What is 'ideology'? Does it really exist? Did it exist in ancient Rome? Is it inescapable? Are there multiple contending ideologies in any given society, or are even the modes of protest and intellectual deviance shaped and predetermined by the ruling ideology? Do not look to the theorists for clear answers to these kinds of queries. One of them in a recent book (as noted by Boyle, 1) lists no less than sixteen different meanings for the word, many of them incompatible.64 Others insist that ideology is a peculiarly modern phenomenon, serving to shape the behaviour patterns of largely secular populations no longer daunted by earlier mechanisms of social control such as myth and religion.65 On that way of looking at it, there can have been no such thing as ideology in antiquity.

If asked for my own sense of what 'ideology' means, I would say that it is the pejorative term for what used to be called 'ethos', a word it has almost entirely displaced in current academic discourse. Whereas 'ethos' views in a neutral or positive light the characteristic outlook of a people, nation or class, 'ideology' implies that the same outlook is restrictive, deluding, repressive and intimately interlaced with the structures of political and economic power. Boyle, in his introduction (2), expresses a similar understanding, quoting J.B. Thompson: 'To study ideology .... is to study the ways in which meaning (or signification) serves to sustain relations of domination'.66 Recent attempts to recover the original eighteenth century philosophical usage according to which 'ideology' denoted the 'science of ideas'67

65 e.g. A. Gouldner, The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology (London 1976).
devoid of further assumptions about the role of ideas in maintaining social divisions are beside the point; they make the concept of ideology less rather than more intelligible. The school of thought that has had most to do with popularising the ideological interpretation of society and culture is, of course, Marxism, and it is impossible now to take the word back to a neutralised pre-Marxist definition. Marxism, for the most part, allowed for the possibility that the deceptive veil of ideology might be torn down, that the social inequalities disguised by ideology might be seen for what they really are and rectified. A contradictory and altogether more pessimistic version of ideology is put forward today by certain historicist scholars and other disciples of Michel Foucault who consider that even forms of dissent in a society are typically channelled in such a way as to reproduce rather than seriously challenge that society’s hierarchy of power.68 Thus rebellion is itself ideologically conditioned; it always turns out to be yet another expression of ideology. Genuine independence of thought is unthinkable.

Given the plurality of meanings ‘ideology’ can be asked to convey, some inherently illogical, most in conflict with others, all theoretically controversial, is it, as a concept, more a source of confusion than of illumination? Boyle also asks this question, but his reply is that it is too convenient an idea to discard: ‘No other term, however, has surfaced to replace it, and the complexity of, and incompatibilities within, the word’s semantic range in no sense inhibit its usefulness’ (2). It is a pity that the argument about meaning gives way at this point to an argument about utility. If there is one thing this book lacks it is an essay that tackles in a direct and hard-headed manner the issues surrounding the applicability of the concept of ideology to the culture of the Romans. The editor’s reluctance to define his book’s theme more


closely is perhaps strategic, for there are apparent inconsistencies in the way his contributors see ideology working. That ideology, if we are to use the term, should always be treated as something both complicated and problematic is a proposition most readers will readily accept. Unfortunately, not all the contributors to this book concur.

An extremely simplistic view of ideology is taken by Habinek in his article on the prefaces to Cicero’s dialogues. In the first paragraph (55) he states his formula for uncovering the ideological import of a text: ‘The ideology of a text, such as a dialogue of Cicero, cannot therefore be understood except in strategic relationship to a particular context. And the question that allows us to explore that relationship and thereby to begin to reconstruct the “relations of domination” underwritten by the text is cui bono: to whose advantage is this text constructed and situated as it is?’ He finds that the group whose status is enhanced by the prefaces is that sector of the aristocracy which he calls the ‘culture workers’, made up of those who are engaged in rhetorical and other ‘high’ cultural activities. He purports to discover in the role of culture ‘a tactic of social control and domination’ (65) and defines classical style as an ‘artificial language that serves as both a medium of communication among the interconnected elites and a mark of their elite status’ (62). Here is historicism at its most fundamentalist and a conception of ideology that is as unsophisticated as it can get; nor is this weakness ameliorated by vague comparisons of the Romans with the Aztecs or the pre-revolutionary French aristocracy (62). As a principle of literary interpretation, cui bono is glaringly inadequate.

Fortunately a far more discerning appreciation of both the nature of ideology and the textuality of the works examined informs the majority of the contributions. Penwill’s account of Lucretius’ Epicureanism as a counterforce to contemporary political ideology is excellent; the discussion of the end of Ovid’s Fasti by Newlands is notable for its elegant writing and responsiveness to
the details of the poetry; for those interested in epic, the pick of the entire book is Malamud's illuminating exploration of the intertextuality of Statius' *Silvae* 2.7, a *genethliakon* in honour of Lucan (deceased); starting from this poem she proceeds to a very rich discussion of its interrelation with Statius' own epic (especially its ending) as well as with Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Sinclair's attempt to politicise Caesar's *De Analoga* and the Elder Seneca's *Controversiae* is interesting but, like Hабинек's piece, assumes a version of ideology that takes texts as mere reflections of social and political tensions and so seems altogether too schematic in its approach.

Maria Wyke's article, 'Taking the Woman's Part: Engendering Roman Love Elegy' is, like all her work, intelligent and superior to much other feminist criticism. She recants her earlier opinion that elegy is an exclusively male genre, arguing that 'problems of gender identity (the tensions and mobility of gender differentiation as "masculine" or "feminine") are integral to its discursive structure' (121). Much of her discussion consists of a critique of other recent feminist scholarship, but she does, in addition, make some valuable comments on Propertius' fourth Book. Martin Winkler in his close reading of Juvenal 4 in the light of the concepts of *allogia*, *emphasis* and the *mundus inversus* pushes his line of interpretation a bit too hard in places, for instance where he attempts to draw out the ramifications of links between Juvenal's fish and Herodotus' tale of Polycrates or where he imagines the satirist playing etymologically on Domitian's name (which isn't used in the poem) with allusion to the verb *domare*.

Few people, I suspect, will actually read Henderson's article on Plautus' *Poenulus* because it is written in Pun-ic, a language understood by only a small number of dedicated scholars and postgraduate students who have devoted the best years of their lives to learning it. If you can work out the title and want more of the same, there are thirty glorious pages of even more atrocious puns: 'Hanno's Punic Heirs: *Der Poenulusneid Des Plautus*'. 
This collection is also a kind of *Festschrift* for the late J.P. Sullivan. It includes a generous and affectionate obituary written by the editor and a list of Sullivan's extraordinarily impressive record of publication starting in 1950 and ending with *Martial in English* (a Penguin book, completed by Boyle) in 1996. Many of the Latin texts covered in this volume are ones with which Sullivan himself was associated during his professional career as a classicist. There is an article on Petronius by Schmeling and there are two on Martial, one by Fowler, the other by Boyle. Schmeling's piece on the *Satyricon* is partly about the history of its reception, partly a return to the hoary issue of genre and partly an examination of acts of interpretation depicted in the narrative. He refers near the beginning to Slater's thesis that this text is 'singularly uninterpretable', adding that he finds this a 'singularly unappetising conclusion' (145). Yet at the close of his article he ends up more or less agreeing with it: 'Examples of interpretation within the *Satyricon* do not seem to shed much light on interpretation of the *Satyricon*.' It seems to me that neither Slater nor Schmeling should have written about the work at all. Scholars and students do not want to read elaborate accounts of how the application of a particular critical approach has failed completely to come up with any of the answers it was expected to deliver. With reference to the *Satyricon*, recording your bewilderment is coming to be regarded as a valuable contribution to knowledge.

If readers of this volume do not learn much about Petronius, they will be more than compensated by what they learn about Martial. Fowler's strongly argued essay contests the conventional wisdom that Martial's poems were first publicised by recitation or in small pamphlets rather than in the Books into which they were eventually collected. He underscores the importance of the Books and the ordering of poems within them, his ultimate aim being, as he acknowledges in his conclusion (224), to remove the epigrams from the category of 'occasional poetry' and emphasise their textual richness; to change the picture of Martial from that
of a poet who reflects his world to one who is actively creating it. The last essay, by Boyle, was originally delivered as the first J.P. Sullivan Lecture at the University of California at Santa Barbara: 'Martialis Redivivus: Evaluating the Unexpected Classic'. It is, in effect, a review article of Sullivan's major book on Martial published in 1991. While concerned to stress the range and overall quality of Sullivan's achievement in producing what Boyle (and others) hail as 'the standard book' on Martial, Boyle makes it clear that what he is writing is 'an evaluation .... and not a hagiography' (253). He claims that Sullivan has a particular blindspot when it comes to recognizing the meaningful juxtaposition of poems within Books and the implications this may have for how we are meant to take the eulogistic passages addressed to Domitian. Here Boyle finds the approach of John Garthwaite more fruitful, adding, 'Niklas Holsberg ventures the view that Martial was playing "a kind of hide and seek" .... I agree, although I prefer Turner Cassity's formulation: "[Martial] flatters the Emperor Domitian in the exact spirit and in the exact degree of honesty with which present day academics fill out grant applications"' (267). It is on the epigrammatic artistry of Martial, above all, that this collection of essays can claim to have expanded and invigorated the contemporary scholarly debate.

Marcus Wilson
University of Auckland