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Ideology of Gradual Decentralization and Ideological Constructs

Master and slave, or the relationship between authority and subservience to that authority, embodies the composite of contrasting forces. An ideal analytical approach to finding a trajectory of peace and fulfillment of many polities eliminates the negative consequences of the relationship between master and slave. This is mainly due to the altruism that a master can exert on the slave. And in all situations, every human by nature is subject to ideology – or the inevitable master.[1] Their servitude, inevitably without lack of agency, allows the entire species to break free from the hegemony of ideological constructs.[2] In a 2004 speech, Arundhati Roy claiming not to be a leader stated "[t]here's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard."[3]But, how does hegemony disintegrate through the erosion of monolithic, coercive social control? A counter to any dominating force is the underlying decentralization of that force. Thus, I will synthesize the works of scholars that discuss the relationship of hegemony and expression. Said differently, decentralization through counter-hegemony will be the primary focus of an argument intended to concentrate on the control that humanity has in both constructing reality and in changing institutional procedures and norms.

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1 Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apperatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Durham and Douglas Kellner, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
2 Ibid.
3 "Roy's Full Speech," *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 4, 2004, sec. Opinion, http://www.smh.com.au/news/Opinion/Roys-full-speech/2004/11/04/1099362264349.html.

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Hegemony

Hegemonic Apparatus

Dominance over the individual due to a central force requires a relationship to exist between a servant and a master. Hierarchical and structural forces are but only some of the commands exerted on an individual or society. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels describe the materialistic conditions of "the hegemony of the spirit of history"[4] and the actions humanity as a whole requires to advance. Briefly, a base emits the outcomes of the superstructure, thereby eliminating the agency that proletarians express. Therefore, by changing the base – institutionally, economically, and/or culturally – the superstructure is altered.

Yet according to Antonio Gramsci, "subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and can not unite until they are able to a become a 'State'."[5] Further to the point, as society unifies, repressive ideological apparatuses[6] diminish in the effective and efficient means of coercion. And as information unites a globalized world, the ability and probability for humanity to form a global unified polity increases. Hegemony of apparatuses diminishes through technological means; especially so with regard to the Internet. The Internet and others "'organise' human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc."[7]

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4   Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Ruling Class and the Ruling Ideas," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Durham and Douglas Kellner, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
5   Antonio Gramsci, "History of the Subaltern Classes," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Durham and Douglas Kellner, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
6   Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apperatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)."
7   Antonio Gramsci, "The Concept of 'Ideology'," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Durham and Douglas Kellner, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).

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Hegemonic Ideology

Yet, ideological beliefs still develop even in the ideal. The best information systems produce unexpected results due to large misconfiguration of "an exact knowledge of the field that must be cleared of its element of human 'mass'."[8] Counter-hegemony that effectively combats hegemonic ideology is likely in many scenarios and probabilistic in situations where the appropriate insight empowers a group. The event which Gramsci describes allow for a comprehensive of understanding two ideas; *(1)*the individual expressing resistance and forming a counter-hegemony and *(2)*a successful change of order on a global level between states.

First, empowerment through information systems – such as books – allow for a sense of unity. More precisely, Janice Radway depicts the resistance women may be portraying in reading romance novels and finds women not only achieve a personal escape from their reality, but also allow for discussion between communities of women.[9] Importantly, women are able to escape their confines of their traditional 1984 roles. Essentially, the most important aspect of the arguments of Radway alludes to a solution. Any counter-hegemony can prevent a hegemony from co-opting it because each member of the counter-hegemonic community has a temporary escape route to supporting communities – internally or externally. Radway simply utilizes

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8   Antonio Gramsci, "Culture Themes: Ideological Material," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Durham and Douglas Kellner, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
9   Janice Radway, "The Readers and Their Romances," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Durham and Douglas Kellner, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).

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women as a unit-of-analysis, and theoretically any polity could share the resistance tailored to its special circumstances.

Second, John Ikenberry describes in his book *After Victory* the pattern of changing global order over time.[10] And in finding a series of settlements, or changes to order, Ikenberry determines that the world completely changed in 1815, 1915, and 1945 after major war.[11] States fundamentally are large polities of centralized power. Each state has the ability to change global hegemony based on their position in a larger hierarchy, and the leading states historically created institutionalized systems of global governance that allowed for gradual decentralization and constitutional forms of government – or perhaps first steps to the ideal form of global democracy.[12] Moreover, global governance institutions have continued to restrain the level of hegemonic control on individuals within each polity. A state is, by definition, a large group of people in a defined territory with shared formal, institutional, and legal codes. The same concept of the influence which leading polities possess already applies to other polities not confined to a specific geographical territory on a map.

In both cases, of the individual reader and the large citizenry, a clear factor of change would be exemplified by information systems which travel at near-light speed. The "human 'mass'"[13] effectively becomes an organized community in the case of the Internet. And to

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10 John Ikenberry, *After Victory* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Gramsci, "Culture Themes: Ideological Material."

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acknowledge one possible rebuttal regarding mass society lacking the characteristics of a fully

configured gathering of people, I propose a perspective. Global community may have recently

developed the ability to better learn from itself. It is not a society that is stagnant or malignant,

but rather the more likely scenario involves a relatively new empathic civilization bristling with

the potential to achieve cultural singularity. To summarize, the global society may begin to

achieve precise and rapid decentralized decision-making due to the relative perceptual change of

people with attentiveness to closer space and time. Additionally, as space and time become

seemingly at the same point, cultural singularity will be achieved.

Concise Communication

To elaborate on the idea of a concrete foundation for expression, the ability to convey

meaning pertains to the vital nature of any organism. In an individual human, a series of

communication pathways allow the brain to exert discourse between each part of the body.

Messages are received, interpreted, and acted on by each system the human organism possesses

for vital functions – the message from each system biologically is relayed back to the brain for

communication. And while I caution comparing *specific parts* of a global community to

specific systems of the human organism, the global organism has methods of communicating

that are quite similar. Messages are encoded and decoded. The interpretation of these messages

are understood in the public sphere where accordant to notions of Stuart Hall, "programme as

'meaningful discourse" provide comprehensive communication.[14] Further analysis into the vast

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14 Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Durham and
    Douglas Kellner, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).

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realm of exact communication which abundantly occurs – at an astronomical rate – over the

Internet is required to fully understand the degree of clarity in the interpretation of messages.

Many globally communicated messages may be continuously misunderstood. The ideal is one

where every message comprehensively creates the intended meaning for the global organism of

humanity through the process of encoding and decoding.[15]

Void of Mirrors

Baring in mind the simulacra of society, conflicting messages are actually adding to the

level of confusion for humanity. In fact, Jean Baudrillard finds the changing order of time in

empires do not have the capacity to preserve territorial based information systems to an

indefinite period of time where "the fraying of this map, little by little" becomes only noticeable

as artifact of prior history.[16] Following this logic, order is not a monolithic, unchanging

structure. Yet, with the "Precession of Simulacra," Baudrillard understands that contemporary

artifacts are created without historical context; hence, a system of real and fake exists without

repeatable observable evidence.[17] Put differently, the ultimate centralized hegemony determines

a domineering reality for its servants, whereas the ultimate form of decentralization allows the

servants to agree through consensus on an intersubjective reality.

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15 Ibid.
16 Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, ed. Meenakshi Durham and Douglas Kellner, 2nd ed. (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
17 Ibid.

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Ideological State Apparatuses

Media, organized religion, schooling, kinship structures, cultural ventures, and other social institutional factors are all influences that create the simulacra of society[18] and Althusser understands that even states influence private life by manufacturing "a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions."[19] Repressive State Apparatuses are inherently coercive and proceed to limit the expressive quality of a society or polity; moreover, all apparatuses that prevent expression are hegemonic. Additionally, the distinction between public and private is an ideological perception, which is part of the simulacra,[20] created by the ruling class. A false perception perpetuated by hegemony is the illusion of freedom, set by the bourgeois, inherently hierarchical, and dominating the ability humans possess to collectively establish a community. Would the absence of the ruling class, then perhaps, allow humanity to *automatically* establish a sense of freedom? Accordingly, one must first understand the two notions. First, the phrase of Althusser, "it is essential to realize that both he who is writing these lines and the reader who reads them are themselves subjects..."[21] And second, expression between subjects allows the communal perspective of those subjects to clearly share a more accurate understanding of reality. While a truly decentralized global society will not truly free society from ideology, and even in cases where society may understand that fact, decentralization would create a sense of freedom due to the shared support and collaborative environment each human could receive.

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18 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apperatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)."
19 Ibid.
20 Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra."
21 Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apperatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)."

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In the consciousness of a global community with sharing of different ideologies, it is very

unlikely if not impossible that the master-servant relationship could become ideological,

hegemonic, or coercive – so long as every ideology maintains respect for other ideology.

Implications

The intersubjective reality of humanity remains an essential part of expression and

discussion – essentially the basis of ideology. Forming a consistent product relies on adapting to

the conditions present in any environment. The skilled chef, irregardless to location, bakes a

cake following a set of procedures and the resulting product coincides within a range of

possibilities that fit the ideal goal. Similarly, global society has the potential to mimic the chef. A

human being will seek goals based upon their ideology given the correct set of procedures; the

procedures being determined through institutional reformation and cultural norms changing to

empower individuals.

From my understanding of expression and ideological constraints, the master-servant

relationship can benefit any human on both an individual level and a societal level. Due to the

inherent function of expression, rules and norms are not fixed. Gradual decentralization is

possible, if not already progressing and within the reach of humanity. Undeniably, a human that

seeks the ability to communicate, share information, and empower others in society also

prevents repressive ideological customs from expanding. In other words, the reduction of

hegemony appears to correlate with ideologies that appreciate non-hierarchical systems.

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Hierarchical apparatus, conflicting similarly to an oroboros, rely on institutions and cultural constructs which are founded upon the lack of usufruct traditions and usury tendencies. Conversely, non-hierarchical systems provide a love of community and mutually ensured survival. In the latter example, humanity does not devour itself.