

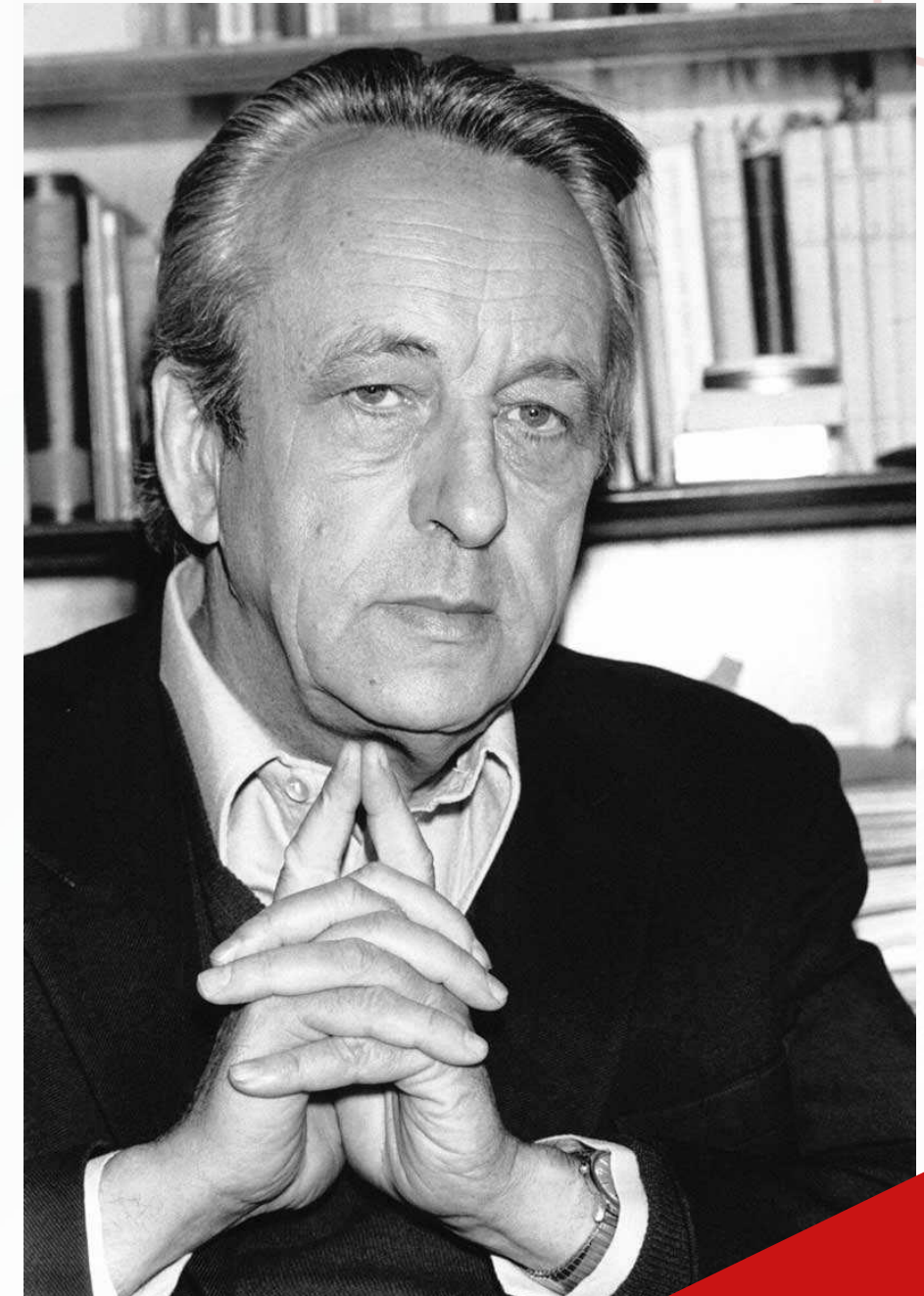
Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses

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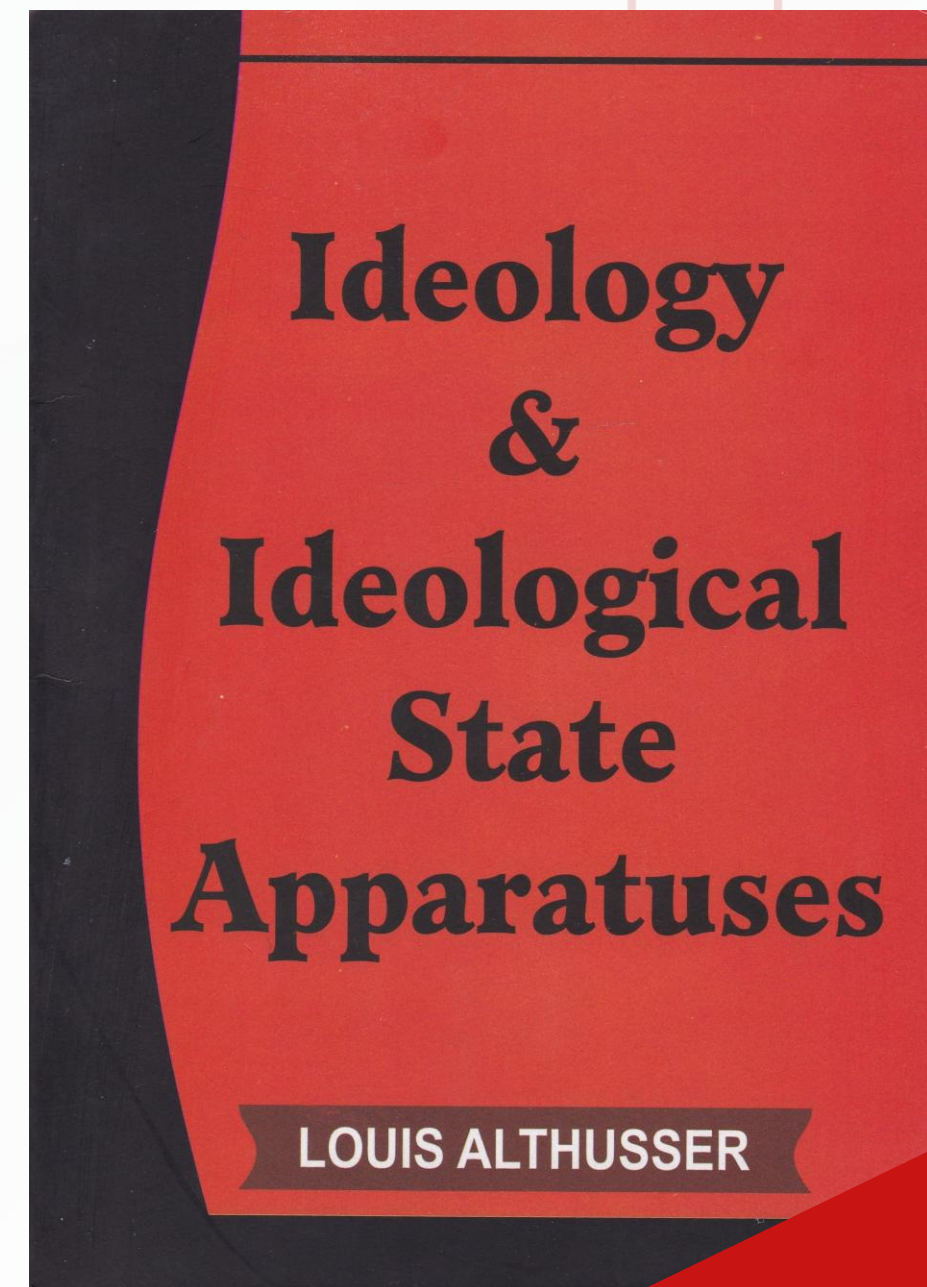
Louis Althusser

- **Born:** 1918, Algeria – **Died:** 1990, France
- **Philosopher & Marxist theorist**
- Key figure in **Structural Marxism**
- Taught at the **École Normale Supérieure**, Paris
- Challenged traditional, humanist interpretations of Marx
- Best known for:
 - *For Marx* (1965)
 - *Reading Capital* (1965)
 - *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1970)
- Influences: **Marx, Freud, Lacan**
- Legacy: Impact on **media theory, education, cultural studies, and critical theory**



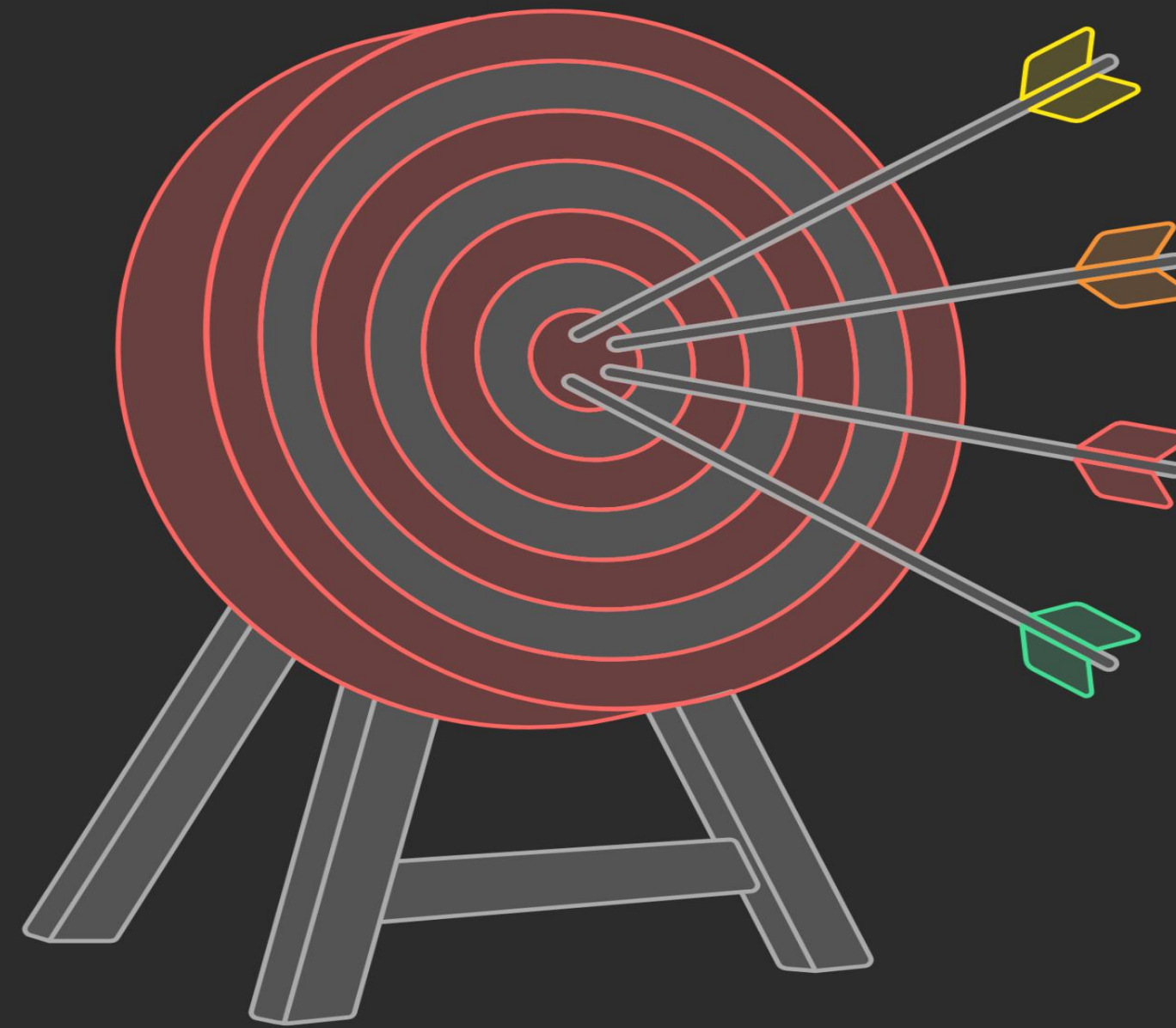
About the Essay

- ❑ It was first published in 1970.
- ❑ The central concern of the text is how dominant ideologies are maintained and reproduced within a society.
- ❑ Relationship Between Proletariat & Bourgeoisie



For the sake of clarity and analytical depth, this essay may be divided into three distinct sections.

Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses



Ideology

Core beliefs shaping society



Condition of Production

Economic context influencing ideology



Infrastructure and Superstructure

Societal framework supporting ideology



State Role

Implementation and enforcement of ideologies

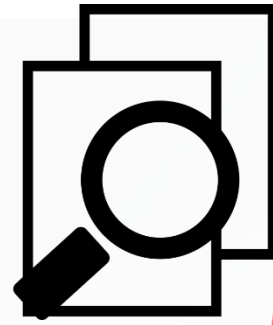
Ideology

Ideology is the shared beliefs and values held in an unquestioning manner by a culture.

Example- Religious Ideology

Many Muslims, Hindus, and Christians adhere to deeply rooted religious ideologies that shape their worldview and guide their daily lives. For many believers, these systems of thought are accepted as absolute truths, often inherited through family, community, and tradition, and therefore are seldom subjected to critical questioning or doubt.





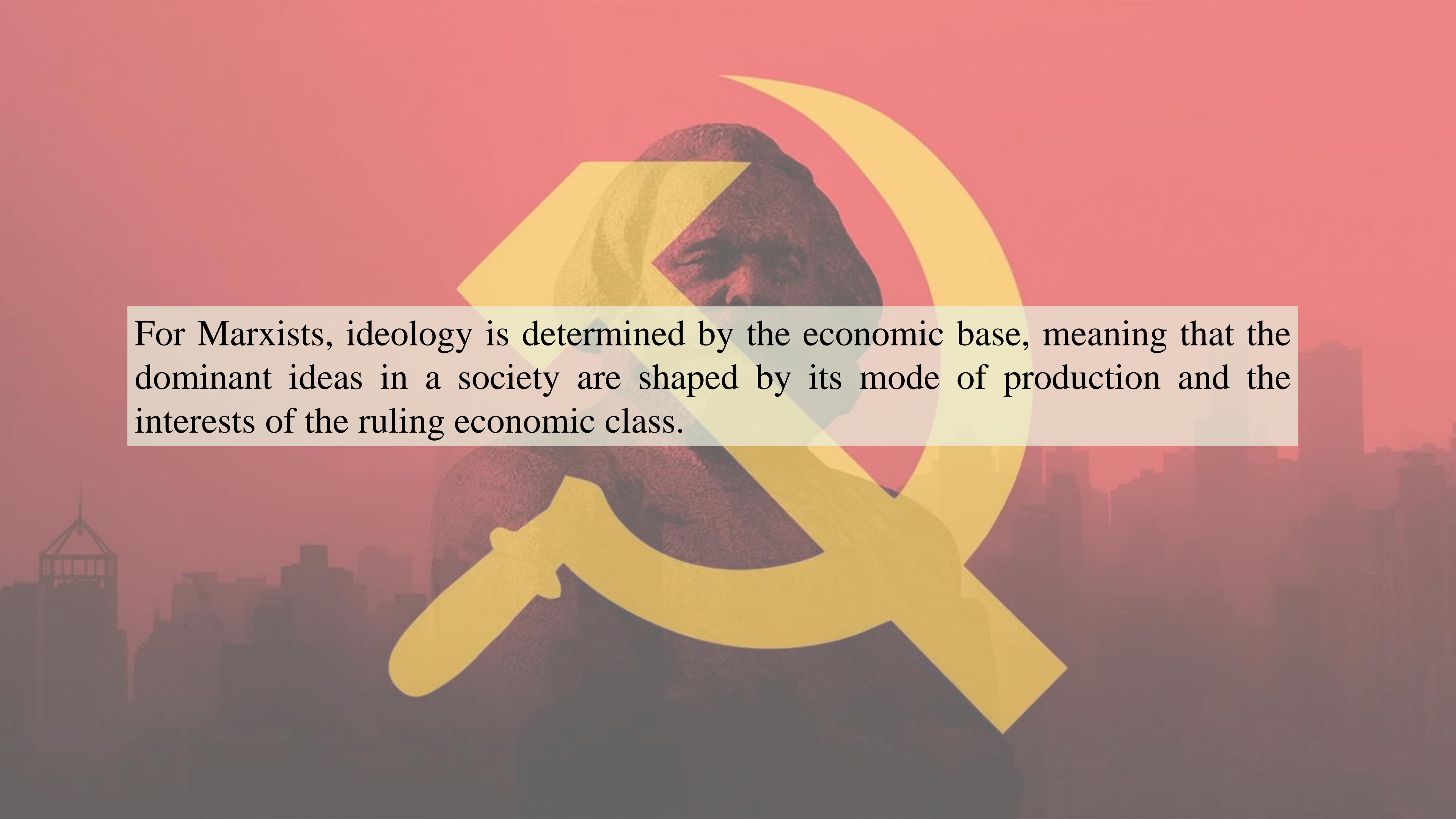
Apparatus

Machinery/ Equipment.

An Ideological State Apparatus is a means or mechanism used to establish and maintain a particular ideology.

Example- The **education system** works as an Ideological State Apparatus by teaching values, beliefs, and norms that align with the dominant ideology, helping to shape how students think and behave.

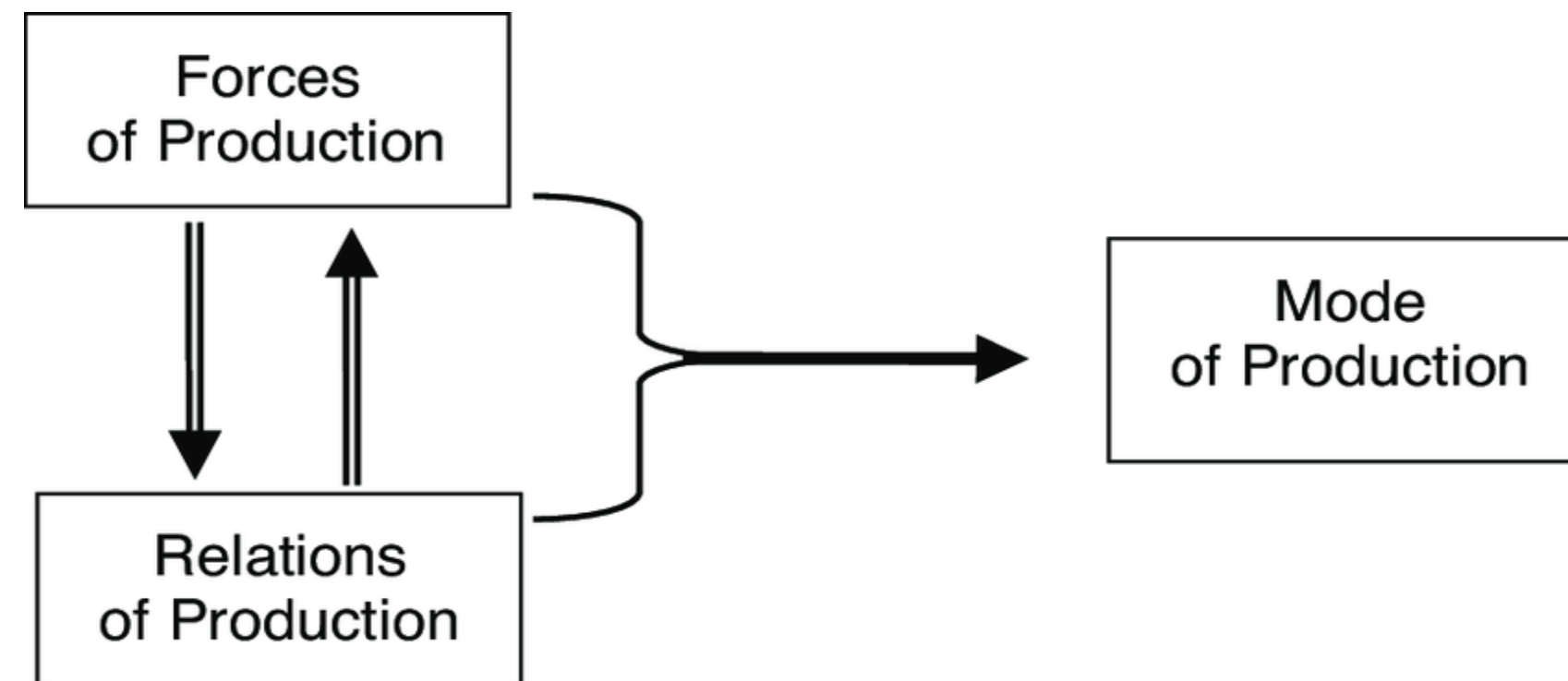




For Marxists, ideology is determined by the economic base, meaning that the dominant ideas in a society are shaped by its mode of production and the interests of the ruling economic class.

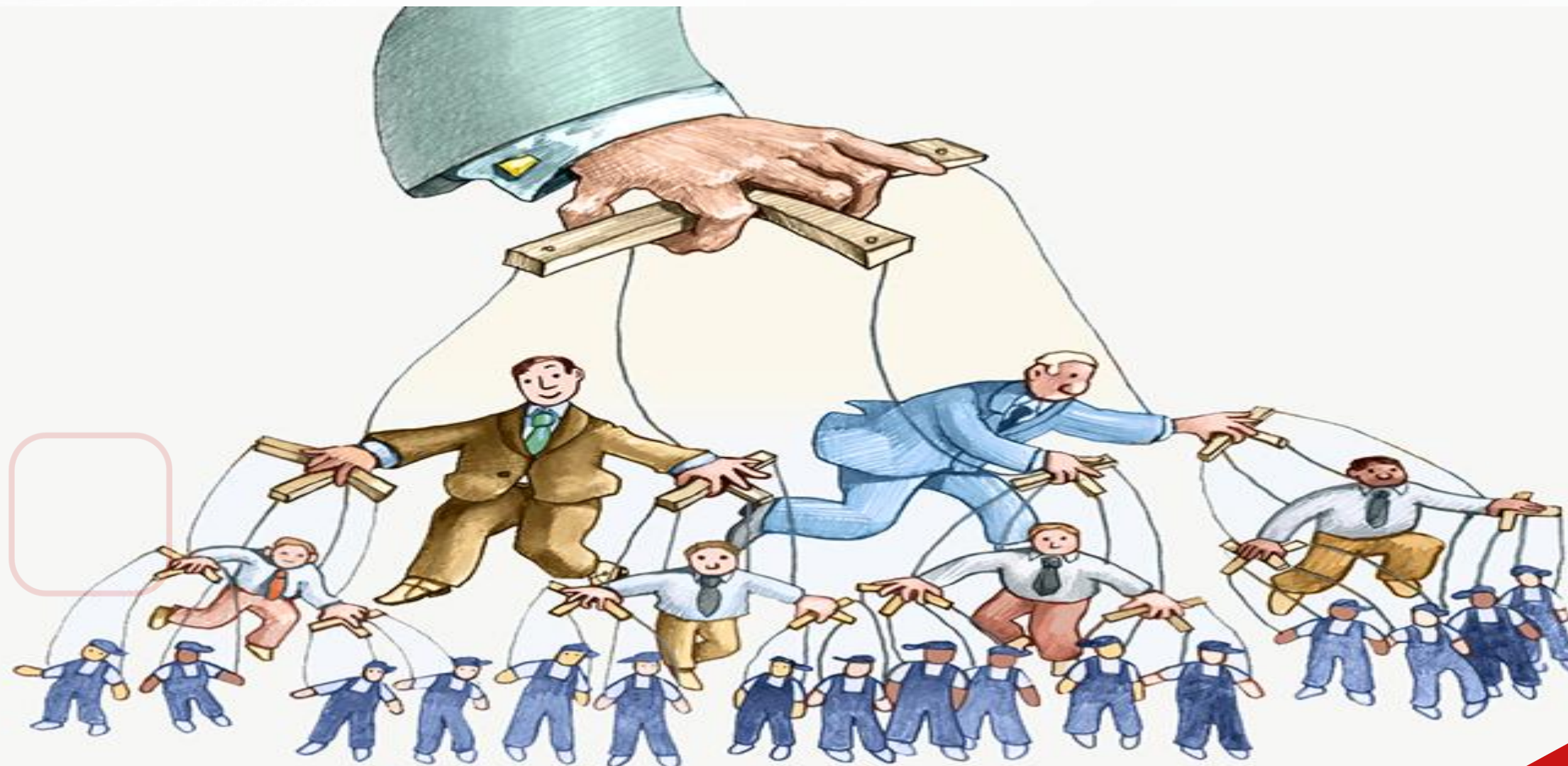
Condition of Production

The mode of production consists of two main parts: **Productive forces** and **The existing relations of the productions.**



Condition of Production

1.Productive forces refer to everything involved in producing goods and services — this includes labor (workers or proletariat), tools, technology, and raw materials. It is an ongoing, endless process where the proletariat (working class) continually produces the goods needed to sustain society. According to Louis Althusser, productive forces are very important for the continuation of society, and this process is supported and organized through the wage system, where workers are paid wages for their labor.



Condition of Production

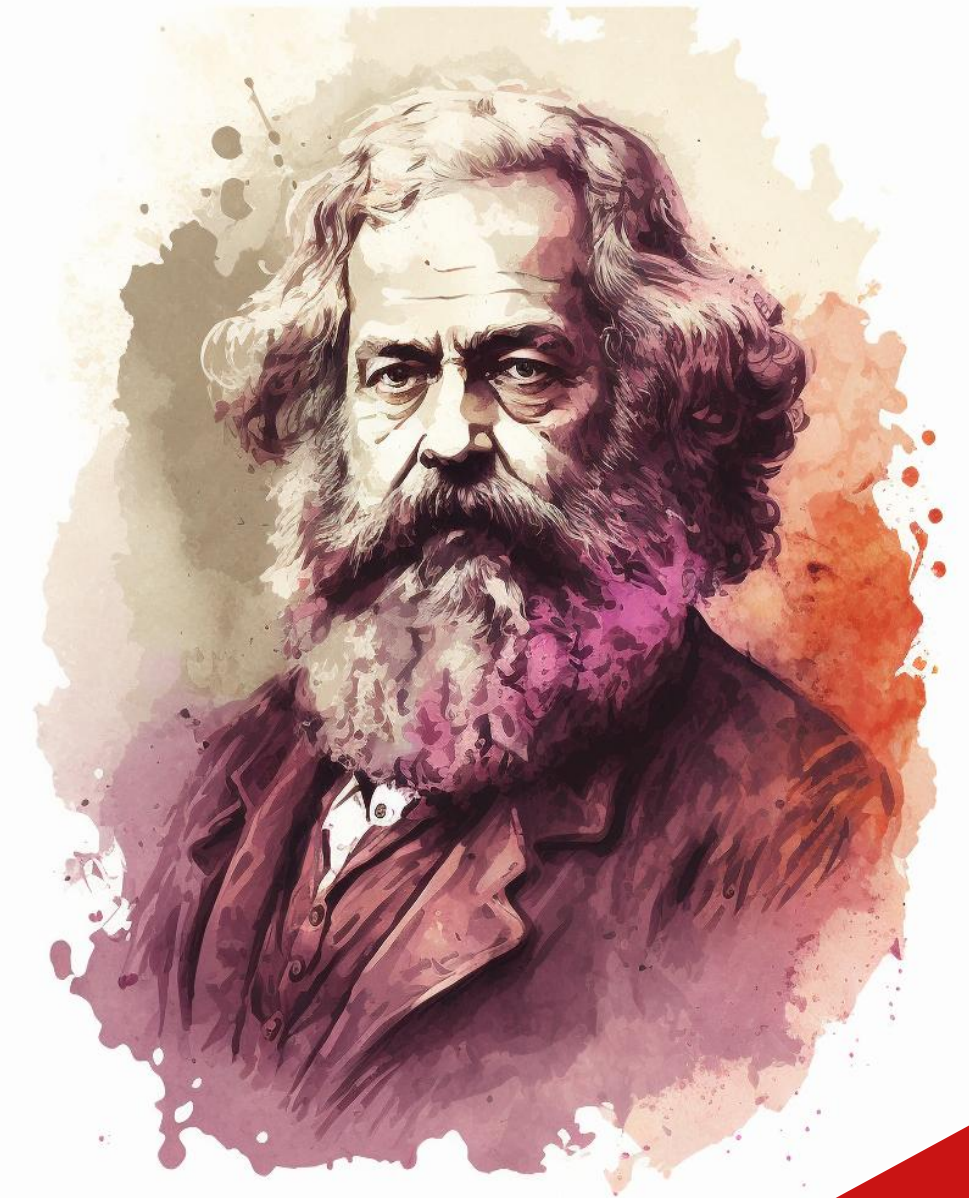
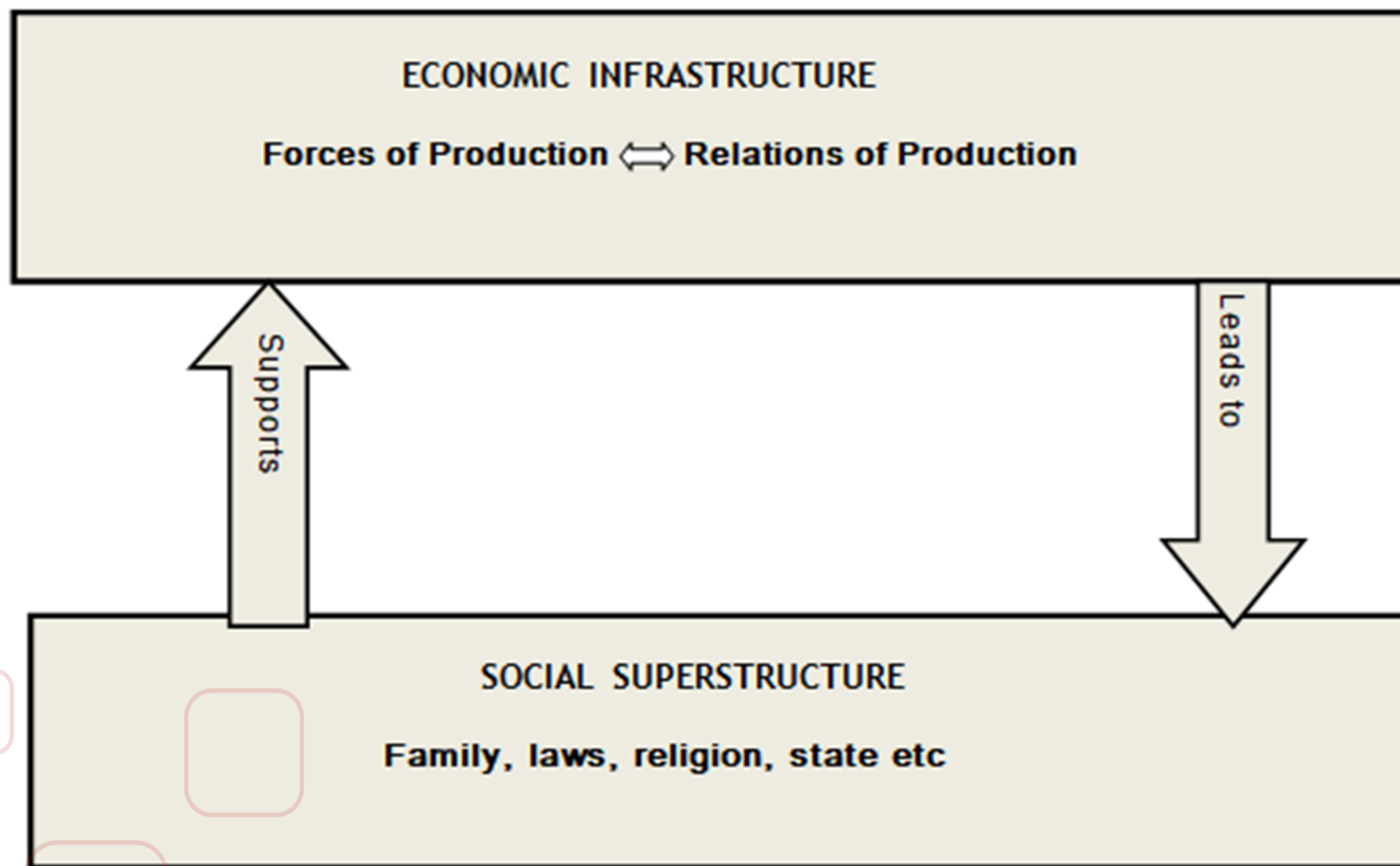
2. Relations of the production describe the social and economic relationships between different classes during production. In capitalist society, the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) own and control the means of production — factories, machinery, and resources — while the proletariat (working class) sell their labor to the bourgeoisie and serve their interests by working in the industries.

Together, these two aspects shape how a society functions economically and socially, influencing both production and power relations.



Infrastructure & Superstructure

In Marxist theory, society is divided into two interconnected parts:
Infrastructure and **Superstructure**.



Infrastructure

Infrastructure (or the economic base) refers to the foundation of society — the **mode of production**, which includes the productive forces (labor, tools, technology) and the relations of production (the relationships between classes involved in production). This economic structure shapes how goods and services are produced and distributed, forming the material conditions of society.



Superstructure

Superstructure consists of the social and cultural institutions and practices that arise from the infrastructure. This includes institutions such as government, education, religion, law, and the media. It also includes morality, art, culture, literature, and other forms of social expression. The superstructure reflects and helps maintain the economic base by promoting ideas and values that support the existing social order.



Example

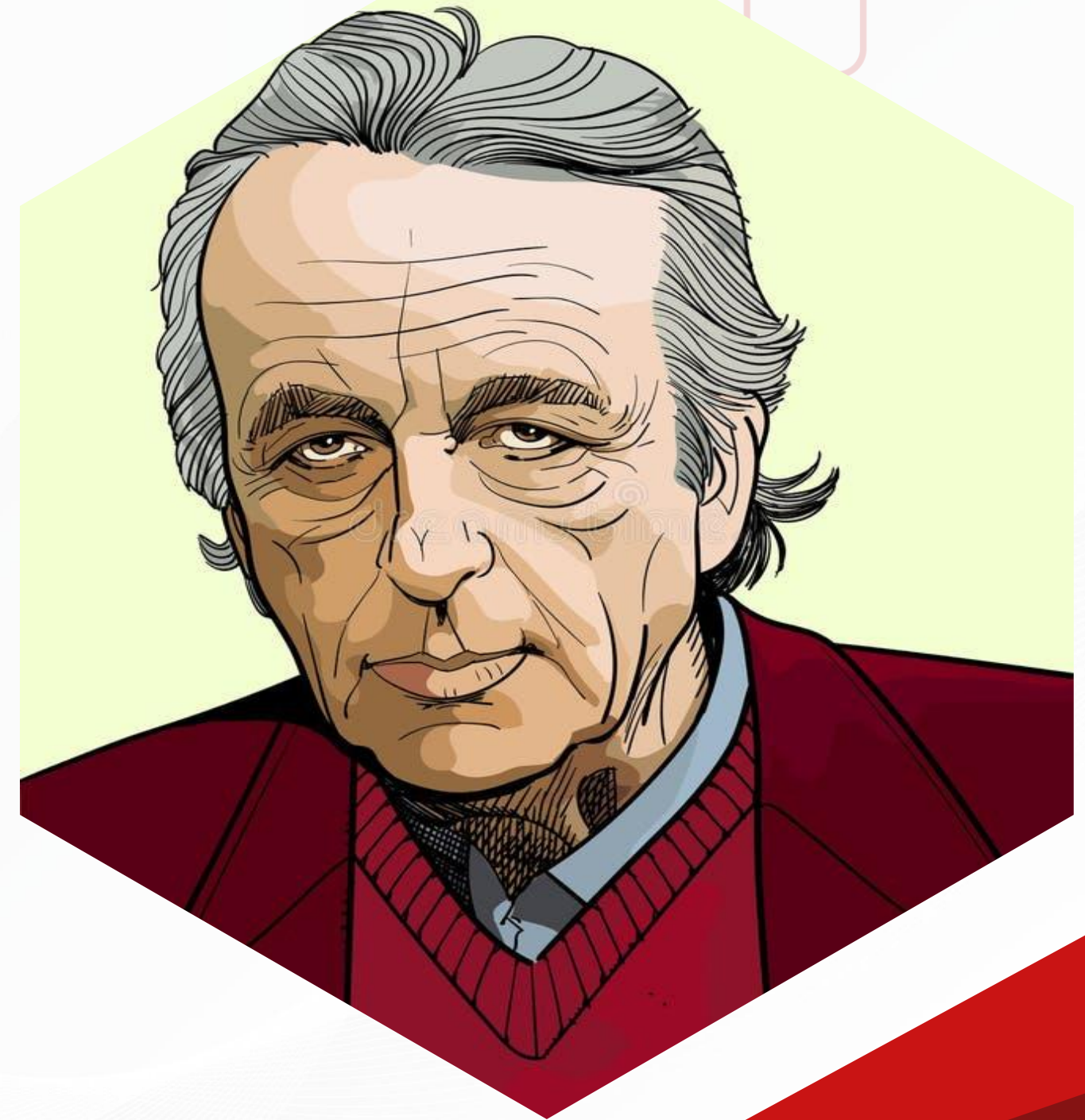
Prostitution is shaped by economic conditions (infrastructure), where poverty or lack of jobs may force people into sex work. At the same time, the social and cultural institutions (superstructure) like laws, religion, and public opinion influence how prostitution is treated—some countries legalize and regulate it, while others criminalize or stigmatize it. These differences reflect how society manages and controls this issue based on its values and economic system.



The Role of the State

Louis Althusser, a Marxist philosopher, provides a detailed explanation of how the state functions to maintain and reproduce the dominant ideology necessary for the continuation of the existing social order. According to Althusser, the state uses two main types of apparatuses to achieve this:

1. **Repressive State Apparatus (RSA)**
2. **Ideological State Apparatus (ISA)**



RSA

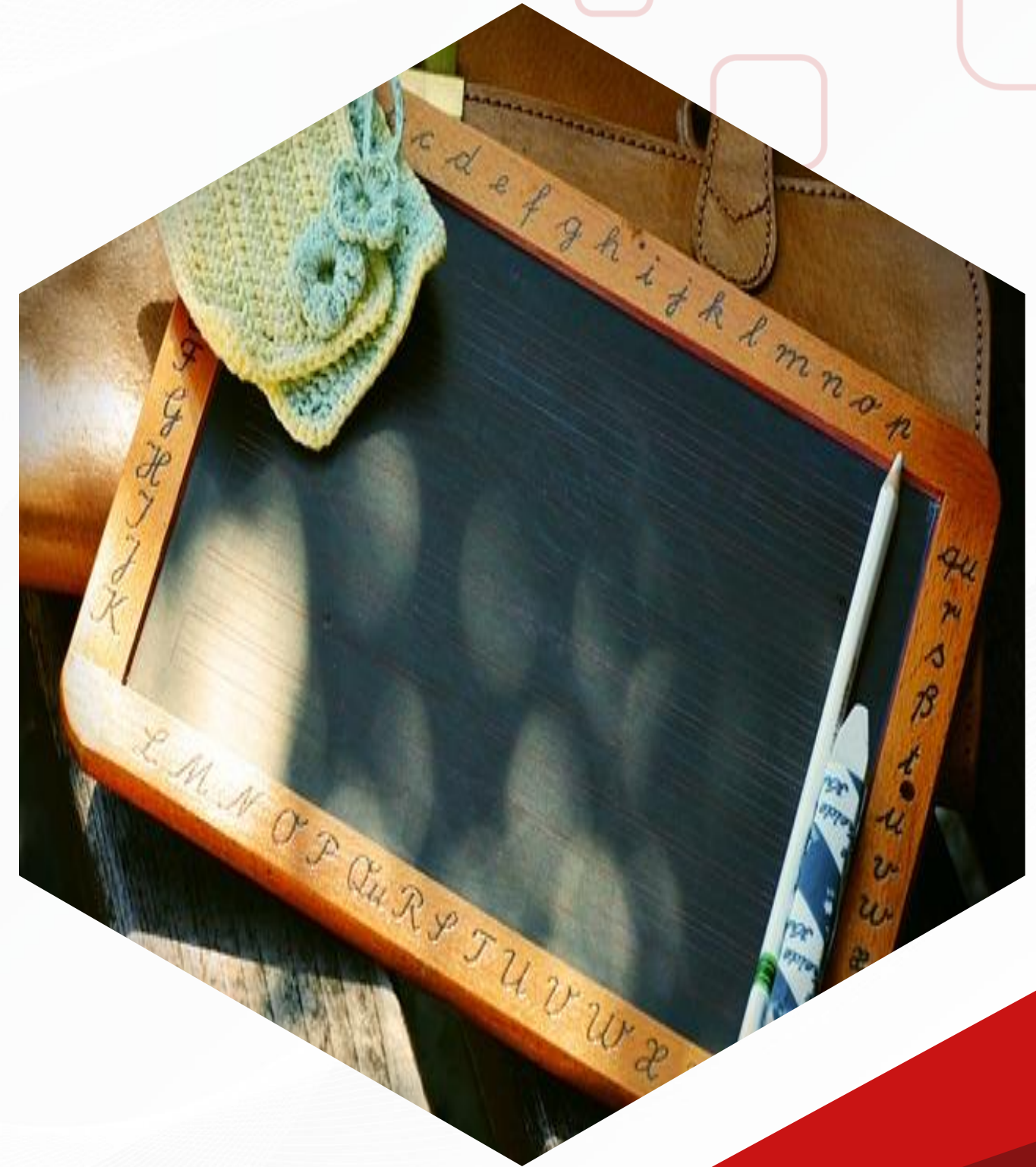
Repressive State Apparatus (RSA):

This includes institutions that primarily rely on force or repression to maintain order and enforce the dominant ideology, such as the police, military, and judiciary. The RSA operates openly and directly through laws and physical coercion when necessary.



ISA

Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA): These are more subtle and diverse institutions that work mainly through ideology rather than force. Examples include schools, family, religious organizations, media, cultural institutions, and political parties. ISAs shape people's beliefs, values, and behaviors by spreading and reinforcing the dominant ideology, often unconsciously.



RSA & ISA



Althusser argues that although the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) controls people mainly through force and repression, it is the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) that are more effective in shaping people's beliefs. ISAs "hail" or call out to individuals through ideology, making them recognize themselves as subjects within society. This process, called **interpellation**, leads people to accept and internalize the dominant ideology as something natural and normal. As a result, the existing social order and economic system are maintained without the need for constant use of physical force..

noun [C or U]

a description or an identity given to someone or something; the process of giving someone or something an identity.

Example

In schools (an ISA), students are taught discipline, respect for authority, and certain social values. When a teacher calls a student by name, the student “recognizes” themselves as the person being addressed and as a student expected to follow rules. This is interpellation — the student accepts their role and the values promoted by the school, which supports the wider social order and dominant ideology without needing force.



Conclusion

The state, therefore, plays a central role in both creating and enforcing ideology by using these apparatuses to reproduce the relations of production. The dominant class controls the means of production and uses the state apparatuses to ensure their ideas and interests continue to dominate society.

In summary, Althusser's theory shows that ideology is not just a set of ideas but a material practice embedded in institutions, and the state is the key actor in producing, disseminating, and enforcing ideology to sustain the existing power structure.





Ideology is an imaginary construction that represents the real world and this representation is so realistic, that nobody challenges it.

- Louis Althusser

Thank You





Raymond Williams

Advertising

As a Magic System

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Raymond Williams (1921–1988)

- Background:** Welsh-born critic, novelist, and academic; working-class roots shaped his lifelong focus on class, culture, and social change.
- Key Figure in Cultural Studies:** One of the founders of Cultural Studies, alongside Hoggart and Hall. He broadened the definition of “culture” beyond elite art to include **media, popular culture, and everyday life**.
- Cultural Materialism:** Developed the idea that culture must be studied in relation to its **material conditions**, economic structures, and social power.
- Media, Culture & Capitalism:** Saw media and communication as **central institutions** of modern capitalism—shaping identity, values, and social relations.
- Advertising: The Magic System** (1960, rev. 1980): His classic essay arguing that advertising is the “**official art of modern capitalist society**”, working like *magic* by attaching emotional and social meanings (love, success, freedom) to commodities.



Historical Concept of Advertising

Industrial Capitalism (19th c.)

- Rise of **mass production** created a surplus of goods.
- Competition between producers → need to **create demand** beyond basic needs.
- Advertising started to **persuade** consumers, not just inform.



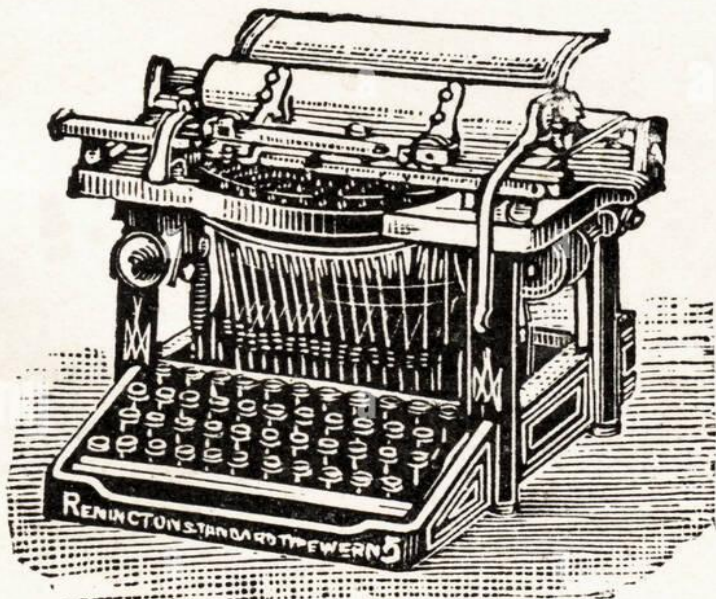
Historical Concept of Advertising

Pre-Industrial Advertising (before 18th c.)

- Ads were simple and **informative** → telling buyers *what* the product was, *where* to get it, and at *what price*.
- Example: town criers, posters, and newspaper listings for local markets.
- Goal = provide **practical information** about goods.

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10d. per 1,000 words.
100 Circulars for 4s

TAYLOR'S,
74, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.
(Est. 1884.)
Telegrams: "Glossator," London.
Telephone No. 690, Holborn.

THE A & H "Tasteless" CASTOR OIL

PURE, ACTIVE, AND ABSOLUTELY FREE FROM
ODOUR AND UNPLEASANT TASTE.

At 6d., 1s., 1s. 9d., 3s. and 9s.

The above is an entirely new article, and if not in
stock, can be readily procured by any Chemist.

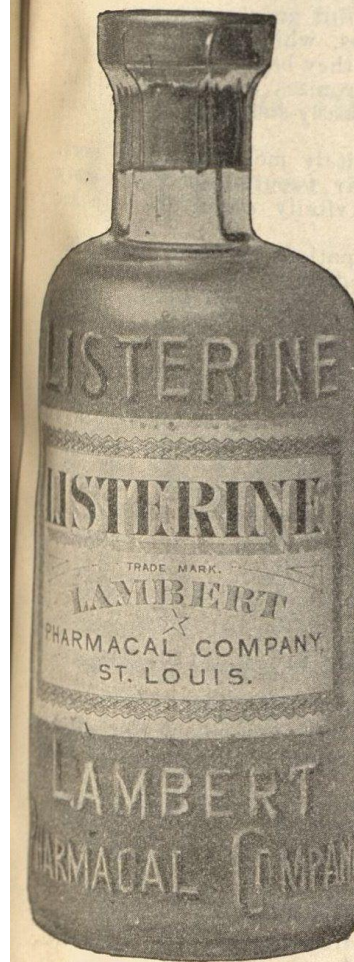
SOLE MANUFACTURERS,

ALLEN & HANBURY'S,
PLOUGH COURT, LOMBARD ST., LONDON.

Special Notice to the Dental Profession.



Listerine
in the
Original Package



WE beg to announce that, in addition to the regular size 14-oz. bottle in which LISTERINE is offered to the trade, a smaller package, containing **three ounces** is now placed upon the market; the consumer of LISTERINE is thereby enabled to purchase, under the seal and guarantee of the manufacturer, even the smallest quantity likely to be required.

Wholesale druggists throughout the United States are prepared to promptly supply Pharmacists with the new size LISTERINE.

ORIGINAL PACKAGE.
3-oz. Size—LISTERINE—Price 25 cents.

Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis.

Historical Concept of Advertising

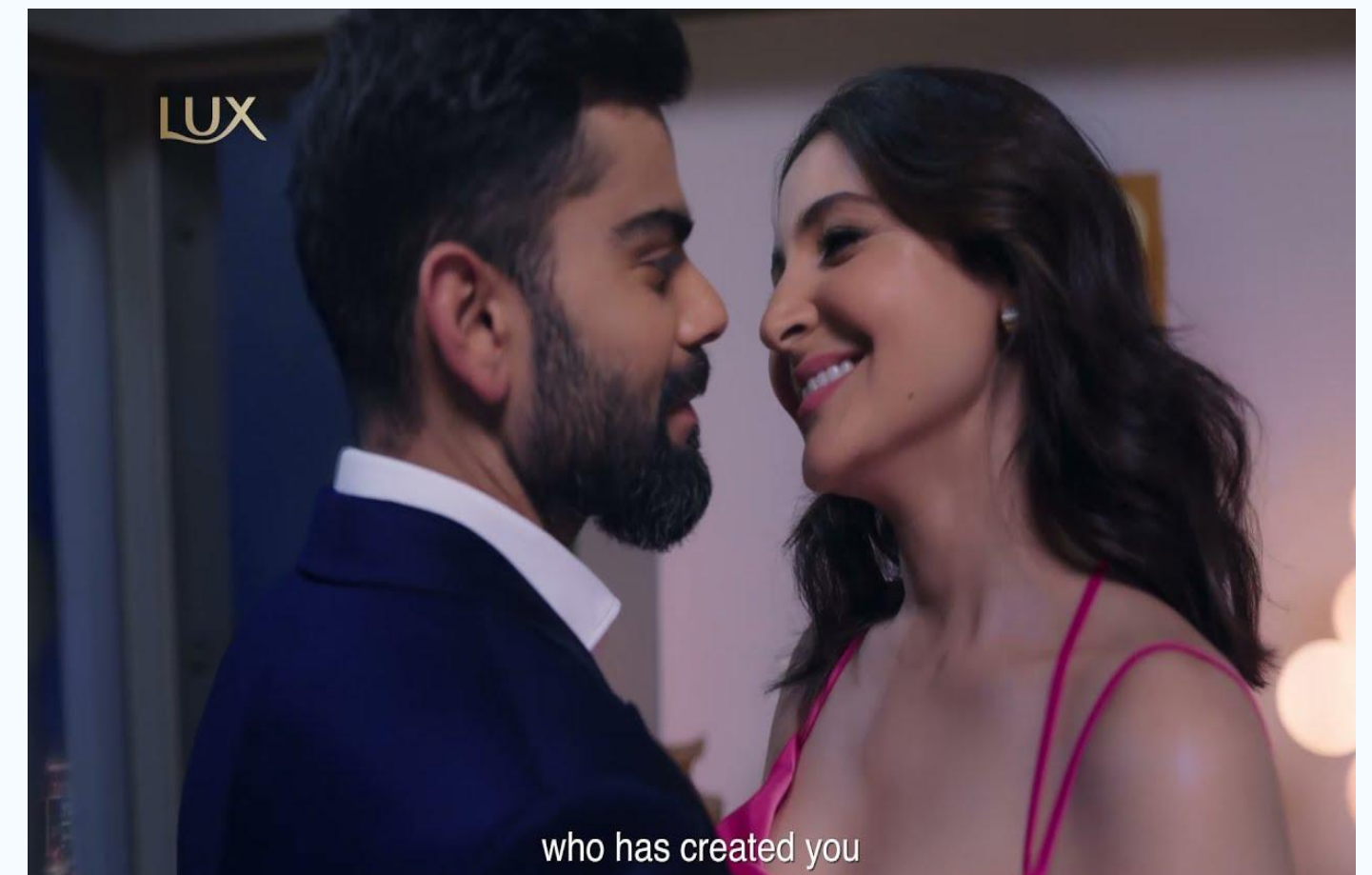
Modern Advertising (20th c. onward)

- Shift from information → **persuasion & fantasy**.
- Ads began attaching **emotional and symbolic meanings** (status, beauty, happiness, success) to products.
- Example: Soap = romance; Car = freedom; Cola = happiness.
- Advertising became a **cultural system** shaping desires, not just a marketplace tool.



Central Argument

- **Beyond Goods → About Meanings**
- Modern advertising rarely focuses only on a product's practical use.
- Instead, it constructs a “**story**” or “**image**” around the product.
- **Attaching Social & Emotional Values**
- Commodities are linked to **human desires and emotions**.
- Example:
 - Soap = romance & attraction, not just cleanliness.
 - Car = freedom, status, masculinity, not just transport.
 - Cola = friendship & happiness, not just a drink.
- **Advertising as “Magic”**
- Like a spell, advertising gives ordinary objects **powers they don't really have**.
- Everyday goods become **symbols** of success, beauty, love, or modernity.
- This “magical” association convinces people that buying goods can fulfill **deep social and emotional needs**.



Advertising as a Magic System

Bronisław Malinowski (1884–1942)

• **Who he was:**

- A Polish-born **anthropologist**, one of the founders of modern social anthropology.
- Famous for his **fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands (South Pacific)**.
- Known as the “father of participant observation” because he lived among the people he studied.

• **Key Idea on Magic:**

- Malinowski studied how traditional societies used **magic, religion, and ritual**.
- He argued that **magic arises when people face uncertainty, risk, or lack of control**.
 - Example: Fishermen didn’t use magic when fishing safely in lagoons, but used magic rituals before **dangerous ocean fishing**.
- Magic = a **psychological and social tool** to cope with anxiety, pressure, and desire.



Why Williams uses Malinowski?

Williams borrows this idea to explain advertising. Just as rituals gave people a sense of security, advertising gives commodities “magical powers” that promise solutions to our anxieties (love, success, belonging).



Advertising as a Magic System

Anthropological Background (Malinowski)

- In traditional societies, **magic** was used when people faced **uncertainty, anxiety, or unmet desires** (e.g., rituals before fishing, harvest, or war).
- Magic provided a sense of control, comfort, and hope.
- **Williams' Argument**
- Advertising works in the **same way as magic**.
- It takes people's **real emotions & social pressures** (desire for love, success, belonging) and offers **commodities as solutions**.
- The product itself doesn't truly solve the problem, but advertising makes it *feel magical*.

•Everyday Examples of “Magic” in Ads

- **Perfume** → promises romance, desire, and mystery (not just a pleasant smell).
- **Smartphone** → symbolizes connectivity, status, and being “modern” (not just a communication device).
- **Sneakers (Nike/Adidas)** → linked to empowerment, courage, and athletic success (not just footwear).
- **Luxury Watch (Rolex)** → suggests prestige, wealth, and timeless success (not just a time-telling tool).
- **Fast Food (McDonald's/KFC)** → marketed as fun, family bonding, and happiness (not just cheap calories).

THE SHOE WORKS IF YOU DO.



The Nike Sweet Classic High is comfortable while still remaining in style. With great quality and a wide variety of colour options, these sneakers are perfect for casual use. Stay fly, stay fresh and get yourself a pair.

JUST DO IT.



nike.com

How the Magic Works

•Displacement

- Human needs (love, friendship, success, confidence) are **shifted onto products**.
- Example: Perfume ad suggests *romance & attraction* instead of just fragrance.

•Myth-Making

- Commodities are “**enchanted**” with symbolic powers they don’t really have.
- Example: Luxury watch = not about time, but *prestige and timeless success*.

•Repetition

- The same messages are repeated across **ads, billboards, TV, social media**.
- Over time, these associations feel “natural” (e.g., cars = freedom, youth = beauty).

•Emotional Appeal > Rational Logic

- Ads speak to **desires and feelings**, not practical function.
- Example: Nike’s “*Just Do It*” doesn’t sell shoes—it sells *courage, empowerment, achievement*.

Critical Implications of Advertising



•Sustains Capitalism

- Advertising is central to the survival of capitalist economies.
- It manufactures **continuous demand**, even when basic needs are already met.

•Creation of False Needs

- Real human desires (love, self-worth, belonging) are replaced with **consumption-based solutions**.
- Ads convince us that **happiness = buying things**.

•Alienation

- People no longer relate to products for their **use-value** (what they actually do).
- Instead, they buy for **symbolic meanings** (status, image, lifestyle).
- This deepens the gap between real needs and artificial desires.

•Shaping Cultural Values

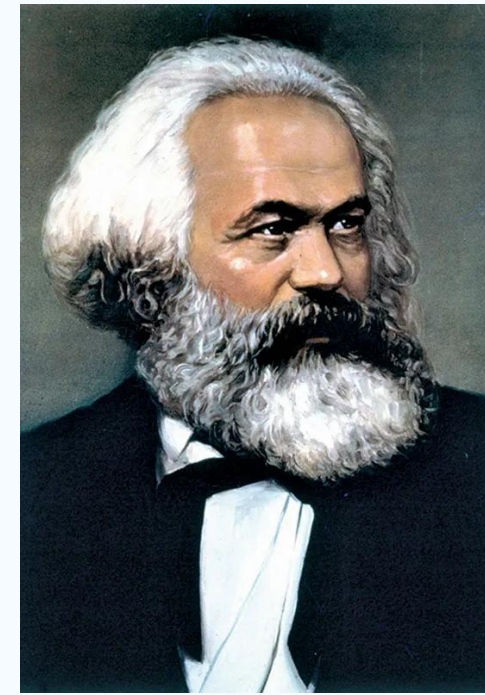
- Advertising defines what it means to be “successful,” “beautiful,” or “modern.”
- Over time, these **advertising ideals** reshape social norms and personal identity.



Link to Other Thinkers

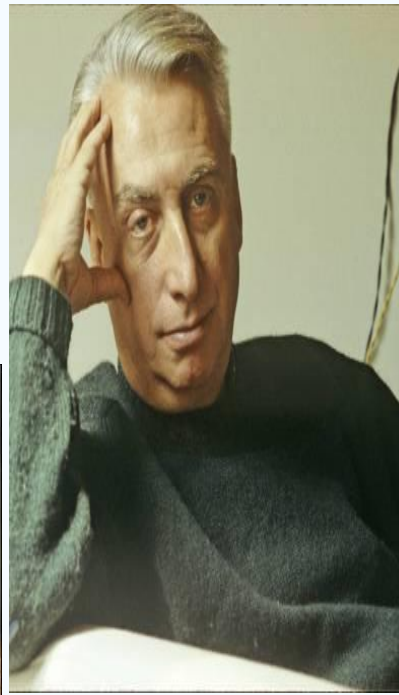
Karl Marx – Commodity Fetishism

- In capitalism, commodities seem to have mystical powers.
- Social relations between people are disguised as relations between things.
- Ads reinforce this by making products appear to carry love, status, or happiness.



Louis Althusser – Ideology

- Ideology works by “hailing” or interpellating individuals.
- Advertising hails us as consumers (“You deserve this,” “Because you’re worth it”).
- It makes us identify with consumer roles without questioning them.



Roland Barthes – Mythologies

- Everyday cultural texts (ads, fashion, media) create **myths**.
- These myths disguise the economic and social realities behind products.
- Ads naturalize certain ideas (e.g., *driving a car = freedom, youth = beauty*).



Williams builds on all three — he shows that advertising is both fetishistic (Marx), ideological (Althusser), and myth-making (Barthes).

Case Study

Coca-Cola → “Real Magic” / Happiness

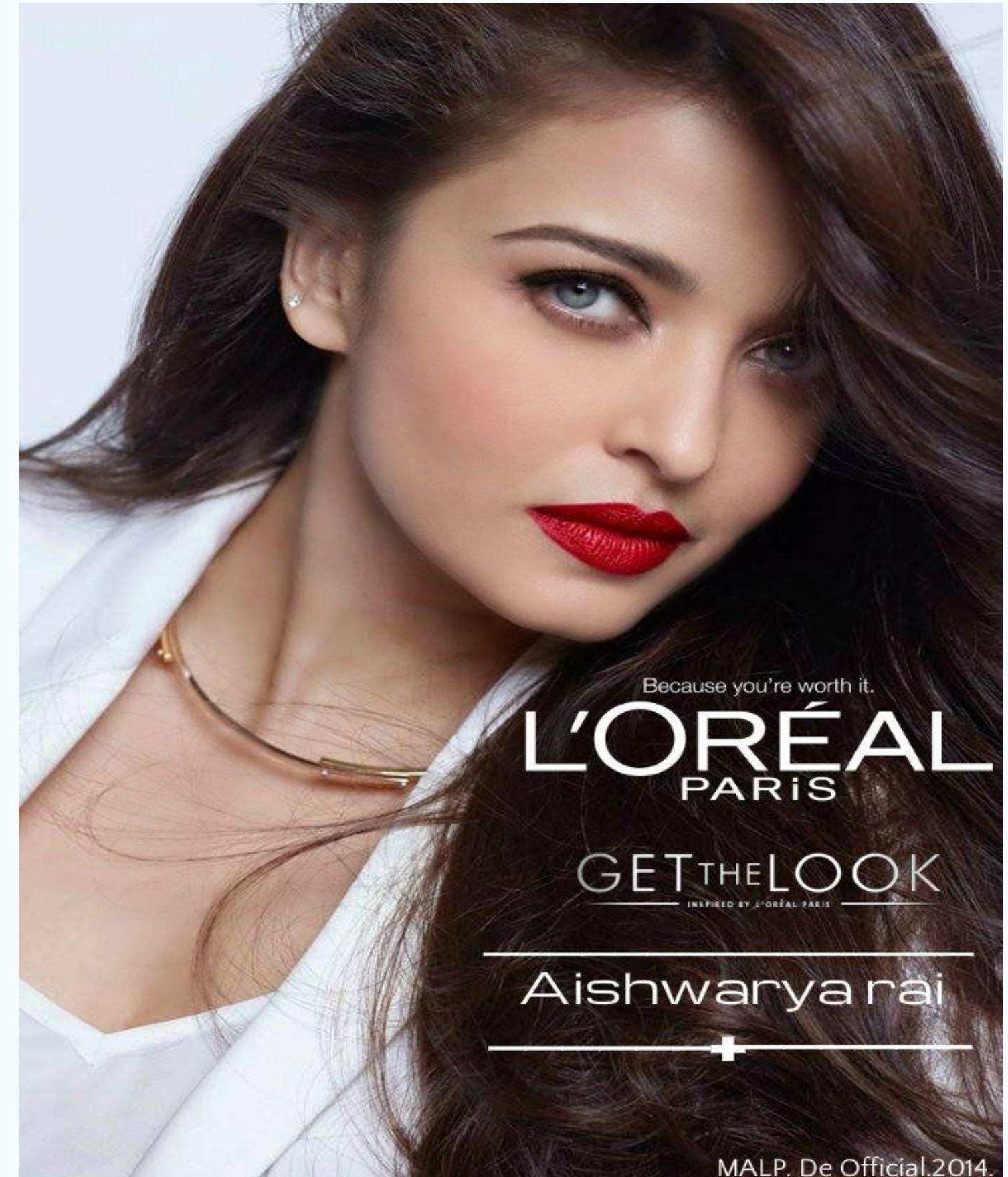
- ❑ Ads sell friendship, joy, togetherness, not just a drink.
- ❑ Example: holiday ads show families/friends united by Coke.



Case Study

L'Oréal → Self-Worth (“Because you’re worth it”)

- ❑ Selling *confidence, empowerment, and beauty ideals*.
- ❑ The product becomes a *symbol of personal value and self-esteem*.



Case Study

Grameenphone – “Cholo Bohudur” (Let’s Go Farther)

- Not just selling a mobile network.
- Symbolizes *connection, ambition, and national progress*.
- Ads often show youth, education, family unity → turning telecom services into a **dream of modernity and empowerment**.



Case Study

Coca-Cola → “Real Magic” / Happiness

- ❑ Ads sell friendship, joy, togetherness, not just a drink.
- ❑ Example: holiday ads show families/friends united by Coke.



“Advertising is ... in a sense, the official art of modern capitalist society.”



Thank you

Advertising is far more than the neutral transmission of product information—it operates as a powerful cultural force. By attaching magical meanings to commodities, advertisements transform ordinary goods into symbols of love, success, happiness, and identity. In doing so, they not only persuade us to consume but also shape our values, desires, and sense of self within consumer culture. As Raymond Williams argues, to truly understand modern society, we must learn to decode this “magic system” and recognize how advertising organizes both our economy and our everyday imagination..