

# I D E O L O G Y

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## **1. What is ideology?**

Ideology is a loaded word. It can mean many different things, and using this word effectively and honestly requires care.

The term was first used by a French thinker, Claude Destutt de Tracy at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For him, ideology was the science of ideas and their origins. Ideology today is generally taken to mean the ideas themselves. Ideology is something embedded in a culture's common sense or in the everyday habits of thought that shape how we think and act as we live our daily lives,

In a more political sense, an ideology exists to confirm a certain political viewpoint. Daniel Bell defined ideology as 'an action oriented system of beliefs', in other words, ideology makes people do or not do certain things.

## **2. Is it a good help or had influence to individual's life or human society?**

In the Marxist tradition, ideology is about how cultures are structured to allow the power holders to have maximum power with the minimum conflict. False consciousness is the term used by Marx, and for him ideology presents a false picture of the world. This is often because a certain group propagates to serve the interests of certain people, usually the power holders.

This interpretation of ideology is similar to the general definition mentioned previously, in that it exists beneath our consciousness. The difference is intention. For Marx ideology states certain things not because it is natural or right, but because it was intended. People are led into believing that they are acting according to their free will, but they actually are not. Dominant institution in society plant ideology through values and conceptions of the world and through symbol systems in order, to legitimize the current order. This socialization process is called hegemony and it is carried out by the state's ideological apparatuses, such as schools, churches, commercial advertisements etc. For example, our culture is addicted to love stories, where the lovers encounter hardships but all's well in the end when they finally realize the true worth of each other. In this kind of setting, we tend to think of love as our most

fundamental concerns. Of course love is an important value in life, but not so important for all other moral and social values to disappear.

### **3. Is ideology dead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

Bell said that a post war consensus on capitalism and liberal democracy might spell the end of ideologies. He views democracy as the political system most in keeping with the nature and needs of humans. History has been an evolution of political forms towards democracy, and so once a state has reached democracy, all it has to do is avoid going backwards. There is no forward to go in terms of political organization. This assumption that democracy is the political system best suited to nature and that history is a movement towards it in itself can be called an ideology.

Because today's society is much more liberal and people make choices, many think that ideology is over. We all seem to be living to our capability and we don't complain too much. But, with the risk of being too radical, this too can be the result of manipulative ideology in which we are led into believing that we are living according to our values. Some say that demonstrations and strikes are allowed in today's society, just to make people think that we have choice and freedom.

The world will never be free from ideology. As Althusser writes, ideology creates us as persons and we are ideological beings.

### **4. Conclusion**

Ideology is neither true nor false, but it is a set of socially conditioned ideas that provide a truth that people, both advantaged and disadvantaged, want to hear. To draw a personal conclusion, ideology is a neutral concept and it exists in many forms and varies greatly in content. The tendency to have negative attitude towards it comes from the emphasis on the ideology of a certain powerful group. It has to be remembered that all minor political parties and social groups abide by their own ideologies.