“One of the basic findings in theories of ideology and

discourse is that the meaning of a term is not fixed

once and for all, but subject to change. At times, it

can even turn into its opposite. This is the case with

‘ideology’” (J. Rechmann, *Theories of Ideology*, p.15)

“The term ideology , in other words, would seem to make reference not only to belief systems, but to questions of *power*” (T. Eagleton, *Ideology.An introduction*, p.5)

“So far we have been considering the role within ideology of what might be called epistemic falsehood. But as Raymond Geuss has argued, there are two other forms of falsity highly relevant to ideological consciousness, which can be termed functional and genetic. False consciousness may mean not that a body of ideas is actually untrue, but that these ideas are functional for the maintenance of an oppressive power, and that those who hold them are ignorant of this fact. Similarly, a belief may not be false in itself, but may spring from some discreditable ulterior motive of which those who hold it are unaware. As Geuss summarizes the point: consciousness may be false because it 'incorporates beliefs which are false, or because it functions in a reprehensible way, or because it has a tainted origin'” (ibid, pp. 24-5).

“The limiting condition within 'ideology' as a concept, from its beginning […], was the tendency to limit processes of meaning and valuation to formed, separable 'ideas' or 'theories'” (R. Williams, “Ideology”, in T. Eagleton (ed) *Ideology*, p. 188)

“We would not usually call a set of beliefs about

whether lamb is tastier than haddock ideological, even though it is true

that there is no belief which *could* not be ideological, given the appropriate

circumstances. It all depends on who is saying what to whom, with what

intentions and with what effects. Ideology, in short, is a matter of *discourse*

- of practical communication between historically situated subjects - rather

than just of *language* (of the kinds of propositions we utter).” (Eagleton, “Introduction” in T. Eagleton (ed), *Ideology*, p.11)

2. “First, the question arises as to whether ideology has a negative or positive meaning. […] Secondly, the question can be raised as to whether ideology has an eminently subjective and psychological character or is, on the contrary, entirely dependent upon objective factors. If subjective, ideology is conceived of as a deformation of consciousness, which is somehow unable to grasp reality as it is. If objective, ideology appears as a deception induced by reality itself: it is not the subject that distorts reality but reality itself which deceives the subject. … A further question arises as to whether ideology should be considered a particular kind of phenomenon within the vast range of superstructural phenomena, or whether ideology is equivalent to and co-extensive with the whole cultural sphere usually called the `ideological superstructure’… Finally, the question arises as to how one is to tackle the relationships between ideology and science” (J. Larrain, *The concept of ideology*, 13-

4) “The difficulty then is that we have to distinguish three common versions of the concept, which are all common in Marxist writing. These are, broadly:

(**1**) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group;

(**2**) a system of illusory beliefs - false ideas or false consciousness -

which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge;

(3) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas ” (R. Williams, “Ideology”, in T. Eagleton (ed) *Ideology*, p. 175)

**QUESTIONS** (you can choose at least one to answer)

1. Analyse the excerpt 1 by R. Williams
2. What is the meaning of the terms “epistemic”, “genetic”, “functional” with respect to the “falsity” of ideology?
3. Analyse Eagleton’s view that “if ideology is sometimes falsifying, then, it is for what are on the whole rather hopeful reasons” (T.Eagleton, *Ideology. An Introduction*, p.27)
4. Write a dialogue which demonstrates the negative understanding of “ideology”, and one that demonstrates its neutral understanding