformed through a new humanism. This transformation, for Fanon and Biko, would allow for a new set of relationships. Fanon (1980:10) argues that

> the new relationships are not the result of one barbarism replacing another barbarism, of one crushing of man replacing another crushing of man. What we Algerians want is to discover the man behind the coloniser, this man who is both the organiser and victim of a system that has choked him and reduced him to silence.

This was "by no means the humanism of the Enlightenment" (Ahluwalia, 2003:341). Because ideology becomes practical and in a very complex way related to the structure of oppressive societies, Fanon and Biko could say that the explicit philosophical grounding for ideology had to be tackled. For Fanon, this could not be done by embracing the liberal humanist tradition. In *The Wretched of the Earth* he articulates "a 'new humanism' whose pedigree includes a radical critique of the liberal humanist tradition" (Gibson, 1999:361). According to Fanon (2001:131) the liberal humanist tradition of the developed world was just as problematic as the negritude tradition of the underdeveloped world. Fanon was critical of the national bourgeoisie, saying that they merely echoed the fashionable phrases of "European treaties on morals and political philosophy". Such phrases first affirmed certain democratic ideas that the oppressors claimed were universal in nature:

> [B]ourgeois ideology, however, which is the proclamation of an essential equality between men, manages to appear logical in its own eyes by inviting the sub-men to become human, and to take as their prototype Western Humanity as incarnated by the Western bourgeoisie.

Ahluwalia (2003:345), however, argues that Fanon's new humanism was not as radical a break with Enlightenment thinking as some theorists have argued because of the way in which Fanon draws from Marx and existentialism. There are and have been many types of humanism and the term is highly contentious. Despite this, it does signify that there is something universal and given about human nature and that it can be determined in the language of rationality.

Fanon and Biko, like Fromm, did not think that man had an unchanging nature but that it was important to see "man as a product of himself and of his own activity in history" (Young, in Ahluwalia, 2003:346). The new humanism that Fanon and Biko

envisaged here has the task of liberating both the coloniser and the colonised (Ahluwalia, 2003:350). Thus for Fanon and Biko the 'true' revolution is one that not only changes man and renews society but also allows for the participation of all in ensuring such changes can take place. Fanon and Biko were both in favour of always questioning the status quo and argued that the individual should constantly strive to "reconsider the question of mankind" (Fanon, 2001:253). According to Biko (1987:88-98) merely accepting "white values" would not bring about the quest for a true humanity and he warned against adopting the "coca-cola and hamburger cultural backgrounds" that would allow for relations of domination to continue. It would seem, in my opinion, that in the context of the contemporary capitalist world system, Fanon and Biko's warnings still need to be heeded. In agreement with Edward Said (Ahluwalia, 2003:354) what Fanon and Biko called for, namely the radical reordering of society, has yet to take place. The reason, I would argue, it has not taken place is because the "counternarrative ... of liberation" did not take the form of the "new" humanism espoused by Fanon and Biko but rather, within a post-modern view point, a defence of "bourgeois humanism and of colonial nationalism by abandoning the very idea of *totality*" (Lazarus, 1999:189). As argued, the solution to the puzzle of domination lies in this very notion of *totality* – but without losing sight of the individual elements that constitute it.

2. Conclusion: The Defence

The explanation of domination provided by Fanon and Biko was not only relevant for the colonial situation but also for today. Their solution to the puzzle of domination is explanatory because they have provided it within a framework of, what I called, *an integrated theory of ideology*. As argued, Rosen has been quick in dismissing the theory of ideology. I think that, by adopting an integrated approach, Fanon and Biko were not only able to describe and explain past social phenomena but make certain predictions about the future. The integrated theory of ideology, similar to the theory of ideology as defined in chapter one, cannot escape its own historical background. But, as Fanon and Biko have illustrated, it does provide the means for understanding deeply embedded social phenomena. The two background beliefs that were central to Marx's answer to Reich's question enabled the two African theorists to make sense of their worlds. The integrated approach is, I have argued, a useful meta-theory that assists us in explaining how society works and is "indispensable for understanding and resisting the forms of oppression that are characteristic of the modern world" (Shelby, 2003:154).

In this thesis I have argued that an integrated theory of ideology is the best theoretical tool with which to try to make sense of the puzzle of domination in society. In chapter one, I argued that the usefulness of the term ideology lay in its capacity to discriminate between ideological consciousness and non-ideological consciousness, in terms of their effects in social life. On the basis of this, it was concluded that the type of explanation provided by the theory of ideology was a functionalist one. According to this account, oppressive societies, *by their very nature*, engender a particular ideological consciousness. In addition, the beliefs, desires, interests, perceptions and actions of individuals perform their ideological function in a number of ways, for example, the individual's belief that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable, or when the individual, in an attempt to reduce cognitive dissonance, believes that she loves her master as is the case with the mechanism of wishful thinking.

It was argued in chapter two that, contrary to Rosen (1996) and Elster (1985), it is not necessary to have a conception of society as self-maintaining in order to provide a functional account of ideology. It was concluded that the functionalist theory of ideology is, at best, a macro-foundational explanation of domination. I argued, in favour of the theory, that it has intellectual validity because it provides the social theorist with the means to understand the operation of a phenomenon, like ideology, at an holistic or social level. The functionalist theory of ideology, it was said, is correct in its claims that the usefulness of the beliefs of the dominated are not accidental, in spite of the absence of an explanation of *how* their usefulness explains their existence. I agreed with Cohen (1978:283) that the macro-foundational account is valid even in the absence of an explanation of the theory of ideology's functional claims. However, it was noted in the concluding section of chapter two that Rosen was correct in his criticism of this explanation of domination because the content, history and social effects of ideological consciousness could not be *fully* explained in terms of their role in promoting or stabilising relations of domination (Shelby, 2003:179).

Due to this criticism, the functionalist explanation of the theory of ideology was extended, in chapter three, to include micro-mechanisms to explain the claims made by the theory. A number of micro-foundational accounts of ideology were presented to explain the possibility of mechanism(s) of ideological-belief formation. It was concluded that the micro-foundational accounts of ideology would not be as informative in the absence of an account of the overarching forces and relations constraining and directing

individuals' behaviour, and, in that sense, should be read as elaborations of a revised theory of ideology. In the conclusion of chapter three I argued that there was a need for an integrated account of ideology to explain both the psychological motivations of individuals and the nature of the oppressive society in which they find themselves. Thus the conception of ideology was summarised as follows: (1) Ideological consciousness benefits some oppressive social entity or structure; (2) it has been formed according to a poor mechanism; (3) it persists because it promotes or stabilises the entity or structure in question, and (4) its wide acceptance can be largely explained by accounts[72] of how individuals come to embrace ideological consciousness. By adapting the theory to include a micro-foundational account of ideology I argued that it served to strengthen the theory rather than undermine it. Contrary to Rosen (2000:393), the solution to the puzzle of domination offered by an integrated theory of ideology is indeed explanatory.

The final task of this thesis was to provide a defence of the integrated theory ideology developed in chapter three. The fourth chapter moved away from the high-level theoretical abstraction of the first three chapters to focus on concrete social analyses. The central focus of the chapter was a critical analysis of the explanation of domination provided by Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko. It was shown that both Fanon and Biko were able to provide a critique of the colonial reality because they provided their critiques within a framework of an integrated theory of ideology. By employing the assumptions of an integrated theory, Fanon and Biko did not consider racist ideology as a mere accident: clearly the victims of racism suffered from ideological consciousness, in part because of the beneficial effect it had on the preservation or stabilisation of relations of domination in colonial and post-colonial society. It was concluded that Fanon and Biko were able to provide a powerful account of colonial reality because they understood that the social character of the individual (a micro-foundational account of ideology) was in a complex way related to the structure of society (a macro-foundational account of ideology).

In conclusion, it is hard to dismiss the validity of an integrated theory of ideology if it allows for an explanation at the level of both the individual and the whole global economic system. Fanon and Biko's accounts of the mechanism proved that if elaborations of the explanation provided by the theory of ideology were present, then this located the claims made by the theory within a longer story. I would argue that by

[72] This micro-account of ideology can contain more than one of the mechanisms discussed in chapter three, indicating how complex the social can be.

utilising a meta-theory, such as an integrated theory of ideology, social scientists would be in a better position to meet Arundhati Roy's call for a 'new politics'. It would seem that the solution to domination requires the starting of a new history, a history that allows the individual to take constant action against all forms of subjugation. In agreement with Roy (2001:33) only dissent and resistance ought to be globalised. This is because, as argued, part of the solution to the puzzle of domination would be for every individual to take on Fanon's (1967:232) prayer and say, "O my body, make of me always a man *(sic)* who questions!"

Bibliography

Ahluwalia, P. and Zegeye, A. 2001. "Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko: Towards Liberation," *Social Identities,* 7, 3.

Ahluwalia, P. 2003. " Fanon's Nausea: The Hegemony of the White Nation," *Social Identities,* 9,3.

Alessandrini, A.C. (ed.) 1999. *Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives.* London: Routledge.

Ayittey, G.B.N. 1998. *Africa in chaos.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Bartky, S.L. 1990. *Feminism and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression.* RKP

Becker, U. 1988. "From Social Scientific Functionalism to Open Functional Logic", *Theory and Society*,17, 6.

Bhabha, H. 1999. "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche, and the Colonial Condition", in Gibson.

Biko, S. 1988. *I Write What I Like.* New York: Heinemann.

Bohman, J. 1991. "Causal Mechanism Are Not Enough: Welshon; Elster And The Need For An Integrated Theory Of Ideology", *Social Epistemology,* 5, 3.

Caute, D. 1970. *Fanon.* London: Fontana/Collins.

Chabal, P. 1994. *Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation.* London: Macmillan.

Chazan, N. et al. 1999. *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa.* Third Edition. London: Macmillan.

Coetzee, P.H. and Roux, A.J.P. (eds.) 2001. *The African Philosophy Reader.* London: Routledge.

Coetzee, P.H. and Roux, A.P.J (eds) 2002. *Philosophy from Africa.* Second Edition. Cape Town: OUP.

Coetzee, P.H. 2002. "Later Marxist Morality: Its Reality: Its Relevance For Africa's Post-Colonial Situation." in Coetzee and Roux.

Cohen, G.A. 1978. *Karl Marx's Theory of History.* Oxford:OUP.

Dane, R. 1994 "When Mirror Turns Lamp: Frantz Fanon as Cultural Visionary", *Africa Today,* 41,2.

Dickman, J. 1990. "Two Qualms about Functionalist Marxism", *Philosophy of Science,* 57, 4.

Eagleton, T. 1991. *Ideology: An Introduction.* London: Verso.

Elster, J. 1982. "Marxism, Functionalism, and Game Theory: The Case for Methodological Individualism", *Theory and Society,* 2, 4.

Elster, J. 1985. *Making Sense of Marx.* Cambridge:CUP.

Elster, J. 1986. *An Introduction to Karl Marx.* Cambridge:CUP.

Elster, J. 1987. "Introduction", in Elster, J. (ed.) *Rational Choice.* New York: New York University Press.

Elster, J. 1993. *Political Psychology.* Cambridge: CUP.

English, P. and Kalumba, K. (ed) 1996. *African Philosophy: A Classical Approach.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Fanon, F. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.

Fanon, F. 1970. *Toward The African Revolution.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Fanon, F. 1980 *A Dying Colonialism.* London : Writers & Readers.

Fanon, F. 1986. *Black Skin, White Masks.* London: Pluto.

Fromm, E. 1991. *Fear of Freedom.* London: Routledge.

Gibson, N. 1998. "Thoughts About Doing Fanonism in the 1990s", *College Literature,* 26, 2.

Gibson, N.C. (ed) 1999. *Rethinking Fanon.* New York: Humanity Books.

Gordon, L.R., Sharpley-Whiting, D.T. and White, R.T. (eds.) 1996. *Fanon: A Critical Reader.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Guess, R. 1981. *The Idea of a Critical Theory.* Cambridge:CUP.

Hansen, E. 1999. "Frantz Fanon: Portrait of a Revolutionary" in Gibson.

Heath, J. 2000. "Ideology, Irrationality and Collectively Self-defeating Behaviour", *Constellations,* 7, 3.

Howard, M. and Dunaif-Hattis, J. 1992. *Anthropology: Understanding Human Adaptations.* New York: HarperCollins.

James, S. 1984. *The Content of Social Explanation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jinadu, L. A. 1986. *Fanon: In Search of an African Revolution.* London: Routledge.

Kandeh, J.D. 1992. "Sierra Leone: Contradictory Class Functionality of the 'Soft' State", *Review of African Political Economy,* 55.

Kennedy, J. 2000. "The Structure of the Social", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*,30, 4.

Kincaid, H. 1990. "Assessing Functional Explanations in the Social Sciences", *PSA: Proceedings Of The Biennial Meeting Of The Philosophy Of Science Association,* 1.

Kotzin, R.H. 1993. "Bribery and Intimidation: A Discussion of Sandra Lee Bartky's *Feminism and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression", Hypatia,* 8, 1.

Kruks, S. 1996. "Fanon, Sartre, and Identity Politics." in Gordon et al.

Ladimeji, O.A. 1974. "Nationalism, Alienation and the Crisis of Ideology," *Transition*, 10, 46.

Lazarus, N. 1999. "Disavowing decolonisation: Fanon, Nationalism, and the Question of Representation in Postcolonial theory." in Alessandrini.

Macey, D. 2000. *Frantz Fanon: A Life.* London: Granta Books

Mangcu, X. 2004. "The Quest for an African Identity, Thirty Seven Years On". Rhodes University Centenary 2004 Lecture Series. Grahamstown:Rhodes University.

McCulloch, J. 1983. *Black Soul, White Artefact.* Cambridge: CUP.

Miller, C. L. 1990. *Theories of Africans: Francophone Literature and Anthropology in Africa.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Miller, D., "Ideology and the Problem of False Consciousness" Date and Source Unkown

Ollman, B. 1971. *Alienation.* Cambridge: CUP.

Paprzycka, K. 1998. " Must False Consciousness Be Rationally Caused?", *Philosophy of the Social Sciences,* 28, 1.

Petit, P. 1996. "Functional Explanation and Virtual Selection", *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science,* 47. 2.

Plamenatz, J. 1963. *Man and Society Vol. 2.* London: Longmans.

Plamenatz, J. 1970. *Ideology.* London: Macmillan.

Praeg, L. 2000. *African Philosophy and the Quest for Autonomy: A Philosophical Investigation.* Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Rader, M. 1979. *Marx's Interpretation of History.* New York: OUP.

Rosen, M. 1996. *On Voluntary Servitude.* Cambridge: Polity.

Rosen, M. 1996a. "The Problem of Ideology", *The Aristotelian Society.* Supp,70.

Rosen, M. 2000. "On Voluntary Servitude and the Theory of Ideology," *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theor,* 7. 3.

Roy, A. 2001. *Power Politics.* Cambridge: South End.

Said, E.W. 1999. "Travelling Theory Reconsidered", in Gibson.

Sartori, G. 1969. "Politics, Ideology, and Belief systems", *The American Political Science Review,* 63. 2.

Sartre, J.P. 1948. *Anti-Semite and Jew.* New York: Schocken

Sartre, J.P. 2001. *Colonialism and Neocolonialism.* London: Routledge.

Scott, J. 1987. "Resistance without Protest and without Organisation: Peasant Opposition to the Islamic Zakat and the Christian Tithe", *Comparative Studies in Society and History,*29,3.

Scott, J. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Schmitt, R. 1996. "Racism and Objectification: Reflections on Themes from Fanon", in Gordon et al.

Serequeberhan, T. 1998. "Philosophy and Post-Colonial Africa", in Eze, E.C. (ed.) *African Philosophy: An Anthology.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Shelby, T. 2003. "Ideology, Racism and Critical Social Theory", *The Philosophical Forum,*34, 2.

Strauss, D.F.M. 2002. "Is It Meaningful To Juxtapose 'Individual' And 'Society'?", *Society in Transition,* 33, 1.

Taiwo, O. 1996. "On the Misadventures of National Consciousness: A Retrospect on Frantz Fanon's Gift of Prophecy", in Gordon et al.

Trotter, D. 1999. "Fanon's Nausea", *Parallax,* 5, 2.

Turner, J,H. and Maryanski, A.R. 1998. "Is 'Neofunctionalism' really Functional?", *Sociological Theory,* 6,1.

Turner, L.A.J. 1999. "Frantz Fanon, World Revolutionary" in Gibson.

Weldes, J. 1989. "Marxism And Methodological Individualism: A Critique", *Theory and Society*, 18,3.

Welshon, R. 1991. "Ideology, First-Person Authority And Self-Deception", *Social Epistemology*,5, 3.

White, R. T. 1996. "Revolutionary Theory: Sociological Dimensions of Fanon's *Sociologie d'une revolution*", in Gordon et al.

Wolff, J. 1996. "The Problem of Ideology: Michael Rosen and Jonathan Wolff," *The Aristotelian Society,* Supp, 70.