

**KNOWLEDGE AND IDEOLOGY:
TOWARDS A NON-POSITIVIST RECONSTRUCTION
OF THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL SCHEME
OF MARXISM**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR
THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**By
MADHU T.V.**



**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD - 500 134, INDIA**

1994

CERTIFICATE

Certified that the thesis entitled '*Knowledge and Ideology: Towards a Non-Positivist Reconstruction of the Epistemological Scheme of Marxism*' submitted by Sri. Madhu T.V. for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad, has been done under my supervision and embodies the result of bonafide research work.

I recommend that the thesis be sent to the examiners for evaluation.

Amitabha Dasgupta 24.2.94.

Amitabha Dasgupta

Department of Philosophy

University of Hyderabad

0000

A. R. Madhukar
24.2.94

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

HYDERABAD

Madhu, T.V.,
Ph.D. student,
Department of Philosophy,
University of Hyderabad,
Hyderabad - 500 134.

Dated: 24 February 1994.

This is to certify that I, Madhu, T.V., have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis for the full period prescribed under the Ph.D. Ordinances of the University.

I declare that no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of any research degree or diploma of any university.

Madhu
24/2/94

Madhu, T.V.,
Enrol. No. 91HPPH03.

A. R. Ramesh

(HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD

Amrita K. Gupta

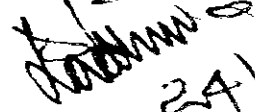
(RESEARCH SUPERVISOR)

K. R. Ranganathan

(DEAN OF THE SCHOOL)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled '*Knowledge and Ideology: Towards a Non-Positivist Reconstruction of the Epistemological Scheme of Marxism*' submitted by me for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities, University of Hyderabad, has not been submitted to any other university or institute for this or any other purpose.


24/2/1974
Madhu T.V.
Department of Philosophy
University of Hyderabad

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the writing of this thesis, I am deeply indebted to many people, from whom I have received valuable suggestions, comments and criticisms. My heartfelt thanks to Dr. Amitabha Dasgupta, for his supervision in organising the style and the content of the thesis. I sincerely feel that words would not be enough to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Dasgupta, without whom this work would not have seen the light of the day. I am thankful to Dr. L. Lanka, who has gone through the manuscripts of this thesis and come up with some important suggestions which helped me in formulating the arguments in a proper manner. In technical matters, I owe much to Mr. K.S.S. Moosath, whose 'mathematical perfectionism' has influenced me a lot in designing this work. I thank Mr. Koshy, Miss. Sarvakala, Mr. Sreekumar and Mr. George Tharakan who have read the proof and helped me in recognising some of the mistakes that I have committed. Thanks to Mr. Tomy for sharing some of his ideas with me in a number of occasions. Thanks to Mr. Shareef for his friendly supports. Thanks to Mr. Muhammedaly for both being critical and analytical of my perspectives.

I am grateful to Prof. Sureshchandra, who has been a source of inspiration for me in carrying out my research work. I am thankful to Prof. A. Ramamurthy, Dr. R.C. Pradhan, Dr. C. Goswamy, Dr. S.G. Kulkarni, Dr. Raghu Ram Raju, Mr. A. Wasalwar, Dr. R. Prasad whose cooperation I enjoyed from the day I joined in the department. I am also thankful to Dr. H.P. Padhy and Miss. keya for their help and cooperation.

I gratefully acknowledge that this work is undertaken during my availing of ICPR fellowship. My acknowledgements are also due to the employees of both the Indira Gandhi Memorial Library, H.C U. and the A.S.R.C. Library, hyderabad for their cooperation.

I take this opportunity to thank all of my friends who kept me happy during my stay at Hyderabad. Few names among them that I cannot but mention are Hari, Bindu, Sahadevan, Jolly, George Thomas, Manoj, Paramu, Vinu, Reji,

Naru, Bimal, Raghu, Hari, Joseph, Gireesh, Sreekumar, Suresh, Moova, Manju, Sharmila, Jayasree, Sandhya, Mareena.

My special thanks to Mr. P. Sathyan for his thought provoking letters.

Thanks to Mr. K. Srinivas who typed this thesis.

Finally, I express my deep sense of gratitude to my parents and sister for their love and encouragement.

Madhu.

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We do not face the world in doctrinaire fashion, declaring 'Here is the truth, Kneel here!'... We do not tell the world, 'cease your struggles, they are stupid; we want to give you the true watchword of the struggles'. We merely show the world why it actually struggles; and consciousness is something that the world must acquire even if it does not want to.

Karl Marx

Introduction:

SETTING UP THE PROBLEM

Conceptual nature of the problem

This thesis has two primary objectives. One is to criticise the positivist interpretations of the epistemological presuppositions of Marxist theory. The other is to reformulate the epistemological postulates of Marx's theory in a non-positivist manner. Obviously, the conviction which propels us to such a project is that the true nature of Marx's theory is non-positivist. This conviction is derived from our perception that the whole of Marx's socio-economic theories has a philosophical ground, and this philosophical ground is provided by the concepts of Hegelian dialectical logic. So, the conviction we have is that the true nature of Marx's theory is Hegelian, that, there is a continuity of Hegelianism in Marx's thought, and therefore, the epistemological concepts of Marx are to be viewed in the light of Hegelian conceptual system.

The problem of knowledge and ideology occupies the central place in all the discussions on Marx's epistemology. Ideology in its usual sense refers to a form of false consciousness, of false knowledge. The problem, therefore, is the problem of knowledge and false knowledge. In empiricist scheme, knowledge is perception; it is subject's representation of the reality. Accordingly, in this scheme, false knowledge will therefore be false perception, which in turn will imply false representation of the reality.

The interpreters of Marxism who assume an empiricist standpoint accordingly define knowledge in terms of perception and ideology in terms of false perception. Thus, the category of representation becomes central to this framework of interpretation. The interpreters of this school accept the thesis that ideology is the false or distorted perspective which is biased towards the class interests of the knower. According to this thesis, every knowledge by the subject is ideological, since everybody belongs to a class and has class 'interests'. This has been the dominant mode of interpretation among the Marxist

thinkers.

The category of representation entails the distinction between the subject which represents and the object which is represented. Subject pictures the object through the senses, and this process of picturing is the process of knowing. The data received through the senses are dependent on the object which exists independently of the subject. Subject is at the receiving end, that its role is to passively receive the data. Precisely, the representational concept of knowledge entails, on the one hand, the concept of receptive subjectivity and, on the other, the concept of autonomous objectivity, i.e., the concept of the independence of the 'object' from the subjective domain. This corresponds to the crude materialist thesis of the distinction between the autonomy of the material domain and the passivity of the domain of ideas. In Materialist scheme, ideas are determined by matter, that, they have no active role in history, since they are mere passive elements ultimately determined by the material social circumstances. Considering from this point of view, Marx's social theory, if understood in a crude materialist perspective, will involve empiricism at the epistemological level, and sociological determinism at the methodological level. This is precisely the mistake which the interpreters who perceive Marxism in a non-Hegelian manner have committed. Our plea, on the other hand, is that the discovery of the Hegelian roots in Marx can alone reveal the essence of Marx's epistemological pursuit.

Hegel's system is considered to be rationalistic. It opposes the empiricist theses of the passivity of the subjective domain and the autonomy of the objective domain. It advances the idea of reason as the creative principle, and the concept of reality as the manifestation of reason (rational necessity). That is, it contradicts empiricism with critical rationalism, with the theory that reason is conceptually prior to the world, that, the subjective domain

precedes the objective domain. Our whole problem is that if Marx's theory has its roots in Hegel's system, then how can the epistemological foundation of Marxism be oriented towards empiricism?. If it is assumed that the idea of critical, creative reason lies at the fundamental level of Marx's system, then how can the crude materialist, deterministic interpretations of Marxism be justified?.

Here arises the necessity for the critical evaluation of the claims of the positivist interpretation of Marxism which consider Marx's epistemology in a non-Hegelian manner. To speak in constructive terms, such a critical evaluation will show the necessity for a non-positivistic, Hegelian reconstruction of the epistemological scheme of Marxism. This thesis is an attempt directed towards these two primary objectives.

In the following, we will briefly present the philosophical issues that shape the controversy between the two interpretations of Marxism. After indicating this we will briefly discuss the specific problems with which we will be preoccupied in the various chapter of this thesis.

Background issues

The controversy between positivist and non-positivist interpreters of Marxism has a pretty long history. This issue is so vast that any enquiry that aims to have a comprehensive view of it is bound to be incomplete. As it has been remarked by the thinkers like Gouldner¹ the positivist - non positivist controversy lead Marxist thinkers to two entirely different groups which can better be called as 'two Marxisms'. One group considers Marxism as a science which has no methodological link to the Hegelian rationalistic tradition.

¹Alwin W. Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms, contradictions and Anomalities in the Development of theory*, 1980

The other group interprets Marxism as a critical theory which is to be placed within the Hegelian philosophical tradition. Hence, the controversy is between 'scientific Marxism' and 'philosophical Marxism'. The foundation of the former is provided by empiricism; it has a clear positivistic orientation. The foundation of the latter is provided by the concepts of Hegel's critical rationalism; it has, therefore, a clear non-positivist orientation. The issue, therefore, is between Hegelian Marxism and non-Hegelian Marxism.

The Hegelian and non-Hegelian Marxists differ not merely in their approach towards the nature of Marx's theory, but, more importantly, in their method of relating Marxism to the various socio - economic, political and cultural problems. To have a comprehensive view of these is beyond the scope of our project. But, some of the important points of difference which provide the methodological ground for each group to take a distinct stand point in different theoretical issues may be highlighted as follows.

While the non-Hegelian Marxists adopt the method of materialism, the Hegelian Marxists base their scheme on the philosophy of praxis, that, while the former depends on the method of (materialist/sociological) determinism, in their analysis of social phenomena, the latter depends on the conception of the primacy of praxis. Non-Hegelian Marxism involves the tendency of sociological relativism, especially in their view of culture, whereas Hegelian Marxism involves the space for the autonomy of culture. At the epistemological level, positivist Marxism entails the passivity of the subject, whereas non-positivist Marxism presupposes the concept of creative subjectivity. While the former is oriented towards the method of analysis i.e., the method of positive analysis of the given facts, the latter is oriented towards the method of criticism, i.e., the method of criticising and of going beyond the given facts.

The central objective of this thesis is not to go into the details of the controversy between the positivist and non-positivist Marxists. But, we would assume this controversy at a fundamental level of our enquiry or, in other words, our discussion would throw light on the fundamental epistemological issues which provide the ground for this controversy. It is true that the principal aim of this thesis is not to discuss this controversy, but it is in the light of this controversy we will try to reformulate the epistemological concepts of Marx in a non-positivist manner. This thesis is not an 'impartial' survey; we take a Hegelian standpoint through out the thesis and thereby argue against the concepts of non-Hegelian Marxism with the conviction that the real nature of Marxism is Hegelian. With this conceptual clarification we shall now offer a brief review of the work.

Thematic content of the work

Our discussion in this dissertation consists of five chapters. First chapter is primarily devoted into the enquiry of the Hegelian roots of Marx's method. We start our enquiry with an exposition of Hegelian dialectics. Dialectics, for Hegel, is primarily a method by which he overcomes the contradiction between reason and reality. In opposition to Kant, Hegel assumes that reason is the essence of reality or, in other words, reality is the manifestation of the rational necessity. Every being is to be understood in terms of the essence that underlies it. Every being has essence and existence. In Hegel's observation, being involves the contradiction between essence and existence which constitutes its negativity. For overcoming this contradiction, the being goes under the conceptual necessity of becoming another. Every being involves negativity and its overcoming. Every being is becoming, inherently dynamic. We derive from this that the whole of Hegelian logic is constituted by the categories of essence, negativity and becoming.

We suggest, in this chapter, that Marx's view of man as a being of praxis who creates reality for himself is to be understood in the light of Hegelian dynamic conception of reason. Marx's view has two aspects. One, it advances the idea of the primacy of praxis. Two, it implies the conception of reality as the manifestation of human essence. To put it in more clear terms, the concept of man as a being of praxis implies two epistemological negations: One is the negation of the concept of passive subjectivity and the other is the negation of the autonomy of the objective domain. In both the aspects, philosophy of praxis implies Hegelian essentialist concepts, the concept of reason as the creative principle on the one hand and, on the other, the concept of reality as the manifestation of reason.

Again, Marx's concept of alienation as a specific social reality which conflicts with the essence of man, or, his concept of the contradiction between alienated labour and true labour has its roots in Hegelian concept of negativity. The contradiction between labour and alienated labour, essence and existence, is the basic contradiction of capitalism. For resolving this contradiction, the system has to perish, to give way to a new system. This transformation, for Marx, is a historical necessity. Obviously, the notion of 'historical necessity' presupposes the Hegelian idea of the 'conceptual necessity of becoming'.

The concepts of praxis, alienation and historicity constitute the philosophical ground of Marxism. We would realise at a later stage of our discussion that the whole of Marx's socio-economic theories especially his theories, of value, fetishism and historical development are based on these philosophical concepts; and hence they all have the Hegelian philosophical roots. We derive from our analysis that the true nature of Marxism is Hegelian, and therefore, the epistemological concepts of Marx are to be understood in a non-positivistic manner.

The Hegelian interpretation of Marx's epistemological concepts has not been universally accepted by all the schools of Marxist tradition of thought. It can be shown that sociological interpretation implies, at a deeper level, a mode of theorising which contradicts with that of Hegelian Marxism. Althusser's interpretation is explicitly non-Hegelian, that, it is in conflict with the Hegelian interpretation. Thus, in second and third chapters, the arguments have been given to show the untenability of both sociological and Althusser's positivist interpretations of Marxism.

Discussion in the second chapter focuses on the important conceptual differences between the sociological and dialectical models of knowledge. Sociology of knowledge, especially of Mannheim, is concerned with the problem of social determination of knowledge. Every knowledge, according to Mannheim's theory of ideology, is biased towards the interests of the group to which the knower belongs. This 'biased' knowledge is ideology. Every knowledge is ideological, since everybody belongs to a social group and has group-interests. The sole aim of Mannheim's theory is to present the problem of ideology as a general epistemological problem.

This project, suggested by Mannheim, we argue, is an extension of the conventional Marxist account of ideology as the distorted knowledge determined by the class-interests of the knower. This account of ideology is grounded precisely on the materialistic interpretation of culture. The two theses central to the materialist interpretation of culture are: 1) base (economy) determines superstructure 2) material conditions of man's existence determines the forms of his consciousness. These two theses are said to be interdependent. The material conditions of existence are conventionally understood as economic conditions. Persons in a social whole are divided into different 'classes' which are having different economic conditions. So, in the last analysis, class determines consciousness,

that, every knowledge is mediated by the class-interests of the knower. Every knowledge is biased, and ideology is precisely this biased knowledge. We argue in the light of our discussion on these issues, sociological mode of interpreting ideology is largely dependent on, or intimately related to, the procedure of the materialistic interpretation of ideology. Three tendencies can be plainly observed in the materialist-sociological mode of interpreting ideology, that are 1) crude empiricist 2) materialist reductionist and 3) relativist. We perceive the tendency of empiricism at a very fundamental level of materialist-sociological theory, that at the level where it conceives knowledge as the 'passive' representation of the reality. Reductionist tendency, but, is explicit in it, that it undoubtedly involves the method of reducing 'subjective' into the 'objective'. Relativism is the unavoidable consequence of every sociological procedure, that, the idea that all knowledge is mediated by the class/group position of the knower necessarily implies the thesis that knowledge is relative.

In the same section we try to argue that how the epistemological postulates of Marx's philosophy of praxis stand against the above mentioned tendencies of materialist-sociological theory. That is, we try to show 1) how the conception of praxis which rejects the 'primacy' of the objective domain goes against the method of materialist reductionism, 2) how Marx's rejection of the concept of autonomous reality results in the denial of the reflection theory of knowledge and, thereby of the very ground of empiricism, and 3) how Marx's concept of man as a being of praxis implies a methodological dismissal of sociological relativism.

In addition to this, in the last part of this chapter, we explore the possibility for a non-materialist approach to culture within the theoretical framework of Marxism. This is done on the basis of our analysis of Marx's 'Theses on Feuerbach', especially ninth

and tenth theses. These theses embody the essentialist epistemological principles and thereby, a clear dismissal of the positivist paradigms which are exemplified in materialist-sociological view of knowledge and ideology.

Third chapter is a critical study of Althusser's conception of knowledge and ideology. We brand Althusser's scheme as neo-positivist in the light of our perception that it embodies a revival of positivist paradigms in a relatively new theoretical form. The whole of Althusser's attempt in the course of his 'scientific' interpretation of Marxism is to overcome the empiricist, deterministic and relativistic fallacies of sociological Marxism.

As a ground to this, Althusser propounds three theories which, he thinks, resolve the riddles of sociological Marxism. The theories are: 1) the theory of ideology as the representation of the 'imaginary' relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence, 2) the theory of over-determination, that, the idea that social totality is to be viewed as a complex relation of *structures*, levels or instances which determines and are determined by each other, and 3) the theory of the epistemological break between science and ideology.

We criticise Althusser's neo-positivist scheme, not in a general perspective, but with the specific aim of showing that its epistemological presuppositions are not fundamentally different from those of conventional sociology. More clearly, our aim is to make the positivist orientation of Althusser's theory explicit. We argue, in this context, that Althusser, by inserting the category of representation to designate the relationship between ideology and the individual's relationship to their conditions of existence, favours empiricism, that, he retains the subject/object structure of classical empiricism in his theory of ideology, and this lead him to the positivist camp where ideology is treated as

merely a form of representation.

Conceiving 'subject' as a 'constituted' category is a sociological procedure. The basic conviction of every sociological approach is that society is an objective structure which determines the role of the subject within it. Althusser's claim that subjectivity is not the source, but the effect of the social totality, we argue, not merely resembles but presupposes the sociological procedure.

A close analysis of Althusser's theory of over-determination makes us realise that it does not, in any way, alter the base-superstructure model, but only complicates it. Althusser's is actually an attempt to provide autonomy to the superstructure at the same time when it retains the primacy of the economic structure. By retaining the idea of the primacy of economy Althusser's theory falls back to the deterministic fallacy. Certainly, we do not imply here that Althusser has nothing to say more than what the base-superstructure model of orthodox Marxism implies. Althusser's theory does provide a new framework where the idea of simple determination completely disappears. But we say only that, at a very fundamental level, at the level where the ultimate primacy of the economy is conceived, Althusser's scheme involves the idea of determination, certainly of the nature of a complex mechanism.

The solution that Althusser's theory provides to the problem of relativism is definitely a positivistic solution. The science-ideology distinction, we argue, directly corresponds to the fact-value or, science - non-science (metaphysics) distinction of classical as well as of modern positivism. The procedure of assigning value-neutral status to science leads invariably to scientism where science is considered to be the form of correct knowledge, superior to other disciplines. In the light of the above findings we arrive at the conclusion

that Althusser's scientific Marxism is the result of a positivist reading of Marx's theory, the procedure involved in which is not fundamentally different from that of 'sociological Marxism'.

In the fourth chapter, we attempt to reveal the availability of a non-positivist paradigm of knowledge within the theoretical framework of Marxism. We observe that 'praxis' and 'historicity' are the two fundamental concepts upon which such a paradigm can be constructed. Both the concepts imply the redefinition of the concept of objectivity, that, they are grounded on the view that 'object' is the property of praxis, not an autonomous fact devoid of any content. Obviously, such a redefinition of the concept of objectivity invalidates the methodology of empiricism which assume the autonomy of the objective domain, and of formalistic enquiries which refuse to penetrate the objective domain into the domain of its historical constitution.

We explain Marx's procedure of the redefinition of objectivity and elaborate the implications of the concept of praxis by going through some of the relevant observations of Marx's 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts'. Similarly, our description of the notion of historicity depends on Marx's critique of the 'analytic method' of classical political economy, especially of its treatment of 'commodity' as an ahistorical fact, devoid of any 'human content'.

In the course of our enquiry towards a non-positivist account of knowledge we seek support from the theories of George Lukács and Herbert Marcuse who have tried to develop the Hegelian presuppositions of Marx's theory into a fulfilled critique of positivism. The theories are namely 1) theory of reification and 2) theory of one-dimensionality. Theory of reification of Lukács is actually an extension of Marx's theory of commodity

fetishism. Fetishism, in Marx's formulation, is a phenomenon specific to a particular system of production where the products of labour assume an objective value, a supra historical power, and confront man by virtue of this power. It is a phenomenon specific to a system where man is governed by the objects. This, Lukács observes, results in a major cultural crisis, in the reification of consciousness. Human rationality, in a system where consciousness is governed by the objects, turns to be more and more abstract and formal. On the one hand, it turns to be a form of recognition of the given facts as the 'abstract' categories totally detached from their human essence, and on the other, it turns to be lost in the 'immediacy' of the facts, impotent to go beyond the appearance of the facts. 'Reified consciousness', in Lukács sense, implies 'formalised' rationality. This formalism, Lukács argues, is the basis of all the positivist paradigms of rationality.

Reified consciousness is false consciousness. The problem of ideology, of false knowledge, is to be understood, in Lukács' Marxism, as the problem of reified consciousness, that, ideology is to be viewed as a form of reified rationality. True knowledge, obviously, implies the paradigm of critical rationality which penetrates the 'givenness' of the facts, which understands the facts as the manifestation of human essence. The concept of knowledge and ideology implied in Lukács' theory of reification is not merely different from, but also critical of both the sociological and the 'neo-positivist' conceptions.

Herbert Marcuse's theory of 'one dimensionality' is a still more powerful critique of positivist paradigms of rationality. We, in the same chapter, attempt to have a brief exposition of Marcuse's theory mainly to show that how Marcuse develops Marxism into a critical theory of positivism.

In Marcuse's observation, the assimilation of the subject into the object provides the

conceptual ground for the one-dimensional technological world. This assimilation gives birth to a pattern of one-dimensional thought, more clearly, to the paradigm of one-dimensional rationality. This is the paradigm central to all the positivist projects such as behaviourism, operationalism, etc.

The characteristic feature of all the behaviourist and operationalist methods is the translation of the 'subjective' into the 'objective', either into the behavioural patterns or to the set of operations which are objectively verifiable. This is precisely the method of 'assimilation'. To assimilate subject into the object is to eliminate autonomous, creative subjectivity. This is to establish a one-dimensional system which lacks the dimension of criticism. The paradigm of one-dimensional rationality is actually the paradigm of uncritical rationality.

It is explicit that true consciousness, in Marcuse's observation, implies the paradigm of bi-dimensional rationality, i.e., the mode of thought which has the dimension of criticism. And, false consciousness implies the paradigm of one-dimensional rationality i.e., a mode of thought which lacks the dimension of criticism. True knowledge, in Marcuse's sense is the critical knowledge which criticises and, thereby, goes beyond the immediacy of the facts. False knowledge is uncritical; it is the uncritical acceptance of the given facts. The problem of knowledge and ideology, thus, is to be understood as the problem of critical and uncritical rationality.

In the concluding chapter, we attempt to have a close look into the epistemological assumptions of both Lukács' and Marcuse's Marxisms, and to show the fundamental similarity between them. It is plain that the procedure of identifying truth with the critical knowledge, i.e., the knowledge which presupposes critical rationality, and falsity with the

'uncritical' knowledge i.e., the knowledge which presupposes uncritical rationality, is a Hegelian procedure. The epistemological thrust involved in it is that of critical rationalism, that of the concept of reason as a creative, critical principle conceptually prior to the world. Both Lukács' and Marcuse's reading of Marx, therefore, is fundamentally Hegelian; it is of the nature of a critical rationalist reconstruction of Marx's conceptual system. An epistemological synthesis of Lukács' and Marcuse's systems provides us with a platform where we can have a Hegelian Marxist account of knowledge and ideology.

.... this struggle is a conflict defined not by the indifference of the two sides in their distinction, but by their being bound together in one unity. I am not one of the fighters locked in battle, but both, and I am the struggle itself. I am fire and water

G.W.F. Hegel

Chapter - 1

DIALECTICAL LOGIC: THE HEGELIAN ROOTS OF MARX'S METHOD

The method that is common to both Marx and Hegel usually goes by the name of 'dialectics'. It is true that a wide variety of interpretations has been given to the notion of dialectical method and hence, it is not very easy to have an undisputable account of it. But, atleast in Both Hegel's and Marx's sense, it can be safely maintained that it is a notion that refers precisely to the idea of 'overcoming the contradictions'. The fundamental thrust of Hegelian method is to resolve the opposition between reason and reality by establishing the supremacy of the former over the later. The antagonism between the subject and the object, thought and reality, in Hegel's account, gets dissolved in the process i.e., in the process of self development of reason. In the present chapter, we shall attempt to view Marx's philosophy of praxis as being rooted, in Hegel's dynamic conception of reason. Precisely, the aim of this chapter is to trace out the Hegelian roots of Marx's concept of man as a being of praxis, as a being who 'shapes' the reality.

To understand the Hegelian concept of reason it is necessary to have a close look on Hegel's critique of Kant. It has been commonly argued that the whole of Hegelianism is methodologically founded upon his critique of Kant's formalism especially of his noumena-phenomena distinction. We shall have a brief discussion on this critique and then proceed to the details of Hegel's non-formalistic logic as exposed mainly in *Science of logic*

Critique of formalism and the foundations of dialectical logic

The basic thrust of Kant's *critique of pure reason* is a synthesis of empiricism and rationalism. Kant openly admits the empiricism thesis that experience generates knowledge. He agree also with the rationalist claim that human mind possesses certain universal forms which are *a priori*. A synthesis of these two theses is possible, as Kant says, when

we observe that the sense experience that generates knowledge itself is dependent on the *a priori* forms possessed by human mind. Perception is not an isolated process. When we perceive something we apply certain categories and organise the perceptual phenomena. knowledge is not possible in the absence of this mechanism of organisation. In other words, knowledge involves the mechanisms of both sense experience and the ordering or the arranging of the sense-data through the universal forms.

Knowledge is constructed by two factors: Sense experience (sensibility) and mechanism of organisation (understanding). The objects are given to us by means of sensibility and they are thought through the understanding. In other words, sensibility, (i.e., the faculty of intuition) furnishes the manifold materials, the discrete particulars of the world, while understanding, (i.e., the faculty concepts) organise and make them intelligible. But, “understanding must directly or indirectly, relate to intuitions, and therefore, with us, to sensibility because in no other way can an object be given to us”.¹

Empiricists commit the mistake of not taking into account the concept as the necessary factor of human knowledge. Empiricist enquiry, as Kant assumes, results in a position where human reason is confined to the limits of the ‘given’. Rationalist, on the other hand, fails to notice that the categories themselves cannot give us any knowledge, but they can simply determine the objects which are given to us by means of sensibility. Both empiricism and rationalism are wrong with respect of their partial perspectives of knowledge, and what we need, according to Kant, is a synthesis, i.e, a holistic perspective in which knowledge involves both the faculties of intuitions and concepts.

The forms of intuition (space and time) and the forms of understanding (categories)

¹Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 65.

are the universals that human mind originally possesses. Human mind organise the objects given to it through these forms. They are completely independent of the sense-experiences. They are not derived from experience, but, rather experiences are 'organised' through them. They provide necessary conditions for all our experiences. They are universal because they are common to all individuals; they constitute the basic structure of human mind. In short they are *a priori*.

Mind, therefore, possesses certain universal forms through which the given objects are 'organised'. 'Organisation' is the *a priori* activity of human mind. Certainly, this *a priori* activity depends wholly on the data received through the senses. It depends on the 'impressions', on the objects as appeared or as presented to it. Mind cannot know what constitutes the appearances. It cannot reach the ground of the impressions which are presented to it. The 'ground', Kant observes, remains always outside the forms of the mind, beyond our reach. In other words, mind can operate only on the things which are given to it; it can never penetrate the givenness. It can never reach the 'thing-in-itself'. Thing-in-itself is unknown and 'unknowable'.

Mind can know only impressions. Human knowledge is confined to the 'realm' of impressions. Reality that we know is that which appears to us. In other words, all the reality we know is 'appearance' or, all the objects of knowledge are 'appearances'. Kant says that these appearances can exist independently of the categories of understanding or they can be given in intuition independently of the function of understanding. But they cannot exist independently of the way in which they are presented or related to our sensibility. They can never be something other than appearances. They remain 'phenomenal'. Thing-in-itself, on the other hand, is completely unknowledge; it remains outside the realm of knowledge. In Kants terminology it is 'noumenon'.

This noumena-phenomena distinction has been the main target of attack for Hegel. Such a distinction, as Hegel assumes, provides the methodological ground for dualism and formalism i.e., for the separation of thought from reality and also for conceiving thought as a formal category which is incapable to penetrate into the thing-in-itself. Therefore, Hegel's critique of appearance-reality (thing-in-itself) distinction amounts to the critique of dualism and formalism. We shall see how the Kantian programme has been criticised in Hegel's system.

Hegel's observation is that in Kant's account reason becomes a passive, 'subjective' principle. "As long as thing-in-themeselves were beyond the capacity of reason, reason remained a mere subjective principle without power over the objective structure of reality. And thus the world fell into two separate parts, subjectivity and objectivity, understanding and sense, thought and existence".² It is plain that Kant's basic intention in rejecting the empiricist hypothesis that experience is the only source of knowledge is to save the autonomy of reason. But, when he says that human knowledge is restricted to the phenomenal realm, it amounts to denying the creative content of rationalism, that it amounts to contradicting the concept of reason as a creative principle. In Kant's hand, reason becomes a subjective principle which possesses no power over reality. Reality becomes an 'alien being' or in other words, it assumes an alienated objectivity. To put it in Hegel's own words, "thought, according to Kant although universal and necessary, are only our thoughts - separated by an impassable gulf from the thing, as it exists apart from our knowledge. But the true objectivity of thinking means that thoughts, far from being ours, must at the same time, be the real essence of the things and of whatever is an object for us".³

²Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, p. 23.

³Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Vol. 1. p. 24.

Obviously, what Hegel advances here is the thesis which overcomes the gulf between thought and reality, that, reason is not a subjective principle, but is 'objective'; its objectivity means that thought must be the essence of the reality. To view thought as the essence of reality is to assert the creative content of reason and also to refute the alien status of the reality. More clearly, it is to reject both the 'passivity' of the subjective domain and the autonomy of the objective domain.

Thought, viewed as the essence of reality, can never be a 'formal' category, obviously because it cannot be confined within the limits of appearance. It is conceptually prior to reality or, reality is the manifestation of reason. "The world which is supposedly beyond thought is really posited by thought, that it is a manifestation of rational necessity".⁴ Assigning conceptual priority to reason is equal to denying outrightly all kinds of formalistic approaches or, to substituting the formalist logic with the essentialist logic. As a matter of fact, what Hegel does in developing his system of dialectical logic is this substitution. We shall observe, in the next section, the essentialist undercurrents of Hegel's dialectical logic.

The Central Themes of Dialectical Logic: An Exposition.

Formalism has been challenged by Hegel through his doctrine of essence. Concept of universality as the real being which makes the particular what it is most fundamental to Hegel's doctrine of essence. A particular thing, Hegel explains, gets its unique individuality from its 'membership' in a specific class. The 'class identify' i.e., the universal, makes the individual what it really is. An individual which belongs to the class 'X' is

⁴Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, p. 47. Taylor says that we overcome the dualism between subject and object, between knowing man and the nature, in seeing the world as the necessary expression of thought, or rational necessity, while we see ourselves as the necessary vehicles of this thought, as the point where it becomes conscious". Ibid - p. 47.

distinguishable from another individual of another class only because of its 'X-ness'. A man is different from animals only because of his 'manness'. Universality, therefore, is not to be understood merely as a common feature shared by the individuals, but as the 'real essence', conceptually prior to the individuality of the individuals. To put it in Hegel's own words: "Every human individual, though infinitely unique, is so only because he *belongs* to the class of man, every animal only *because* it belongs to the class of animal. Being-man or being-animal is the prius of their individuality".⁵

To say that 'manness' is a quality shared by every member of the human community is to conceive essence as 'mere abstraction'. Hegel evidently opposes this idea with the claim that essence is 'concretely' real. It is not dependent on the reality of the particulars. But, on the contrary, the particulars are dependent on the reality of the essence. It is the 'concrete universal' that can never be conceived in terms of 'abstraction', rather, it is to be understood as 'something self specifying and self-particularising'. As Hegel maintains, "it is of the greatest importance, both for knowledge and practice, that the merely common should not be confused with what is truly universal".⁶

Essence is the source without which a particular thing cannot appear as it is. It is the necessity which underlies everything that appears. Essence therefore preceeds appearance. But, as Charles Taylor observes, essence here is not a posited substrate; "it is the necessity which underlies everything and posits the observed fact as something external".⁷ The meaning of this observation is plain that the essence in Hegel's sense must not be conceived as something posited by the facts, but as the primary reality which posits everything as something external. The conception of essence as something

⁵Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Vol. I, p. 45.

⁶Hegel, *lesser Logic*, Quoted in *Hegel - A reexamination*, by J.N. Findlay, p. 225.

⁷Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 259.

posited by the appearing facts presupposes the method of starting from appearance and reaching the essence, that it follows the position that essence is to be understood in terms of appearance. The conception of essence as the underlying necessity which posits the observed facts as something external, on the other hand, involves a quite different methodological position that appearance is to be understood in terms of essence. Essence, for Hegel, is the starting point, the true being. Appearance is the manifestation of the essence. Hegel derives from this the fundamental thesis of his dialectical system that the world of appearances is the manifestation of the underlying rational necessity, i.e., the essence.

Being and Nothingness.

Hegel's essentialist enquiry does not stop at the level of the primacy of essence. Rather, it starts from this level and proceeds to the conception of the 'first universal', of the first principle that determines everything. The conception that he arrives at is the conception of pure Being. Hegel says: "Pure Being makes the beginning: because it is on one hand pure thought, and on the other immediacy itself, simple and indeterminate; and the first beginning cannot be mediated by anything or be further determined".⁸ Explicitly, two ideas that are implied here are:

1. Being is the absolute beginning of everything.
2. Being is indeterminate.

Thought is possible only when we acknowledge 'something' which is simplest and most fundamental than everything thought of. This something, in Hegel's observation, is a logical category. Hegel calls it as 'Pure Being'. "It is only when there has been such

⁸Hegel, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Trans. as *Hegel's Logic*, p. 124.

an acknowledgement that we can begin to say of what has been acknowledged that is so and so determined, so and so related, numbered and so on".⁹

Being is presupposed in every act of thinking. Without such a presupposition nothing can be thought of or nothing can be determined. In other words, all determinations start from the presupposition of the logical category of Being. Being therefore is the absolute ground of every determination, the pure beginning of everything. Logically, the first thing which determines everything should be placed outside the realm of determination. The first principle which explains everything cannot be explained by something else; it must not be determined in terms of some other principle. Being therefore is indeterminate. It determines everything but, itself is not determined. It is pure indeterminacy, absolute immediacy.

Here we encounter with the difficulty of explaining the Pure Being. This difficulty is of complex nature, since, Being in Hegel's sense, cannot be explained in terms anything else, that it is absolutely indeterminate. The only possibility is to define Being as '1=1', as 'Absolute indifference' or Identity, and so on.¹⁰ To say 'X is equal to X' is to say nothing in addition to that which is already known. What we do is only to reveal the impossibility of an explanation. When we try to explain or, think pure Being, as Hegel observes, we, in fact, explain or think nothing at all. All our ventures are left with an empty space or, in Hegel's language, 'nothingness'. It can be derived from this that pure Being is just nothing.

But, does it mean that there is nothing called pure Being, that when we try to think pure Being, we think absolutely nothing at all? Hegel's answer would be in negative,

⁹J.N. Findlay, *Hegel - A reexamination*, p. 153.

¹⁰Cf. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia of the philosophical Sciences*, Trans. as *Hegel's Logic*, p. 125.

because an affirmative answer would definitely put him in trouble of defending the validity of the introduction of the concept of pure Being. Hegel avoids this trouble by insisting that when we try to think pure Being, it is not the case that we think nothing at all, but we think the ‘impossibility of thinking’ the pure Being. In other words, we think the ‘disappearance of the category of pure Being into mere Nothingness’. The character of the indeterminacy of pure Being is revealed in this disappearance of the category of pure Being into Nothingness.¹¹

This point needs to be elaborated. In Hegel’s account, the impossibility of thinking the pure Being is due to the fact the moment we try to think it, Being disappears into Nothingness. Our thought, therefore will be left with this ‘disappearance’ of the pure Being into Nothingness. When we try to think Being, we think the disappearance of Being into Nothingness. Being does not have a determinate content. It always reveals in its disappearance into Nothingness, and also, for this reason, Being cannot be comprehended in isolation from its disappearance into Nothingness. Hence, “the category of pure being is revealed to be equivalent to the category of nothingness” (Ibid p. 132). Hegel draws his fundamental logical claim from this, that being is both ‘is’ and ‘is not’. Being is both ‘being’ and ‘nothing’. It constantly wavers between being and being nothing at all. This logical tension between being and nothingness, as Hegel observes, is revealed to constitute the logical character of pure Being itself; it is what pure Being is.¹²

The significance of the doctrine of Being lies in two ideas upon which the whole of Hegelian metaphysics is based. First one is the idea of negative totality, which means that reality is not a positive unity, but a negative totality; a unity of opposites. Second

¹¹Cf. Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, p. 132.

¹²Cf. Ibid p. 132.

one is the idea of change, that reality is not static or permanent, but inherently unstable, because it involves 'becoming'. We shall try to have a close look on these two.

We have seen that, the logical character of pure Being is constituted by the contradiction between being and nothingness. Being disappears onto Nothingness, and this 'disappearance' is the only 'medium' through which Being reveals. In other words, Being is identified with its disappearance into Nothingness. Being, therefore, is 'Nothing', essentially negative. The two opposites, absolutely distinct, and yet unseparated and inseparable, each disappearing immediately in its opposite, constitute the logical structure of being. Hegel makes it plain by concluding that being is the negative totality, the unity of opposites, that is, 'becoming'.

"Pure Being and Pure Nothing are, then the same; the truth is, not either Being or Nothing but that Being-not Passes - but has passed over into Nothing, and Nothing into Being.... their truth is therefore this movement, this immediate disappearance of the one into the other, in a word becoming; a movement wherein both are distinct, but in virtue of a distinction which has equally immediately dissolved itself".¹³

With the conception of becoming, Hegel's logic assumes a dynamic form. The logic of becoming leaves no space for 'Positivity' and 'Permanence' in reality. On the one hand, it refuses to accept a given fact as positive, precisely because, its reality is the unity of opposites, is constituted by the logical tension between Being and Nothingness, and, on the other, it discards the possibility of reality to be permanent, since the truth of everything lies in 'becoming', in the movement wherein both Being and Nothing dissolve themselves. A given fact is not a positive unit, a 'dead objectivity', since it involves

¹³Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Vol. 1, p. 94.

its own negation in its very essence. It is not fixed or permanent either, as its inherent negativity transforms its being into a dynamic process - that is, becoming. Being is essentially Becoming. Reality is inherently dynamic. Hegel's rejection of empiricism is based on this dynamic logic which conceives reality not as a 'dead fact', but as a process. At the later part of this discussion we will show how Hegel uses this idea in formulating his critique of empiricism.

Being Determinate

It is quite clear from above that there is a shift of attention in Hegel from Being to becoming, or as Hegel explains, from indeterminate Being to Being determinate. "In Becoming, the Being which is one with Nothing and the Nothing which is one with Being, are only vanishing factors; they are and they are not. Thus by its inherent contradiction, Becoming collapses into the unity in which the two elements are absorbed. This result is accordingly Being determinate. (Being there and so)".¹⁴ When we reach at Becoming, we actually reach at Being determinate. It is determinate, because it has a determinate content. It is a unity where Being and Nothingness are constituent elements. It has both being and nothingness. It is both negative and positive. It is to be noted that, negativity of pure Being is different from the negativity of determinate Being. Hegel is very much emphatic on this point when he maintains that negativity is not a quality or an attribution of Pure Being. Pure Being is same as 'Nothing'. It is indistinguishable from 'Nothing'. But, in the case of Being determinate, nothingness becomes the negative moment of it. This distinction can be better illustrated as follows:

¹⁴Hegel: *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Trans. as "*Hegel's Logic*", p. 133.

Pure Being	Being determinate
Pure, without any quality, mediation, determination. The moment we try to think it, it disappears into nothing. It is emptiness, same as Nothingness. It is indistinguishable from Nothingness	It is the unity in which the categories of being and nothingness are absorbed and become its constituent elements. 'Nothing' Becomes the character, the negative moment in it.

Being is just 'Nothing'. This sentence cannot be elaborated anymore, precisely because nothing can be said about pure Being. But, Being determinate is not just 'Nothing'. It involves 'nothingness', since it is the unity of being and nothing. In other words, being and nothingness are the constituent elements of the Being determinate. 'Nothingness' becomes the element of being, the negative moment of being. More clearly, 'Nothing' constitutes the negative character of Being determinate. The above idea can be expressed more clearly as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Pure Being is Just Nothing | True statement |
| 2. Pure Being has negative character | False Statement |
| 3. Being determinate has the negative character | True Statement |
| 4. Being determinate is just Nothing | False Statement |

First statement is true, because pure Being is indistinguishable from 'Nothing'. Second one is false, because pure Being does not have any character, as it is purely indeterminate. Third one is true, because 'Nothing' constitutes the negative character of Being determinate. Fourth statement is false, because Being determinate is actually the unity of being and nothingness.

Negativity of a being determinate according to Hegel is in its otherness. What is

'otherness'? To say that a particular thing called 'X' has certain qualities is to say that X excludes certain other qualities. Precisely, this exclusion determines the nature of 'X' as distinct from that of Y or Z. X 'is' only when it is not Y or Z. A thing is what it is by virtue of what it is not. In other words, a being is what it is only in relation to other beings, and these relations determine the very nature of it. Hegel calls this as 'otherness'. "Negation is no longer an abstract thing, but, as a determinate being and somewhat, is only a form of such being - It is as otherness".¹⁵

Obviously, 'otherness' is that which makes a thing what it is by determining what it is not. A thing exists with the dimension of 'otherness', that its existence implies the negation of other. Everything involves this negative moment in itself, by virtue of which alone it can be determined. 'Is', implies 'is not'. Existence implies negativity. Evidently, Hegel's assumption is that Negativity exists in every being in the form of its otherness.

Hegel derives from this analysis the thesis that every determinate being has two dimensions. (1) being-for-other and (2) being-by-itself.

1. A thing has 'otherness' - the negative moment in itself, by virtue of which alone it exists as distinct from other. A thing, therefore, has a 'being' in relation to others. (Being-for-other).
2. A thing has something which stands against the otherness, as what the thing is in itself. A thing, therefore has a 'being' in relation to itself (Being-by-itself).

Hegel goes on by operating with this conceptual scheme composed of two elements, namely, Being-by-itself and Being-for-itself, to show the dynamic nature of reality. We have seen that, a particular thing can be determined or defined only with reference to

¹⁵Hegel, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Trans. as *Hegel's Logic*, p. 135.

another. This 'another' is obviously that with which it is contrasted. A 'straight line' can be understood only by reference to a non-straight line with which it is contrasted. Red colour, can be described only in relation to other colours, such as blue or green with which red colour is contrasted. Certainly, red colour is the 'negation' of the blue colour; but red is also essentially not-blue that it can be grasped as red only if it is grasped as not blue.¹⁶ In the same way, a straight line is the negation of the non-straight line, but it can be understood only if it is grasped as the negation of non-straight line. Three possible derivations are as follows:

1. A thing can be defined only in relation to other, that a thing exists necessarily with the dimension of otherness.
2. The dimension of otherness is the dimension of negativity, that negativity exists in every being in the form of otherness.
3. Every thing, therefore, involves its own negation.

If X can be understood only in relation to Y, then 'Y' is the essential dimension of X. If Y is that with which X is contrasted, that it is the negation of X, then it can be rightly argued that X involves its own negation. In other words, X is in essential relation to its own negation. Every determinate being, Hegel assumes, involves its own negation, and hence, is contradictory. To be is to have a determinate nature, and to be determinate is to be self contradictory. Whatever contains, its own negation obviously cannot survive. It necessarily has to change or, to perish. Every being is finite and contains in itself the seed of its own destruction. Everything is bound to perish, or to change into another form. "Things are only in so far as they arise and pass away, or, being must be conceived

¹⁶Cf. Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 234.

as becoming".¹⁷

Hegel derives the idea of finite being from the above idea that everything contains the seed of its own destruction and therefore necessarily finite. Let us have a close look on it. Every being, as Hegel points out, involves its own negation and thus, subjects to change. It is, rather, a conceptual necessity for every being to have its own negation, the seed of its transformation into another form. A determinate being, therefore, is finite. Because of its finite nature, it is said to be dynamic, or potential enough to change into other form. This change, in Hegel's view, does not lead to the disappearance of the being, but on the other hand, it leads to another determinate form. Obviously, this process continues as the new form which takes birth is also determinate and self contradictory.

A finite being is finite precisely because of its inner negativity. This negativity makes the being dynamic, potent enough to go beyond its own finite nature. This 'going beyond' does not lead in any way to the disappearance of the being, but it opens up the possibility for a new form of being — another determinate being. Strictly speaking, It is not completely new, but the 'explicit manifestation' of that which was potentially contained in the old. It takes birth from the death of the 'first' finite being. Here, it can be rightly assumed that, one finite being is not 'real' in itself, because the 'truth' of which has to be made explicit in its other form, which is only possibility contained in it. Therefore, a given form i.e., a determinate being, is equal to a 'possibility'. One possibility gives rise to another 'possibility', that is, another determinate being which again has to transform into another. The second one contains the truth of the first, might be real in relation to the first, but not absolutely real, because it resolves its inner contradictions only by going under the conceptual necessity of becoming another. Each 'fact' is real in relation

¹⁷Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Vol. 1, p. 118.

to the old, but only 'potentially real' in relation to the next. It is both real and unreal. Hegel bases the whole of his metaphysics upon this dialectical scheme.

The above analysis certainly introduces the notion of 'infinity'. But, we are reminded by Hegel that the infinity we are forced to admit once we realise the fact that every finite being has to transform into another, is not the same infinity which we are familiar with. In what respect, Hegel's infinity is different from the usual sense of the term? We shall try to see it in a more clear manner. Hegel claims that every being is self contradictory, it essentially collapses into another, which again passes over to another because of its inner negativity. "What is passed into is quite the same as what passes over, since both have one and the same attribute, viz., to be an other, it follows that something in its passage into other only joins with itself".¹⁸ Both the beings, i.e., what is passed into and what passes over are 'possibilities'. They are not real in themselves, since they are bound to go under the conceptual necessity of becoming - a dialectical process through which their truth gets actualised. This process, Hegel assumes, is to be found in the very nature of beings. The very nature of being is becoming. Infinity is to be observed in finite thing itself. It is, in Hegel's terminology, genuine infinity.

1. Every finite being is a 'possibility'.
2. Its 'truth' lies in the process in becoming another.
3. What is real is the process, genuine infinity.
4. Infinity is to be observed in the very nature of being themselves.

A is not real in itself, it is selfcontradictory and for resolving its contradiction it has to pass into B. Again, B has to transform into 'C' for transcending its inner negativity.

¹⁸Hegel *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Trans. as *Hegel's Logic*, p. 139.

This goes on as an infinite process. A, B and C are, therefore 'possibilities'. Their 'reality' lies in the process, i.e., in the process in which the truth of each gets actualised in other. But, this process is not something beyond the realm of A, B and C, but, it is the very nature of it. Precisely, 'the process of becoming B' is not something alien to A, but it is the very structure of its being. A is both finite and infinite. Finitude contains infinity, i.e., being is becoming. "... the infinite and the finite are therefore one and that the genuine unity, the truth, must be defined and enunciated as the unity of the finite and infinite" (Ibid p. 140).

Becoming, in Hegel's account, is a process purely of conceptual necessity. Nothing explains it or makes it possible from outside. A finite being collapses only because of its inner contradiction and a new being arises as the resolution of this contradiction. One finite being gives rise to another that the death of one is the birth of another. There is no principle beyond the realm of finite beings, in terms of which we can explain the death of one finite thing or the birth of another. Passing away of one finite thing is the coming to be of another, and coming to be of the new is just the passing away of the old. As Charles Taylor observes, "the predecessor goes under of conceptual necessity. For its demise is the resolution of a contradiction. Hence the successor comes to be of conceptual necessity. But all finite things are the successors of some others. So that not only the passing away but also the coming to be of finite things happens of necessity."¹⁹

If the whole process of changing finite things is simply the unfolding of conceptual necessity and there is no other principle outside the process which explains the transformation of things, then it can be rightly assumed that the source of the process is contained in the finite things themselves. The roots of 'infinity' are then to be found in

¹⁹Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 243.

the necessity which underlies every finite being. This is to say that infinity is present in finitude.

The above idea can be expressed more clearly as follows. A given form, as we have seen, is the manifestation of that which was contained in the past form, and, by the same logic, it potentially contains its future form. Both past and future are present in each form or that the whole process of 'passing away' and 'coming to be' of finite beings is present in every being. Each finite being entails 'infinity' in itself; it can never be conceived in isolation from its past and future, or to put it in a different terminology, from its 'historicity'. More clearly, infinity is strictly present in every given fact as its historicity.

History, in Hegel's account, is the process of becoming; it is the process of 'passing away' and 'coming to be' of finite beings. This process, as we saw, is potentially present in each finite being as the very life of it. A being cannot be conceived in abstraction from its inherent process of becoming, that it is inconceivable as an ahistorical fact. To say that being is becoming is to say that every finite being is infinite, that infinity is inherently present in each finite form. This is actually to say that every being is historical, that, history is the 'necessity' which underlies every thing; it is the essence, in isolation from which nothing can be conceived.

The principle of historicity embodies the epistemological assumptions of Hegelian system, the major thrust of which is undoubtedly against empiricism. Hegel's observation is that any system which does not accommodate historicity of the facts would definitely fall under empiricism. Empiricist generally assume that whatever is true must be in the actual world and present to sensation. To confine truth merely to the world given to the

senses is equal to treating every fact as true-in-itself. Hegel stands against this position by claiming that what is given is only a possibility, not true-in-itself. It contains the potentiality of becoming another, by which it goes beyond its own given form. Every finite thing contains the power of leading beyond its given limits. It is impossible for Hegel to conceive a fact in isolation from this potentiality. Empiricism abstracts being from its inherent potential nature, and thereby de-historicise it. Consequently, it reduces reality into mere 'observable' facts, into 'dead objectivity'. To put it in Hegel's own words:

"Empiricism - being in its facts limited to the finite sphere - denies the supersensible in general, or at least any knowledge of it which would define its nature, it leaves thought no powers except abstraction and formal universality and identity".²⁰

To detach a particular fact from its inherent process of becoming is to place it outside of its essence, its 'historicity'. That is to treat it as a life-less object which is impotent and ahistorical. According to Hegel's essentialist logic, the particular has to be understood in terms of its essence which maintain itself behind the range of its manifestations, as the process of its self realisation.²¹ That is, the particular is real only in so far as it exists as a particular expression of the process of its self realisation or, as a form which contains the possibility of becoming another. In empiricist scheme, Hegel observes, the given reality gets divorced from its essence - the process of its self realisation, and is treated to be static or fixed. When the 'living spirit' gets eliminated, the reality ceases to be dynamic and becomes a 'dead object'.

²⁰Hegel, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Trans. as *Hegel's Logic*, Pp. 61-62.

²¹Cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Spirit*, Trans. by M.J. Petry, in *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, Sect. 378, p. 13.

Hegel strongly opposes the empiricist conception of universal as the common feature shared by the individuals of a particular class. This conception, in Hegel's observation, is the outcome of the ahistoricist view of reality. Every particular thing, as Hegel perceives, is to be understood in terms of its universality; universality is the essence without which an individual cannot appear as it is. Empiricists fail to perceive the essence of reality, the true being, the real starting point of everything. They commit the fallacy of starting from the observed facts and treating them as true-in-themselves. They arrive at the wrong conclusion that essence is merely an abstraction. In other words, their enquiry results in formalism, in treating thought as a formal category alien to, and dependent on, the 'reality', which has no powers 'except abstraction and formal universality and identity'. Hegel rejects this formalist hypothesis, with the claim that thought is the essence of reality. The points of difference between Hegel's dialectical logic and the logic of empiricism can be illustrated in the following way.

Logic of empiricism	Hegel's dielectical logic
1. Formalism, treating thought as a formal category	1. Concept of thought as the essence of reality
2. Reality as discrete individual facts devoid of essence	2. Concept of essence as the underlying necessity 'which posits the observable facts as something external'.
3. Particular facts as positive units, which are static, permanent and ahistorical	3. Reality as essentially negative, dynamic and hence a 'historical process'

To sum up, we may say that Hegel's metaphysics centers around the three fundamental themes such as the principles of essence, negativity and historicity. These principles, as

we found provide the epistemological foundation for the whole of Hegelianism. In the next section, we shall see how the basic categories of Hegel's logic have been absorbed in the theoretical scheme of Marxism.

Marx's framework: An Introduction

It has been argued by many, especially by the positivist Marxists that Marx's theory embodies a methodological reversal of Hegelian metaphysics. This view has been commonly accepted in conventional Marxist circles, particularly in those circles where Marx has been treated strictly as a materialist. It is quite necessary for those who perceive Marxism as an empiricist theory, to have a non-Hegelian view of Marx, since the major thrust of Hegel's metaphysics, as we have seen, is against empiricism. But, in recent times, the above interpretation has been challenged from different angles, mainly with the claim that Marx's philosophy is basically an outcome of Hegelian metaphysical tradition. It has been pointed out by the exponents of this approach that even though Marx is highly critical of the idealistic scheme of Hegel, the categorical structure developed by Hegel on the basis of his essentialist ontology has been retained in Marxism as its very methodological ground. This perspective becomes evident when we look deep into the Hegelian orientation of Marx's dialectics.

The difficulty we face here is of crucial importance, that both Hegel's and Marx's systems differ from each other in terms of their respective orders of truth. Hegel's system is truly philosophical; its main concepts are logical and epistemological categories. Marx, on the other hand, does not speak anything systematically about logic or epistemology; his concepts are mainly socio-economic. Comparing philosophical categories with socio-economic concepts does not seem to be worthwhile pursued. Therefore, for an enquiry

into the Hegelian roots of Marxism to be fruitful, what is needed is not a comparison of an ordinary type but a reading of Marx's concepts in the light of Hegelian scheme or, in other words, a Hegelian reading of Marx.

In our search for finding out the Hegelian roots in Marx's thought, we may specially take note of the three fundamental concepts of Marx which undoubtedly have their roots in the three basic principles of Hegel, namely, the principles of essence, negativity and historicity. Before discussing these concepts let us explain, at a preliminary level, the strong Hegelian resemblances which are found in these particular concepts employed by Marx. To start with, the concept of praxis, on the one hand, is the concept of man as a being who creates reality, and, on the other hand, is the concept of objective reality as the product of man or, as the manifestation of human labour. This reminds us of Hegel's concept of reason, that, of the thesis that essence is conceptually prior to existence or, the objective reality is the manifestation of reason. Undoubtedly, the conception of alienation as 'the negativity of capitalist system' has its roots in Hegel's idea of negativity, that in the Hegelian thesis that every being contains its own negation. Similarly, Marx's concept of history as the dialectical process through which society develops has an obvious influence of Hegel's idea of becoming, of the idea that every being, for resolving its inner contradictions, has to go under the conceptual necessity of becoming another.

In the light of these preliminary remarks showing the resemblance between the respective concepts employed by Marx and Hegel, we shall now go into the detail discussion of the three fundamental concepts as mentioned earlier. This discussion will substantiate the claim which we made.

Let us start with praxis. As a prelude, we shall have a few words on how this concept

is oriented towards the Hegelian non-formalist logic. We have seen that dialectical logic is non-formalist, that to treat human thought or reason as the creative source is to invalidate the methodology of formalism. Viewing thought as the essence of reality is equal to viewing reality as a 'human product', or to perceiving man as the essence of reality. Precisely, this is what the concept of praxis means. This conception, i.e., of man as a being who shapes the reality can be suggested as the most simple evidence for proving the non-formalist orientation of Marx's theory. It has been well pointed out that this conception is the philosophical ground upon which the whole of Marx's socio-economic theories (Theories of labour, value, alienation, fetishism etc.) is based. Marx's critique of classical political economy evidently presupposes such an essentialist conception of man, that, at the epistemological level, it embodies an essentialist critique of formalism. We would come to these points at a later stage of our discussion. Here, we shall restrict our enquiry to the essentialist presuppositions of the notion of praxis.

Praxis and Essence

The fundamental hypothesis upon which the whole of Marx's philosophy is based is that, man is a being of praxis. The expression 'praxis', in the sense in which it is used in Marxist tradition, refers to the activity through which human beings produce things and practically construct their lives. In a wider sense, it refers to the activity of production. Meaning of the thesis 'man is a being of praxis' can therefore be expressed in plain language as man is a creative being. Creativity here is not the quality, but the very essence of man, that, to be a man is to be a creative being, engaged consciously in the activity of production.

Man exists primarily by producing things. The activity of production is the activity

of transforming nature into the means of human subsistence. To produce a wooden table is to transform the natural object called wood into a 'human object'. That is, to produce is to humanise nature. Labour therefore is the humanisation of nature. Man is a being who humanises nature. He is a being who creates reality for himself; that, reality is not an objective category alien to his existence, but a product of his activity, a property of praxis.

In 'Economic and Philosophical manuscripts' Marx observes the activity of production as the life-activity of man. The whole character of human life, i.e., the species-character, is contained in the activity of production. Man produces things, transforms nature into the means of his subsistence, and in that process he realises his potentialities and transforms himself according to them. Production therefore is a creative and self-creative activity; productive life is life-begetting life.²² Human life goes on progressing through this creative and self-creative activity. In other words, the whole development of human life is the development of his productive life.

Man's activity of production is a free, conscious activity. He makes his life activity into an object of his will and of his consciousness. As a matter of fact, animals also produce. They build nests, dwelling places etc. But, as Marx observes, they are immediately one with their life activity. They are incapable of setting themselves mentally free from their activity. In other words, they live according to the natural needs of their physical existence, or, rather, they act as being completely subordinated to their immediate physical needs. They have no awareness of themselves as acting entities.²³ Human beings, on the other hand, are conscious of the distinction between their life activities and

²²Cf. Karl Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', in *The Portable Karl Marx*, p. 139.

²³Cf. Bertell Ollman, *Alienation; Marx's conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, p. 110.

themselves as living beings. This self consciousness enables them to be free from their life activities, and thereby to mould their life according to their will. Obviously, Marx comes to the conclusion that freedom and consciousness constitutes the very essence of human life activity.

Praxis therefore is the free, conscious and creative activity of man. To say that man is a being of praxis is to say that man is a free, conscious and creative being. This is to say that man is not a passive natural being, a being who merely co-exist with the objective world, but a being who shapes the world. The activity of shaping the world gets conceptual primacy over the world which is 'shaped'. Human subjectivity, thus, is prior to the objective domain, that it is to be viewed as the creative source of everything 'objective'. In other words, reality is not an objective category alien to man, but human reality, praxis being the essence of it.

This view is explicit in all the economic theories of Marx, especially in his labour theory of value. Labour theory of value suggests that the value is nothing but the labour-power expended to produce the object. The economic categories, in Marx's view, are the manifestations of labour, of human essence. The essence of Marx's critique of classical political economy lies in his observation that political economists detach the products from praxis, the categories of economy from the historical substratum of human praxis, and treat them as belonging to an autonomous domain. Value, thus, becomes an objective character of the product; the product becomes an independent object (commodity) devoid of any human content. Such a treatment necessarily implies a fetishist mode of thought i.e., a mode of thought in which 'forms' are conceived to be 'objective', real-in-themselves. Formalism of this variety, in Marx's observation, is fallacious, precisely because it denies the primacy of praxis, it refuses to view reality as

the property of praxis.

Fetishism, for Marx, refers to a specific condition of capitalist system of production, or of the system of alienation. The details of it will be discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. Now, in the next section, we shall make an attempt to explore the Hegelian presuppositions of Marx's concept of alienation.

Alienation and Negativity

Marx's social theory is to be understood primarily as a critical theory of capitalist system of production. The mode of production of capitalism, Marx observes, is invariably connected with the phenomenon of alienation. Alienation is a social reality which seems to deny the essence of man, by separating man from his life activity, by breaking up the essential connection between the product and the producer and by isolating man from his fellowmen.

In 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' Marx analyses the various aspects of this problematic and shows concretely how the phenomenon of alienation denies the essence of man. The essence of man, as we have explained earlier, lies in his free, conscious and creative activity, that it is expressed in his activity of shaping the objective world and himself. System of alienation denies praxis in four ways: 1) It alienates object from subject, the products of labour from the producer. 2) It alienates man from his life activity. 3) It alienates man from himself, from his species-life 4) It alienates man from othermen. These four aspects are interdependent. As Marx maintains, man's alienation from the product as well as from the activity of production are mutually dependent and they together lead to the alienation of man from his species-life. Man's alienation from his species-life implies his estrangement from his fellowmen.

Capitalism, in Marx's understanding, is a system of production where the worker has to sell the product of his labour for money. That is, worker in a capitalist society produce things to exchange them to others for money, that "he does not produce what he needs but what will earn him sufficient money to buy what he wants".²⁴ Consequently, in such a system, the product does not have 'use value' for the producer.²⁵ Worker produces things for selling them to others, and therefore, he produces use value for others.

Obviously, a product becomes useful for others, or, it gets use value only after it is exchanged. 'Exchange' forms the basis of the usefulness of the product, that it determines the value of the product. In other words, the exchange-value becomes the value of the product. Needless to say that exchange-value is the direct consequence of the alienation of the product from the producer, that, in order to be exchanged the product must be alienated from the producer. Marx derives from this the basic theme of his critique of capitalism that value in the capitalist mode of production is nothing but alienated labour.

According to Marx's labour theory of value, what constitutes the value of a product is the labour-power expended to produce it. But, in the system of alienation, as we found, the product gets alienated from the producer and appears to have a different value which is determined by the process of exchange. That is, the product becomes an object by assuming an existence alien to the worker. The activity of production, thus, ceases to be the activity of humanising the objects; it turns to be an activity of producing things which are alien to man, the non-human objects. In other words, it ceases to be an activity of shaping the reality and turns to be an activity in which labour becomes an object which stands opposed to man as an autonomous power. Instead of engaging

²⁴Bertell Ollman, *Alienation; Marx's Conception of man in capitalist society*, p. 183.

²⁵A product has use value when it has the power to satisfy some human need.

himself in the activity of humanising the objective nature, man in the capitalist society engages in a relation where the objects alienate themselves from him by assuming a supra human reality. In such a system, Marx asserts, subject and object, man and nature stand opposed to each other, and thereby, the very existence of man turns to be unauthentic.

Alienation of the product from the producer is actually the alienation of the man from the activity of production. Because, the product is only the embodiment of the activity of production. If the product is alienated, then the activity of production itself must be alienated. Capitalism separates product from the producer and thereby man from the activity of labour. The activity of labour becomes external to the essential being of man; that, "in his work he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel well but unhappy, does not freely develop his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind".²⁶ Labour becomes coerced; it is forced labour, not voluntary. It is not a satisfaction of a need but only a means for satisfying needs external to it.²⁷

The activity of production is supposed to be the chief means through which man express and develops his inherent powers, or, man creates himself. To be alienated from the activity of production is to be estranged from the self creative activity. Man, in the capitalist system, is a being alien to the creative and the self creative activity; he is like a passive natural being who lives strictly according to the laws external to him.

The products, in the system of alienation, as we found earlier, appear to be the objects independent of the producer; they assume a non-human objectivity. They ceases to be the properties of human praxis and turn to be the power superior to man. Man turns to be a slave to the objects. "... the more powerful the alien world of objects which he creates

²⁶Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, In *Portable Karl Marx*, p. 136.

²⁷Cf. Ibid. p. 136.

over an against himself becomes, the poorer he and his innerworld become, ...".²⁸ In short, alienation denies praxis, that it makes man a being who is controlled by the objects. As Marx says, it turns the advantage of man over animals into a disadvantage.

Alienation of man from man is a direct consequence of man's enstrangement from the product of his labour, from his life activity. The species character of man, as we have seen, lies in his free, conscious and creative life activity. If man is estranged from his life activity, then he must be estranged from his species-being. Alienation, Marx says, thus, makes man's species-being an existence alien to him; it turns the free, conscious, social existence of man into a passive individual existence. Alienated individual lives not as a species-being but as an 'isolated monad'. Society ceases to be the essence of man; it becomes something external to his 'individual existence'. Naturally, it affects the whole of man's relationship with other men, that he recognises the other man not as the part of his species-essence, but as an object lies completely outside the realm of his individual being. To put it in Marx's own words; "What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work, and to himself, is also true of man's relationship to the other man, and to that man's labour and the object of his labour".²⁹ Precisely, man's alienation from himself implies his enstrangement from other men.

Every social system is determined by a specific system of production, that, it is the labour process which determines the basic pattern of every society. Capitalism is a social system, the basic structure of which is determined by the system of commodity production. Commodity is the product alienated from the producer; it is an alien object which appears to have an independent reality. Capitalism therefore is rooted in alienation,

²⁸Ibid p. 134.

²⁹Ibid pp. 140-141

that the process of labour which determines the basic pattern of capitalist social system is that of alienated labour.

Alienation as Marx illustrates is a 'negative ordering of labour', that in it the activity for production assumes a 'non-human' form. Capitalism therefore is negative; 'it's negativity lies in its alienation of labour'. What seems to be negated in the system of alienation is the human essence, the creative and the self creative activity of man. In other words, what is contradicted by the alienated labour is the 'true labour'. The picture of capitalism is that of the contradiction between true labour and alienated labour. The whole development of capitalism, as Marx assumes, is the development of the contradiction, inherent in it.

This concept of the contradiction between labour and alienated labour reminds us of the Hegelian dialectics of essence and existence. Every being, in Hegel's logic is a union of its given form and the unactualised content, that is, of existence and essence. Essence contradicts the existence, and for resolving this contradiction being goes under the conceptual necessity of becoming another. Becoming is the resolving of the contradiction inherent in every being; it is the negation of the given form of being. Capitalism, as Marx observes, is the union of alienated labour and true labour. It is a union of contradiction. For resolving its inherent contradiction it transforms itself into another system, that it gives way to a new social order. This transformation obviously implies the destruction of its present form, the abolition of alienated labour. It is the negation of the negativity of capitalist system.

"Man's social practice embodies the negativity as well as its overcoming. The negativity of capitalist society lies in its alienation of labour; the negation of this negativity

come with the abolition of alienated labour".³⁰

Society's transition from capitalism to socialism is actually a transition from the negativity to the negation of negativity, from the system of alienation to the system of unalienated labour. It is a transition from a system where the existence seems to deny the essence to a system where the existence is recognised to be the realisation of the essence, from a state of affairs where man is governed by the objects to a state of affairs where man shapes the objective reality.

History and Becoming

Hegel's 'becoming' provides the conceptual ground for Marx's theory of history. Every being, in Hegel's logic, involve contradiction. It resolves its inherent contradiction by becoming another. 'Another' is not something entirely new; it is the explicit manifestation of that which is contained in the old. Every being potentially contains its future form. 'Becoming' can be identified with the potential nature of being. Being can never be understood in isolation from its potential nature, from its inherent process of becoming. Being therefore is becoming.

Marx's overall view of history is that it is a process of development of man through particular social forms towards the highest form in which his inherent potentialities are fully realised. To be precise, it is a process of realisation of human essence. A social system is a definite stage in the process, that it is not an end in itself. For resolving its inner contradiction it has to transform itself into another. It contains the seed of its own destruction. Capitalism is a specific social reality which denotes a specific stage in the process of history. It contains the contradiction between labour and alienated labour.

³⁰Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, p. 282.

Resolution of this contradiction comes with the abolition of alienation, the destruction of capitalism itself. Destruction of the system of alienation is the establishment of the system of unalienated labour. The 'Passing away' of the old is just the 'coming to be' of the new. That is, to say that capitalism contains the seed of its own destruction is to say that the germ of the new social order is potentially contained in it.

Every fact, in Marx's view, is historical. It is to be understood in terms of its 'historicity', that as a form which potentially contains its future form. To view something as a form which potentially contains its future form is to view it as a form that contains its own negation, as a negative form. To perceive a form as negative, in Marx's sense, is to recognise its dialectical nature, to take note of the contradiction inherent in it. That is to perceive the essence with which it is contradicted. Methodologically speaking, to assert the historicity of the facts is to penetrate into the essence of the fact, that, historicism implies essentialism.

We shall make the above idea some more clear with the help of an example. To say that 'commodity' is a historical fact is to say that it is not an unalterable fact, that it is a form which potentially contains the seed of its own negation. Its negative character gets realised only when we see the contradiction inherent in it, only when we perceive the real essence i.e., the human praxis with which it is contradicted. Marx's critique of classical political economy is due to its inability to perceive the human essence behind the commodity form, due to its ahistoricist treatment of commodity as a positive unalterable fact.

By defining capitalism as a historical form of existence of human beings, Marx actually implies two ideas: 1) capitalism comes into existence as the resolution of the contradiction involved in the past form, i.e., in the feudal system 2) capitalism potentially contains

the seed of its future form i.e., of socialism, because it involves contradiction, and for resolving it, it has to transform into a new social system. This is precisely to say that capitalism is a definite stage in the process, that, in the strict Hegelian sense, the whole process of 'passing away' and 'coming to be' of forms is inherently present in it. The contradictions involved in each form get resolved in the process of history, i.e., in the process of becoming. To speak in terms of theorising, the theory of history to which the concepts of praxis and alienation get fused presupposes the Hegelian concept of becoming in which the concepts of essence and negativity get integrated. In this sense, it may be maintained that Marx's method is the method of historicism just as the logic of Hegel is dynamic, i.e., the logic of becoming.

In the methodological sense, historicism is the antithesis of positivism. Because the procedure involved in the former is that of essentialism, that of starting from essence, where as the procedure of the latter is that of empiricism, that of starting from the appearance. Marx's social theory presupposes the method of historicism, and therefore, its epistemological thrust is against empiricism and positivism. The non-positivist epistemological dimension of Marx's social theory will be discussed in detail later on in the last two chapters. In the next chapter, we shall attempt to have a close look on one of the dominant modes of interpretation of Marx's epistemology that has been commonly accepted in conventional Marxist circles, namely the sociological mode of interpretation, and see how it contradicts the Hegelian content of Marx's philosophy of praxis.

The identification of human consciousness with the practical process of reality as shaped by man is Marx's epistemological and historisophical achievement. To Marx reality is always human reality not in the sense that man exists with nature, but in the sense that man shapes nature.

Shlomo Avineri

Chapter - 2

TWO CONTRASTING MODELS: SOCIOLOGICAL AND DIALECTICAL

Marx's concept of man has often been interpreted in a deterministic manner. Deterministic mode of interpretation involves on the one hand materialism; consciousness is reduced to matter, or ideas are reduced to material circumstances. On the other hand it involves sociology, in that everything subjective is reducible to the objective social circumstances. Man, according to sociologist approach is the product of society and therefore is causally determined by society. The reality of the product is wholly dependent on the reality of what produces it. Man, therefore, is not independently real, but determined by the 'real'. Human subjectivity is a derivative category and all that is subjective, namely ideas, concepts, thoughts etc., are epiphenomenal. Undoubtedly, this approach presupposes a causal paradigm of subject-object relation, and as a result, the objectivistic epistemological thesis of the primacy of the objective domain.

Does Marx's theory involve the claims of sociological determinism?. The main objective of this chapter is to find out an answer to this question. In the previous chapter we have seen that Marx's epistemology is grounded on the conceptual system of Hegel's dialectics. Here, we shall try to bring out the epistemological presuppositions of sociology and to compare them with those of Marx's dialectical system. Naturally, the focal attention would be on the epistemological foundation of sociological approach, more clearly, on the sociological model of knowledge.

One practical difficulty we face here is the diversity of the approaches towards the construction of a sociological model of knowledge. Discussions in this direction have been carried out by many thinkers, most of them are sociologists rather than philosophers. Their approaches have generally been brought together under the label of 'sociology of knowledge'. Karl Mannheim is the systematic expounder of this school of thought. We shall confine our study to the observations of Karl Mannheim, Particularly to his theory

of ideology, for two reasons. (1) Mannheim's theory of ideology clearly presupposes an epistemological position which provides the methodological ground for the whole of sociology. (2) Mannheimian model of knowledge is based on Marx's conception of ideology, or, atleast on a particular interpretation of ideology. In the first section we shall have a brief sketch of Mannheimian theory of ideology. In the second section we shall try to see how Mannheimian model depends on Marx's model (on a special interpretation of Marx's model). Third section would attempt to highlight the epistemological assumptions of Mannheim's theory and to compare them with those of Marx's philosophy of praxis. In the final section we would see how Marx's theory involves the space for a non-materialist paradigm of knowledge which is 'critical' of the positivist paradigm involved in the sociological method. A closer view of the epistemological assumptions of Mannheim's theory would enable us to perceive how positivism is exemplified in sociological mode of analysis and also, how Marx's non-positivist method differs from the method of sociology. Subsequently, we would come to the point that dialectical method is not merely different from the sociological method, but also critical of it.

Mannheim's Theory of Ideology: An exposition

Central to Mannheim's sociological enterprise is the theory of the social determination of knowledge. This theory precisely says that every knowledge is socially determined; a person's thought is socially located, or is a function of the social position. Mental activities such as knowing, thinking, conceiving etc. do not have an autonomous realm of their own as they are fundamentally dependent on the practical, social life situations of the knowing (thinking, conceiving) subject. The process of knowledge does not develop in accordance with the immanent laws; it does not follow from the pure logical possibilities. ¹

¹Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, p.240.

In other words, the activity of knowing does not take place in an abstract plane depending on its own internal laws, but in a concrete realm, i.e, the realm of the practical life process of the knowing subject.

The practical, social, life situations, according to Mannheim are 'the existential factors', which not only influence but "determine the scope and the intensity of our experience and observation..."² Man can never be a pure, isolated being. His very subjectivity is embedded in a life situation in a particular social structure. This life situation penetrates into his mental world and determines the very mode of mental activities, the mode of perception or the mode of thought. So, all mental activities of human subject are determined by the factors external to the realm of thought, i.e, in Mannheim's terminology, the extra theoretical factors.

An individual can think only in a certain way in which he is 'compelled' to think by his life situations in a particular social structure. This is to say that the life situations generate a thought model which determines the modality of one's thinking process. Every one has this implicit 'thought model' before he proceeds to think or to understand something. He can not go beyond this 'thought model'. In other words, he is bound to think in accordance with it. This lead Mannheim to the rejection of the claim of absolutism in theory of knowledge, or positively, to the relativist thesis that every knowledge is necessarily relative.

Individual 'A' understands something in accordance with the 'thought model' which is implicit in him. 'B' understands the something in a different way from that of 'A', precisely because his 'thought model' is different from B's, or, to put it in the plain

²Ibid P. 240.

language, the life situations which determines A's mode of perception is different from that which determines B's. Both A's and B's understanding is necessarily partial and relative. Every knowledge is relative, in so far as the social factors determine the mode of perception of every knower.

Mannheim locates the 'thought model' within the system of beliefs of the social groups to which the individuals belong. An individual who belongs to a specific social group will have a particular 'thought model', a particular mode of perception, which represents the belief-system of the group. Social groups differ from one another in terms of their respective belief systems. Consequently, individuals differ in their perspectives depending on their respective memberships in various social groups. Every perspective is relative, since everybody belongs to a social group and has a thought model which reflects the belief system of his group.

What is a 'social group'? Mannheim's answer would be that it is a social category whose unity is constituted by a similarity of location of a number of individuals within a social whole.³ Mannheim seems to believe that individuals appear to be assuming different 'places' in the social structure. Those who are located in the same place or the individuals who assume the same position in the social whole, belong to a particular social group. This concept of social group resembles Marx's concept of 'class'. By class Marx means the economic group, the similarity of location of a number of individuals in the economic structure or, in the system of production. But, Mannheim goes further by arguing that social group refers not merely to classes, but also to generations, status groups, sects, occupational groups, schools etc.⁴

³Cf. Nicholas Abercrombie, *class, structure and knowledge*, P. 38.

⁴Cf. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, PP. 247-8.

Ideas, modes of thought and behaviours of the individuals who belong to the same group are moulded by their common social location. The crucial feature of common location is that it limits the range of experience open to an individual. It excludes certain possibilities, and also encourages the formation of certain definite modes of behaviour and thought.⁵ For example, certain individuals who belong to the social group of capitalists believe in justice as long as it is not detrimental to their economic interests. Their common location 'compels' them to exclude some of the aspects of the concept of justice and to follow a mode of approach and behaviour which suit their interests. Labourer's mode of approach regarding the concept of justice would be different from that of the capitalist, precisely because their 'place' in the social whole is different from that of the capitalist. Both the capitalist's and the labourer's mode of thought is biased towards the interest of their respective social positions. They perceive the reality in different angles, from different perspectives. They cannot go beyond these perspectives, and therefore, their knowledge is limited to these perspectives. There is nothing called absolute knowledge other than different perspectives, since everybody in a social whole assumes a particular 'position', belongs to a particular social group.

Mannheim illustrates this point with the example of the concept of 'freedom'. In the early years of the nineteenth century, when a German conservative spoke of freedom, he meant thereby the right of each estates to live according to its privileges. If the same concept was used by some other man who belonged to the protestant movement of the same century, he would have understood it as 'inner freedom', that is the right of each individual to live according to his own individual personality. "Both of these groups thought in terms of the 'qualitative conception of freedom', because they understood

⁵cf, Nicholas Abercrombie, *Class, Structure and knowledge*, P. 38.

freedom to mean the right to maintain either their historical or their inner individual distinctiveness".⁶

We have seen that, in Mannheim's account, thought is located within the belief-system of the social group in which the thinking subject is a member. A question still remains, namely, what kind of relation exists between belief and social group? The theory of the sociological relationship of thought and social group would be inadequate if it does not attempt to provide a sufficient account of the mechanism involved in such a relation. Mannheim is not explicit in providing such a theoretical account, but his theory implicitly contains the assumption of an interest-mechanism, i.e, the interest-relation between the belief-system and the social group. The question, namely why a social group should adopt one set of beliefs rather than another can be answered from a Mannheimian point of view by arguing that there is an interest-mechanism involved in a group's adoption of a particular belief-system. Every social group has certain interests which determine the conditions of its existence. These interests compel the members of the group to adopt a particular belief-system suitable to them. For example, the capitalist class has the interest of extracting profit from the production process, the profit-motive, without which it can not exist as a social group. The profit motive compels the members of the capitalist social group to adopt a particular mode of thought which serves and justifies the conditions of existence of their group. Therefore, what is expressed at the fundamental level of all the perspectives of a capitalist is his group-interest. A mode of thought, Mannheim assumes, consists of a basic interest which represents the basic assumptions shared by all who belong to a specific social group. In other words, all modes of thought consist of a group-interest. Every knowledge is biased towards the group-interest of the

⁶Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, p. 245.

knower.

The question that why an individual should have a particular set of interests rather than another is an absurd question, because, in Mannheim's account, interests are determined by the social position, not by the 'free will' of the individual. Social position, obviously, is not the matter of individual's choice, since it is objectively structured or, determined by the social structure. The basic conviction of every sociological approach is that society is not a collection of individuals, rather it should be understood as an objective structure which determines the 'places' of the individuals. The position of the individual in the whole, thus, is predetermined by the social structure. Mannheim, like all other sociologists, assumes that one's social position is distinguished by specific conditions of existence, a specific set of social relations. For example, to be a teacher is to be related to other teachers, the students and also, to have a definite relation to the entire society. These relations constitute the position of the teacher and form his conditions of existence. Obviously, his relations are objectively or socially structured, and so are his conditions of existence. Since his social position is constituted by his conditions of existence and is objectively structured, his interests are also structured. His forms of thought, the categories in which he perceives the reality are also, Mannheim assumes, socially structured. Knowledge, which is biased towards the interests of the social position of the knower, therefore, is socially determined.⁷

Ideology, in Mannheim's system, refers to the partial, relative knowledge. Every knowledge is partial and relative and therefore, is ideological. Subject perceives the 'object' through the categories which are biased towards the interests of its social position; its mode of perception is conditioned by its group-interests. Every knowledge presupposes

⁷Cf Bhikhu Parekh, *Marr's theory of Ideology*, PP.18-19.

a 'partial' mode of perception and therefore, is ideological. There is no knowledge which is free from ideology, since there can not be a subject detached from social existence. The extreme relativist thesis which obviously follows from this position is that there can never be an absolute criteria for determining the truth and falsity of knowledge. The self-refutative nature of this thesis is well discussed in philosophy, that to hold the claim that no knowledge is absolutely valid is to deny the validity of the claim itself. The only way to escape this fallacy is to take a positivist stand by arguing that there are some knowledges which are free from the social determination, autonomous and therefore, non-ideological. In the next chapter of this thesis, we would be discussing Althusser's celebrated distinction between science and ideology. Mannheim does not provide a theory of such a distinction, but it is quite obvious from his assertion that science and mathematics are above social determination and free from ideology, that he also moves towards the positivist camp, towards the positivist theory of scientific knowledge as the true, objective knowledge.

We shall not deal with the above problem here, as the aim of this chapter is restricted to the understanding of Mannheim's concept of ideology and its methodological links to a particular interpretation of Marx's theory. We have seen that, in Mannheims account, every knowledge presupposes a thought-model which is constituted by the social position of the knower. Knowledge contains ideology, or in other words, ideology is the structural element of every knowledge; it lies in the perceptual structure of every individual. This conception, Mannheim believes, is a positive advancement over Marx's 'particular' concept of ideology in which certain of the 'opponents' assertions alone are viewed as ideological. Marx's concepts of ideology, according to Mannheim, refers to the modes of thought of certain individuals who belong to a particular social group, i.e, of bourgeoisie.

It fails to take into account the total mental structure of the asserting subject. 'The total concept of ideology', on the other hand, as Mannheim says, takes into account the mental structure in its totality and presents the problem of ideology as a general epistemological problem. By the expansion of the particular concept of ideology, Mannheim claims, a new mode of understanding has come into existence in which every knowledge, the form, the content and the conceptual framework of every mode of thought are necessarily bound up with the concrete life situations in the society, and therefore, are unavoidably ideological.

Sociologism and the Materialist Interpretation of Culture

We shall argue, in this section, that the above discussed view of ideology is closely associated with, or even based on a particular interpretation of Marx's view of culture. It has been commonly accepted in the conventional schools of Marxism that Marx's theory of culture involves the method of materialist reductionism. Materialism is the view that matter is the primary reality and everything 'non-material' is absolutely dependent on it, or ultimately reducible to it, that the material conditions of men constitute the objective domain which determines the consciousness, ideas, thoughts, in short, the subjective domain. Ideas do not have independent existence, as they are determined by the material conditions of man's existence. They do not cause changes in the objective conditions of men, on the contrary, the objective conditions of men cause changes in ideas. Methodologically speaking, materialism is the view which asserts the primacy and the autonomy of the objective domain and the relativity of the subjective domain. Marx's theory, as it is viewed in the perspective of conventional schools, presupposes the materialist methodology, in so far as it contains the idea that culture belongs to the superstructure which is determined by the economic base-structure, or the thesis that all forms of consciousness are 'super structural' as they are determined by the 'real structure', i.e, the economic

structure which comprises the material conditions of man's existence.

Materialist interpretation of culture, obviously, bases on the two above mentioned claims, viz, (1) base determines superstructure (2) Material conditions of man's existence determines the forms of consciousness. Both these claims are interdependent, and even complementary to each other since base refers to the economic structure which comprises the material conditions of man's existence, and superstructure to the totality of the non-economic activities of man, i.e, legal, political etc, and the forms of consciousness corresponding to them. But, for the sake of convenience, we shall deal them separately, and see how they have been understood and developed conventionally into a rigid materialistic theory of culture. Naturally, what immediately follows here would be an exposition of the conventional account of base-superstructure model. The difficulties with this conventional account particularly that how the conventional account contradicts the non-materialist presuppositions of Marx's theory would be discussed in the last part of this chapter.

Every attempt towards a materialistic reading of Marx's theory of culture starts with the formula from the preface to *A contribution to the critique of political economy*: "It is not the consciousness of men determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness".⁸ It is often suggested that the term 'social being' refers to the conditions of existence of man in the society, i.e, the social conditions of man's existence. Again, the term 'conditions of existence' refers to the basic features of the mode in which men exist or the way in which people earn their living. The mode of existence or, the conditions of existence of men is embedded in a specific type of social

⁸Karl Marx, *A contribution to the critique of political economy*, (in K. Marx and F. Engels *Selected works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1970) P. 117.

relation. In other words to be engaged in a specific form of economic activity is to be involved in a specific type of social relation. An agricultural labourer earns his living through a specific form of activity; the fundamental characteristics of this specific form of activity form his social conditions of existence. By this he is also involved in a specific type of social relation, that he is related to his fellow labourers, to his masters and to the wider society in a specific manner. To be a labourer is to be related to others in a specific, socially determined manner. This is to say that the conditions of existence of a labourer is defined by a specific type of social relationship.

Every man in a social totality is engaged in a specific form of activity by which he earns a living; he is involved in a specific type of social relation. This involvement determines the quality and the content of his life. In other words, the manner in which man earns his livelihood determines his all other activities, his mode of life in general. The activities such as thinking, knowing, conceiving etc. are conditioned by his involvement in the economic process, in the 'mode of production of material life'. Consciousness in general, therefore, is determined by the material conditions of man's existence.

Men, engaged in a common manner of earning a living, involved commonly in a particular type of relationship, have common interests, belief-systems and ways of thinking. They share in common their conditions of existence, and are related to and affected by the rest of society in a similar manner. Their common interests and experiences tend to generate a shared sense of identity, i.e., the class identity.⁹ For example, men engaged in the specific activity of producing food in a feudal system belong to a social class, because they have a common manner of earning a living, a common type of social relationship,

⁹(Cf. Bhikhu Parekh, *Marx's theory of ideology*, p. 25).

and therefore a common way of living and thinking. They share in common their material conditions of existence, and thus their modes of life in general. Their consciousness is determined by their membership in the class, i.e., by their common location in the economic structure of the society.

The relationship between the class and consciousness, assumed here, is explicitly a causal one. To say that social class determines consciousness is to say that there is a kind of causal relationship between social class and consciousness, that, consciousness is causally determined by social class. This is precisely to say that consciousness is an 'effect', social class being the source, that given the cause one can assume the effect. The effect does not have either primacy or autonomy. It is not 'real in itself', but determined by the 'real'. Consciousness belongs to a secondary realm; it does not have autonomy in so far as it is determined by social class. Ideas do not have any 'original' content; they are mere reflections of the interests of the social class. They are passive and do not cause changes in the material conditions of man's existence, the material conditions cause changes in ideas. This lead the conventional Marxists to believe that ideas do not have any active role in history, since they are mere by-products of material, social conditions, and also to hold the materialist view that the non-economic activities of man and the forms of consciousness corresponding to them, in short culture, is absolutely determined by the economic base-structure of the society.

When it is assumed that men who share in common their conditions of existence have common interests and belief-systems, it is also assumed that consciousness of those men is shaped, conditioned, or determined by their common interests, i.e, the class-interests. The notion of class-interest is central to the deterministic interpretations of Marxism. Consciousness shaped by the class-interests is necessarily 'partial'; it is 'false

consciousness'. It cannot be true in the sense that its scope of representation is limited, that it cannot represent reality impartially. It is always a representation in a specific perspective i.e, the perspective of a particular class. Every perspective is limited in scope. "Since it is already committed and predisposed to certain assumptions, the validity of which it takes for granted, its perception of the whole is filtered through them, and is inherently biased" ¹⁰

Consciousness is biased towards the class-interests and is necessarily 'false'. The term 'false consciousness' refers to the partial representation of the whole. Biased representation, as it is often suggested, involves distortion, i.e, to represent reality in a biased point of view is to distort reality. Distortion has often been interpreted as a mechanism of misperception. Distorting something, in this sense, is misperceiving certain aspects of it which are against or irrelevant to the class-interests of the perceiver. Marx's discussion on the liberal ideology of the capitalist social class is often suggested as the example. Capitalists believe in liberal ideology, in the idea of freedom, because the bourgeoisie mode of production required that man should be free to sell their labour and to buy the goods, and therefore, they should be defined as 'free citizens'. The meaning of freedom, for them, is restricted to this aspect; it does not go beyond to the other aspect of freedom in which men should also be free from exploitation, that they have the right to earn sufficient money out of the labour they sell. Capitalist concept of freedom, therefore, is a distorted concept, that it misperceives certain aspects of the reality that do not serve their class-interests.

Ideology, in the conventional Marxist sense, refers to the biased perspective, the distorted representation of the reality. It is knowledge biased towards the class-interests

¹⁰ibid, p. 27.

of the knower. Every knowledge is ideological, since everybody belongs to a particular social class and has class-interests. Needless to say that this position comes close to the sociologist view that every knowledge presupposes a specific thought-model which is biased towards the group-interests of the knower. The concept of class-determination of materialist Marxism gets replaced by the concept of group-determination in Mannheim's scheme. Obviously, by this replacement, Mannheim does not deny the class-factor in the determination of knowledge. All that he does is to consider class as one among the social groups, to introduce a general term which comprehends all the social factors including the class-factor in the determination of knowledge and thereby to provide a wider framework for the theory of social determination of knowledge. Evidently, the idea of class-determination is included in the theory of social determination as one of the aspects of it. Marx's theory of knowledge, thus, is conceived to be a part of the sociology of knowledge. Even, it has been claimed by some sociologists that the theory of class-determination of knowledge provides the methodological ground for sociology.

The other of the two ideas upon which the materialist interpretation of Marx's theory of culture is based is the one that 'base determines superstructure', or precisely 'economy determines culture'. It is often said that such a deterministic thesis is clearly implied in the following passage from the preface of *A contribution to the critique of political economy*.

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms

of social consciousness".¹¹

Society, here is said to be divided into two structures, namely economic structure and superstructure. Economic structure comprises the relations of production; it is the sum total of the relations of production. Superstructure stands for the non-economic institutions such as legal, political etc, and the forms of consciousness corresponding to them. Economic structure is the base, because it is the real ground on which the entire superstructure is based. It is 'objective' in the sense that it is independent of the subject; it is not to be understood as a structure determined by the subject, but as a structure which determines the position of the subject within it. Individuals enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will. They occupy different positions in the economic structure, the positions being determined by the structure itself. More clearly, they are not the source of the structure, but the 'elements' of it.

The non-economic institutions are superstructural, because they are grounded on the base structure. Superstructure does not have autonomy, as it is fundamentally dependent on the economic base. The non-economic features, legal, political, religious, artistic, educational etc, and the definite forms of consciousness corresponding to them, such as law, political-ideologies, moral concepts, ethical values, aesthetic perspectives, literary theories etc, therefore, do not constitute an independent domain of their own. They are the reflections, or the expressions of the deep structure of the society. A 'reflection' is determined by what is reflected; it changes in accordance with the changes in the object reflected. The relation of the superstructure and the base structure is conceived to be

¹¹Karl Marx, preface to *A contribution to the critique of political economy*, in K. Marx and F. Engels selected works, P. 181.

that of reflection and real, effect and cause. Culture as the totality of the superstructural forms, therefore, is conceived to be the effect, or the by-product of the economic substructure of the society. The view that culture is the 'effect' of the base structure explicitly entails the assumption that the forms of consciousness are causally determined by an independent reality. In the strict epistemological sense, it entails the 'reflection' theory of knowledge in which knowledge appears as a simple reflection of an independently existing reality. In short, it entails the materialist presupposition of the passivity of the subjective and the primacy and the autonomy of the objective domains.

We had noted that the thesis 'base determines the superstructure' is complimentary to the thesis of the class-determination of knowledge. It is, as we saw, because of the fact that base refers to the relations of production which constitutes the class-position of every knowing subject. Also, we had noted that Mannheim's theory of social determination of knowledge or theory of ideology is an expansion of the idea of class-determination of materialist Marxism. In the next section, we shall try to explore the central epistemological presuppositions of the Materialist-Sociologist theory of ideology and see how they basically contradict the Hegelian dialectical thrust of Marx's method.

Dialectical Model Vs Sociologist Model

The materialist-sociologist theory of ideology (here after MSTI) clearly implies the following epistemological claims

1. Knowledge is subject's representation of reality.
2. Every knowledge is mediated by the social position of the subject.
3. Knowledge, mediated by the social position of the knower can never be the true

representation; it must be biased, distorted and therefore, is ideological.

Representation is a category which necessarily entails the epistemological duality between the knower and the known, one who represents and the thing represented. The knower experiences the world outside through his senses. He pictures the world through the senses. This process of picturing is the process of knowing. Experience is the primary mode of knowledge. But, as the second of the above mentioned claims suggests, the experience is not a direct, unmediated encounter between the subject and the object. By assuming a slightly different epistemological position from that of empiricism, MSTI advances the idea that the perceiver imposes certain categories upon the external world, the categories which are implicit in him before he proceeds to perceive. What generates these categories is the social position of the perceiver. Knowledge, therefore, is the experience mediated by the social position of the knower.

When it is assumed that knowledge is mediated by the social position, class/group position of the knower, then the 'objective truth' is an impossibility. All knowledge is perspectival. There are only relative truths, no absolute truth. Perspectival thought is ideology. Theory of knowledge can not be distinguished from theory of ideology, since every knowledge is perspectival and thus ideological.

The social position of the subject is determined by the social structure. Society, in MSTI, is to be conceived as an objective structure, which determines the 'positions' of the subjects, a system of 'places'. In conventional Marxism, we have seen that economic structure is an objective structure which consists of certain specific relations. These relations create the 'places', the different class-positions. The class-positions determine the mode of perception of the subject. More clearly, the structure generates the places, the points of perception and thereby determines the mode of perception of every knower.

Precisely, structure determines the content of ideology. Ideology is a function of the structure of reality itself; the places that are created by social relations generate the ideologies that follow, from them, through the mechanism of experience¹²

Three tendencies can be plainly observed in the above mode of analysis; 1. crude empiricist, 2. Materialist reductionist and 3. relativist.

1. It is perhaps slightly unfair to say that certain empiricist tendencies can be observed in a system which is claimed to be oriented towards rationalism. Sociologism, especially of Mannheim, as we have seen earlier, takes the rationalistic turn with the assumption that there is a thought-model implicit in every individual before he proceeds to perceive the world. But the tendency of a naive variety of empiricism that we perceive is at a more fundamental level of the sociologist system, i.e., at the level where it conceives knowledge as belonging to the realm of passive representation, where it devalues the importance of thought by considering it as the passive reflection. The thought-model which determines the content of perception, or the categories that the subject imposes upon the object of perception, according to MSTI, are not the properties of the autonomous realm of mind; they are generated by the objective social structure. In short, the objective structure determines the mode of perception, the content of knowledge of every knower. In conventional Marxism it is the economic structure which determines the class-position, the point of perception and thus the content of knowledge of the subject. Knowledge, therefore is always the representation determined by an independent structure, a pre-existing reality. It can not have either primacy or autonomy. Thought can never be active, in so far as it belongs to the realm of reflection determined by the real. It is

¹²cf. Paul Hirst, *On Law and Ideology*, p. 24.

the 'effect' of the objective social structure, a 'constituted' category, and can never be constitutive or 'creative'. The obvious outcome of this is the crude materialist thesis that man is merely the product of the social structure, by no means the producer of it.

2. Reductionist tendency is explicit in the sociologistic mode of analysis of ideology. Ideology, in MSTI, as we have discussed earlier is a form of 'false' experience, distorted representation. False, because it is determined by the position of the subject in the reality. 'Position' is the creation of the objective structure of the reality. More clearly, reality creates the position from which the experience (false) is generated. Reality, therefore, is the primary determinant of experience and, therefore, of ideology. It is the 'truth' of ideology, because it determines ideology ¹³ Going to the truth is looking at the reality. The form of experience of the capitalist, for example, is shaped by his social position, the capitalist social structure which defines his 'place' in it. To go to the truth of his ideology is to look at his social position, to reduce it to the objective social conditions which generate it. The mode of analysis, here is undoubtedly reductionist; it consists in reducing the subjective into the objective, ideas into the material ground.
3. It is beyond dispute that the theory of social determination of knowledge involves relativism, that the idea that all knowledge is mediated by the social position of the knower and is necessarily partial, implies the thesis that every knowledge is relative. This is to say that there are no objective criteria which would enable us to determine the truth and falsity of different knowledge. To reject the claim of absolutism is to accept the relativist claim. Again, to accept the relativist claim

¹³Cf Ibid p. 24.

that every knowledge is relative is to refute the absolute validity of the claim itself; therefore, relativism is self-refutative. .

The self-refutative nature of sociology is well illustrated by Walter Benjamin in his celebrated paper 'The sociology of knowledge and the problem of objectivity'.¹⁴ Benjamin's criticism starts with the analysis of two statements, the first of which refers to the cardinal principle of Mannheim's sociology, the second one precisely shows the 'semantic riddle' involved in the first statement and illustrates the paradox of sociology in general.

Statement: 1: All empirical propositions about social life are perspectively conditioned and therefore lack objectivity.

Statement: 2: Statement:1 is an empirical proposition about the social life.

Obviously what is meant by the statement:1 is the central epistemological principle of sociology. Once it is accepted, then there is nothing called objective knowledge, no proposition can claim the absolute validity. Benjamin argues that statement:1 is not analytic; no self-contradiction is forced by asserting that propositions about social life are not perspectively conditioned, nor it is tautologous since it can not claim any logical warrant for its certainty. It must, therefore, be synthetic, in more concrete terms, an empirical generalisation. But, if, as statement: 2 suggests, statement:1 is a proposition about social life, it must be perspectival and can not claim the objective validity.

The way out of this paradox is to say that statement:2 is wrong, that the statement:1 'all empirical propositions about social life are perspectively conditioned and therefore

¹⁴Walter Benjamin, 'The sociology of knowledge and the problem of objectivity', in *Sociological theory: inquiries and paradigms*, 1975,

lack objectivity' is not an empirical proposition about social life. To say this is to say that statement:1 possesses a different cognitive status. To explain this cognitive status by arguing that the statements referring to the social determination of knowledge are themselves not socially determined, is to dilute the content of the sociologist theory itself.

A sociologist of knowledge, we can say, has to either dilute his theory by taking an Althusserian stand that there are some branches of knowledge that lie outside the realm of social determination, which are value-free and non-ideological and his theory is one among them, or to end up with a hopeless self-contradictory position. Althusser gives a positivistic solution to the paradox of sociologism (that we would discuss in the next chapter) by suggesting that there is a radical distinction between science and ideology, and Marxist theory is to be placed in the realm of science. Mannheim does not go to such an extent, but the orientation towards a positivist solution to the riddle of relativism is explicit in his assertion that there are certain categories of knowledge, scientific, mathematical etc. that are exempted from social causation.

Now, we shall attempt to highlight some of the crucial epistemological presuppositions of Marx's concepts which have been already dealt in the course of our discussion on the Hegelian content of Marx's thought and to show that how they fundamentally contradict the above discussed tendencies of sociologism. We have seen that the epistemological thrust of Hegelianism is against empiricism. Also, it is explicit and no way disputable that Hegel's system does not involve the tendency of materialist reductionism, because ideas for Hegel do not belong to a secondary realm reducible to a 'primary objective' realm. Ideas are conceived to be more real than the objects in the sense that they make the objects what they are. The question of relativism, therefore, does not arise at all in

the Hegelian epistemological framework. We have also found in the first chapter that the dialectical thrust of Hegelianism has been absorbed in Marx's social theory, especially in Marx's concept of praxis. Here, we see how the epistemological postulates of philosophy of praxis stand against the empiricist, materialist reductionist and the relativist tendencies of sociologism.

Let us start with three claims which would be substantiated in the following discussion:

1. Philosophy of praxis rejects the primacy of the objective domain and thereby goes against the methodology of materialist reductionism.
 2. It refuses to accept the 'reflection' theory of knowledge and thereby discards the possibility of empiricism.
 3. It perceives man as a being of praxis and thereby attacks the methodological ground of sociological relativism.
1. The essence of Marx's conception of praxis is the idea that man is a creative being; he is not a passive natural being, but a being who shapes the reality, a being of praxis. Reality, viewed from the perspective of the philosophy of praxis, is not an objective category; it is human reality "not in the sense that man exists with nature but in the sense that man shapes nature"¹⁵ This idea, obviously, has two aspects:
 - a) The so called objective reality is the product of man, the property of human praxis.
 - b) Man is not a being determined or produced by a pre-existing objective reality.
 Presently, we shall restrict ourselves to the discussion of the first aspect,

¹⁵Shlomo Avineri, *social and political thought*, P. 71.

because the second aspect would be taken up in the next part, in our discussion of Marx's methodological rejection of empiricism.

The whole of Marx's critique of the materialist idea of the primacy of the objective domain is implied in 'Theses on Feuerbach'. The very first theses of this essay says that the chief defect of materialism is "that the object, reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of *object* or *contemplation*; but not as *sensuous human activity as practice*; not subjectively".¹⁶ To conceive reality in the form of 'object' is to assert that there is something independent of man or the human sensuous activity, objectively real which can only be reflected or represented in human mind through a passive process. This is precisely to say that reality is an autonomous category. What Marx suggests in opposition to the materialist approach is that reality is to be understood as 'practice', to put it in more clear terms, the property of human praxis. To understand reality as the property of praxis, not as the object 'out there' is to destruct, on the one hand, the autonomy and, on the other, the primacy of the so called objective reality. Man, Marx views, is a being who transforms and constitutes the reality. Reality is something which is shaped or constituted through the historical praxis of man. It is not ready-made. It can not be the constitutive ground to which everything else can be reduced.

It is quite evident here, that Marx's alternative to the materialist approach suggests a redefinition of the concept of objectivity. The methodological ground for such a redefinition has been provided by him in 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' (here after EPM). The central concern of this work, as it has been commonly described is the construction of a philosophical theory of labour basing on a 'historicist' view of nature, i.e., the view that nature for man is not the objective reality,

¹⁶Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach', in *portable Karl Marx*, p. 155.

but essentially the human reality. Labour, as it is conceived in EPM is not merely an economic activity; it is the existential activity of man. Man exists primarily by producing things. The activity of production is the activity of transforming nature into the means of man's subsistence; it is the humanisation of the nature. Nature, therefore cannot be conceived as an objective category unaffected by the historical praxis of man. On the contrary, it is to be understood essentially as 'historical', the property of human praxis. (This view would be discussed in detail in our fourth chapter). Explicitly, this historicist conception of reality fundamentally rejects the materialist hypothesis of an objective domain, the reductionist claim that everything subjective can be ultimately reduced to an objective ground. Marx's method, therefore, is basically different from that of materialist reductionism.

2. The theory that reduces all thought to the level of a manifestation of social substratum which is objectively real implies the classical empiricist distinction between the 'receptive' subjectivity and the autonomous objectivity. We have seen that the idea of the autonomy of the objective domain clearly disappears in Marx's redefined scheme. We shall argue here that to reject the autonomy of the objective domain is to attack the reflection theory of knowledge. Marx's redefinition of objectivity, as we saw, establishes the conceptual primacy of the human agency, that it establishes the view that human praxis is the source of the social 'substratum', of the so called objective domain. When it is assumed that human praxis is conceptually prior to the objective reality, then it is also assumed that all that is *humane* are not to be conceived as belonging to a secondary realm; they constitute the primary realm. Consciousness viewed as the essential aspect of human praxis, then does not belong to the epiphenomenal realm, to the realm of reflection.

The view that consciousness is an essential aspect of human praxis needs to be elaborated. It is clearly implied in Marx's economic and philosophical writings, especially in his conception of human labour as exposed mainly in EPM, the idea that consciousness is not to be understood in isolation from praxis, the actual life process of man. "Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence"¹⁷ To understand the actual life process of man apart from consciousness, Marx assumes, is to reduce human existence to the level of a passive natural being. What distinguishes man from a mere natural being, according to Marx, is the activity of production, i.e., the conscious activity of transforming the objective nature into the means of his subsistence. It is the fundamental life activity of man. Animals, Marx says, do not involve in the activity of production consciously. Their life-activity is just mechanical. They are immediately one with their life activity. They do not distinguish themselves from it. Man, on the other hand, as we discussed earlier, makes his life activity itself into an object of his will and of his consciousness; he has conscious life activity. This conscious life activity distinguishes man directly from the life activity of the animal.

The thesis follows from the above is that consciousness is an inseparable aspect of human praxis. It becomes clear here that the statement, 'social being determines consciousness', understood in a crude deterministic sense, stands against this thesis. The term 'social being', viewed as an objective ground, does not involve the meaning of the conscious life activity of man; it refers to a category of being which is conceptually separated from, prior to the category of consciousness. Such a dualistic idea clearly disappears in Marx's formulation. The category of consciousness,

¹⁷Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, in *Portable Karl Marx*, P. 169.

as we saw, in Marx's account can never be different from the category of social being. Man, for Marx, is a conscious, creative being, a being of praxis. Consciousness separated from praxis is necessarily passive; it can never be creative. Human consciousness presupposes creativity, and creativity presupposes consciousness. Man produces consciously. "His creation, in practice of an *objective world*.... is the proof that man is a conscious species-being"¹⁸

Marx's concept of consciousness, therefore, has to be viewed in a fundamentally different way from that of sociology. Thought, in Marx's scheme, is not merely the passive reflection of a pre existing reality; it is an inseparable aspect of praxis, a fundamental aspect of the activity of shaping the reality. Knowing is not to be understood as merely the activity of representing the reality, but the part of the activity of shaping the reality. In other words, the activity of knowing can not be divorced from the activity of transforming the reality. Reflection theory of knowledge is inadequate, if not false; it totally fails to account the creative content of thought and to perceive man as a creative being.

3. The sociological relativist thesis that every knowledge is mediated by the social position of the knower and therefore relative is methodologically founded upon the materialist conviction that the human subject is the product of the objective social reality; that everything subjective is causally determined by the outer reality. The supposition here is that society is an objective circumstance, the determinant base; when the circumstances change the subject changes in accordance with it. Marx attacks the very basis of this supposition by arguing that the change in the social circumstances is not to be understood in terms of an objective process unaffected by

¹⁸Karl Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', Ibid, P. 139.

man, it is man who causes changes in the circumstances "The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of (men's) circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator himself must be educated".¹⁹ The suggestion here is that materialism fails to grasp the human essence behind the social changes; it denies the fact that human praxis is the source of history. This denial leads the materialists to the reductionist thesis that man is merely the product of an objective process called history.

It is to be noted here that Marx's assertion that human praxis is the source of the historical process does not in any way imply that subject is unaffected by the process. It is true that the basic thrust of Marx's argument is against the reduction of subjectivity to the level of an effect, the relativisation of thought. But, it does not go to the extreme of assigning an ahistorical status to the subjective domain. Marx clearly maintains that praxis implies the shaping of both the objective and the subjective domains, that in the process of production man 'produces' himself. The act of shaping reality shapes man himself. In the process of changing the circumstances man changes himself. Man creates history and history creates man. Marx says: The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self change can be comprehended and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice".²⁰

Marx stresses the necessity for a new approach, a revolutionary approach which accounts the creative and the self-creative aspects of human praxis, and thereby conceives reality as a total process implying a constant interaction between subject and object. Explicitly, the relation between subject and object according to such an approach is not that of a one-sided determination in which the former is always determined by the latter,

¹⁹Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, in *Portable Karl Marx*, P. 156.

²⁰Ibid, P. 156.

but that of a dialectical interaction where neither of them has a separate existence apart from the process, a ahistorical status.

But, man is an effect of a process which is initiated by himself. He recognises himself in a world that he has created.²¹ It can very well be argued here that there is a space for the autonomy of the subjective domain within the theoretical framework of Marxism. Subject is autonomous in so far as it is not an effect of something other than its own activity. Human activity is free in the sense in which it is not caused by anything outside the process. Precisely, this is what Marx means when he describes man as a free being, human life activity as a free conscious activity.²² Marx's concept of praxis, in this sense, signifies the essence of man implying Freedom, consciousness and creativity.

Essentialism of Marx stands obviously against the deterministic concept of man; it offers a non-materialist approach to culture in which cultural domain is not merely a product of 'structure', it has an autonomy of its own. The rejection of determinism provides the methodological ground for the rejection of positivism in general. In the next section we shall see how Marx's non-materialist theory of culture involves the space for a critique of positivism.

Non-materialist approach to culture and the critique of positivism

We shall begin with the crucial observation of Marx embodied in the ninth thesis of 'Theses on Feuerbach' which clearly exposes the methodological link between the representational concept of knowledge and the mode of approach of positivism. Marx says: "The highest point attained by contemplative materialism, i.e., by that materialism which

²¹cf, Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', in *Portable Karl Marx* p. 140.

²²Cf. Ibid, Pl 139.

does not comprehend sensuousness as practical activity, is the contemplation of separate individuals and of civil society".²³ The theory which presupposes a representational concept of knowledge, which perceives knowledge as a passive process of representation, not as an aspect of human praxis, is 'contemplative'. It understands reality only in the form of an 'independent object'; it fails to comprehend the constitutive essence of the reality, i.e., the human praxis. In other words, it conceives reality only as an 'object' devoid of any human content, as a form. Methodologically speaking, such a conception implies a mode of approach which refuses to penetrate the form into the essence. This mode of approach can be characterised as formalistic. To refute the essence behind the facts is to refute the universality, and thereby to accept the absolute reality of the particulars. A formalist theory which does not attempt to go beyond the appearance or which perceives the observable forms as the facts devoid of any content, therefore, implies the empiricist-positivist paradigm of knowledge i.e., the paradigm which restricts knowledge to the representation of the discrete particulars (or which conceives knowledge as the 'contemplation of separate individuals').

The term 'civil society' in the sense in which it is used in the thesis mentioned above, refers to a society where men are divided into separate individuals alien to each other; it refers to a system of alienation. We had seen in our first chapter that, in Marx's account, in a system of alienation men get alienated from their species-life, from their social essence, and turn to be divided into separate, isolated individuals. The picture of civil society, therefore, is the picture of separate individuals. Marx's observation here is that the spirit of positivism is exemplified in the form of life of the civil society.

One can easily follow the meaning of this observation if he goes through the discussion

²³Marx, Theses on Feuerbach, in *Portable Karl Marx*, P. 157.

in 'On Jewish Question' where Marx brings out the formalistic character of the fundamental concepts which form the basis of civil society. Individual in a civil society, Marx observes is a self-sufficient monad withdrawn to himself and separated from the community. All the basic concepts of civil society such as liberty, equality etc. are defined in such a way that they provide the secure ground for the separation of man from man. For example, the concept of liberty as it is used in a civil society, denotes the right to do anything which does not harm others. The limits within which each individual can move without harming others are determined by law. Therefore, liberty, in a civil society is that of man as isolated monad withdrawn into himself. Concept of liberty, Marx says, thus is based not on the association of man and man but rather, on the separation of man from man. Similarly, the concept of equality refers to the right to be equally considered in front of law. Marx observes that it simply means equal access to liberty, that each man is equally considered to be a self sufficient monad. Again, Man's right to private property is the right to enjoy one's property, to dispose over it arbitrarily according to one's will, without considering other men, independent of society.²⁴ Obviously, it is a right of self interest. It is the right of every individual to be an isolated monad. Thus, all the concepts which form the basis of civil society are the concepts of individualism. Individualism, in its most usual sense, is a mode of approach which presupposes the idea of separate individuals. In other words, the paradigm that implies in every individualist approach is positivism, that of 'the contemplation of separate individuals'.

The idea of civil society is the idea of separate individuals. The highest point attained by materialism is the idea of separate individuals. The standpoint of materialism therefore, as Marx says, is civil society. Non-materialist theory of culture which accounts the

²⁴cf, Karl Marx, 'On Jewish Question', in *Portable Karl Marx*, P. 108.

creativity of the subjective domain evidently discards formalism. It replaces formalism with essentialism. The standpoint of essentialism is not civil society, but a society where individuals are not alienated from each other, a 'human society'. Marx makes this whole idea explicit in the following thesis. "The standpoint of the old type of materialism is civil society, the standpoint of the new materialism is human society or social humanity."²⁵

To accept essentialism is to reject formalism. The idea of a society where the essence of man—freedom, consciousness and creativity is fully realised, implies the negation of the idea of civil society, the system of alienation. The establishment of the 'human society', in this concrete sense, implies the positive abolition of alienation, the destruction of the system of alienation. This essentialist-critical thrust of Marx's theory has been carried out and developed by later Marxists especially by George Lukács and Herbert Marcuse, into a full-fledged critical theory. We would be discussing the major features of the 'critical Marxism of Lukács, and Marcuse later on, in the last two chapters. Presently, in the next chapter, we shall have a critical view of the revival of the positivist paradigms in a relatively new theoretical form in Althusser's 'scientific Marxism'.

²⁵Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, in *Portable Karl Marx*, P. 158. We do not use the term 'new materialism' to designate Marx's mode of approach, for the practical reason that such a term might be misleading, especially in a discussion that focuses on a critique of materialism.

.... we must begin by stating the first premise of all human existence, and therefore of all history, the premise namely that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to “make history”.

Karl Marx

Chapter - 3

ALTHUSSER'S 'NEO-POSITIVISM': SCIENCE AND IDEOLOGY

In this chapter we deal with the 'neo-positivist' conception of knowledge and ideology by considering some of the major aspects of Louis Althusser's reading of Marx. Sociological-materialist theory of culture, as we have seen in the previous chapter, depends wholly on a positivist understanding of Marx's theory or, in other words, on a reductionist interpretation of Marx's notion of ideology. Method of reductionism results invariably in relativism, in the relativisation of human thought. Relativism, as we saw, contradicts itself with the non-positivist epistemological presuppositions of Marx's philosophy of praxis.

Althusser's major thrust in the course of his 'scientific' interpretation of Marxism is to provide a secure foundation for positivism by resolving the errors of relativism and reductionism of the conventional sociologism. In this precise sense, Althusser's is an attempt to revive positivism on a more secure ground — a ground which is not provided by the concepts of conventional sociologism, but by the 'new' concepts of a new 'sociological' theory. The aim of this chapter is to show that the fundamental concepts of Althusser's new scheme are not basically different from the concepts which form the basis of conventional sociologism. In the first section we will try to explore the conceptual scheme of Althusser's neo-positivism and to bring out its epistemological presuppositions. In the second section we shall attempt to analyse them critically and to show how they stand parallel to the concepts of conventional sociologism. The finding that the concepts of Althusser's new scheme are not fundamentally different from those of conventional sociologism would substantiate our claim that Althusser's reading of Marx is of the nature of a positivist reinterpretation of Marx's theory, especially of Marx's concepts of knowledge and ideology.

Three doctrines by means of which Althusser tries to resolve the 'errors' of conventional Marxism are, 1) The doctrine of ideology as the representation of the imaginary relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence, 2) the doctrine of overdetermination and 3) the doctrine of the epistemological distinction between science and ideology.

Althusser's conception of ideology

In sociology, ideology is the false (distorted) representation of the reality. Human subject, as being determined by the material/social circumstances, thinks or involves in the knowing process from a specific point of view, as Mannheim claims, from the perspective of his social group. Social group determines belief systems, ideas and all other mental activities. Every knowledge is biased towards the interests of the social group to which the knower belongs. Biased knowledge cannot be the true picture of the reality; it is a distorted picture, a false representation of the reality.

The thesis that ideology is the false representation of reality implies the representational concept of knowledge, i.e., the idea that knowledge is the representation of reality. The concept of false representation is possible only when it is assumed that the process of knowing is the process of representation. In order to defend the thesis that ideology is a distorted recognition of reality, it must be argued that the process of knowledge described by empiricism is a real process.¹

Therefore, to accept the sociologist thesis of ideology is to accept empiricism. The construction of a theoretical scheme which is methodologically free from empiricism and sociology must, therefore, be based on the rejection of the representational theory of

¹Cf. Paul Hirst, *On Law and Ideology*. p. 23

knowledge. Precisely, this is the task which Althusser undertakes before proceeding to his constructive enterprise.

In his celebrated essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' Althusser advances the thesis of the 'materiality of ideology' which clearly implies the refusal of representational theory. Ideology, according to this thesis, is not to be understood in terms of the category of representation; it is not 'ideal' or 'spiritual' but 'material'. Ideology does not consist of ideas as opposed to matter, precisely because, ideas are not something which belong to a spiritual realm separated from the material realm. They are material in the sense that they are fully expressed in the objective social forms; they are to be understood as the concrete forms of social practices and social relations.

To put it in Althusser's own words, ".....'ideas' or 'representations', etc., which seem to make up ideology do not have an ideal (*ideale* or *idéelle*) or spiritual existence, but a material existence".² The two expressions 'ideal existence' and 'material existence' need to be elaborated. Althusser seems to believe that 'ideal' is of the nature of something pure, isolated from the social practices and social relations. In other words, it is of the nature of 'representation' which 'exists' as an abstract realm. The term 'material' obviously refers to the objective social practices and social relations, in other words, to the concrete social phenomena. The thesis of the materiality of ideology, i.e., the view that ideology has the material existence, discards the possibility of a radical separation between ideal and material; it advances the idea that the so called 'ideal' is fully expressed in the concrete social practices and has a kind of materiality.

Althusser explains this thesis with the help of some examples. An individual who

²Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology*, p. 39.

believes in God behaves in certain ways, adopts certain corresponding practical attitudes; he goes to church to attend Mass, kneels, prays etc., and does follow certain conventions. Similarly, an individual who believes in justice, Althusser observes, will submit himself unconditionally to the rules of law and acts according to them. In both the cases, individual's belief is expressed 'objectively' in certain practices. The practical attitude an individual adopts is not a matter of his voluntary choice but is the necessary condition of his belief. Believing in God is following certain conventions practically. To believe in justice is to act 'according to the idea of justice'. If one does not act according to the idea he has, it is because he has other ideas in his head as well as those he proclaim, and that he acts according to these other ideas, as a man who is either 'inconsistent' or cynical, or perverse.³

Ideas exist in actions. What is an action?. Althusser insists that an action is not to be understood in individualistic terms. It is not to be viewed in isolation from the social totality. An action is determined by the behavioral patterns, conventions of the given society. In short, it is to be conceived as being inserted into social practices. An individual's belief in God is expressed in his actions which are conventional in the sense that they are followed collectively by a group of people as their social practices. They are determined by the behavioural patterns of the society. In Althusser's language they are to be understood as material social practices.

Althusser further argues that these practices are 'governed by rituals'. What does he mean by 'ritual'?.

The expression 'ritual' commonly refers to a pattern of behaviours, the forms of

³Cf. Ibid. p. 42.

thought and actions conventionally followed by a given community. The same meaning is expressed here when Althusser maintains that practices are governed by rituals. A practice is conventional in the sense that there are some conventional rules to be followed for performing that practice. A definite form of life is associated with every practice. Therefore, every practice is inscribed into a ritual and also governed by it. The same example of the believer can be pointed out here. A believer who belongs to a particular religion performs the actions according to the conventions followed by other members of his religion. In other words, he acts according to the rules and conventions of his religious life. Religion, here, is the form of life, the ritual which governs his actions. All the actions which are inserted into practices are, therefore, governed by the rituals.

The practices inscribed into rituals are objective social forms. They are no way abstract, but concrete. They have 'materiality'. Althusser maintains that they are to be conceived as the instances of the 'ideological apparatuses'; their existence is to be viewed in terms of the 'material existence of an ideological apparatus'. To quote Althusser's own words: "...practices are governed by rituals..., within the *material existence of an ideological apparatus*, be it only a small part of that apparatus: a small mass in a small church, a funeral, a minor match at a sports club, school day, a political party meeting, etc."⁴

What is an ideological apparatus?. To answer this question we have to go a little deep into Althusser's theory of state apparatuses. In line with Marx's analysis of social formations, Althusser argues that the process of production of every social system presupposes the process of the reproduction of the conditions of production. To put it in more clear terms, every social system, for its existence, has to reproduce its conditions of production

⁴Ibid, p. 42.

at the same time as it produces. What are the conditions to be reproduced?. Althusser answers: One is the forces of production and the other is the relations of production. 'Forces of production' refers to the combination of three elements namely, labour, the material which is worked by the labourer and the tools which are used for the labour. In other words, the reproduction of the forces of production means 1) the reproduction of the labour power 2) the reproduction of the materials and 3) the reproduction of the tools. We shall confine our study to the 'reproduction of the labour power', precisely for the reason that the other two are out of our concern especially when we discuss about ideological apparatus. What does the 'reproduction of the labour power' mean? Althusser would say that it primarily means the reproduction of the skills of the labour power, i.e., keeping labour power 'skilled' in order to be suitable enough for the process of production. The development of every system (of production) depends primarily on the development of the capacity of the labourers to work or, rather, on the efficiency of the available labour power. Every system, therefore, necessarily reproduces its conditions of production; it keeps the available labour power competent enough or, in other words, it reproduces the skills of the labour power. Althusser's observation is that this process of reproduction of the skills is internally related to another process i.e., the reproduction of the relation of the labourers to the existing system of production.

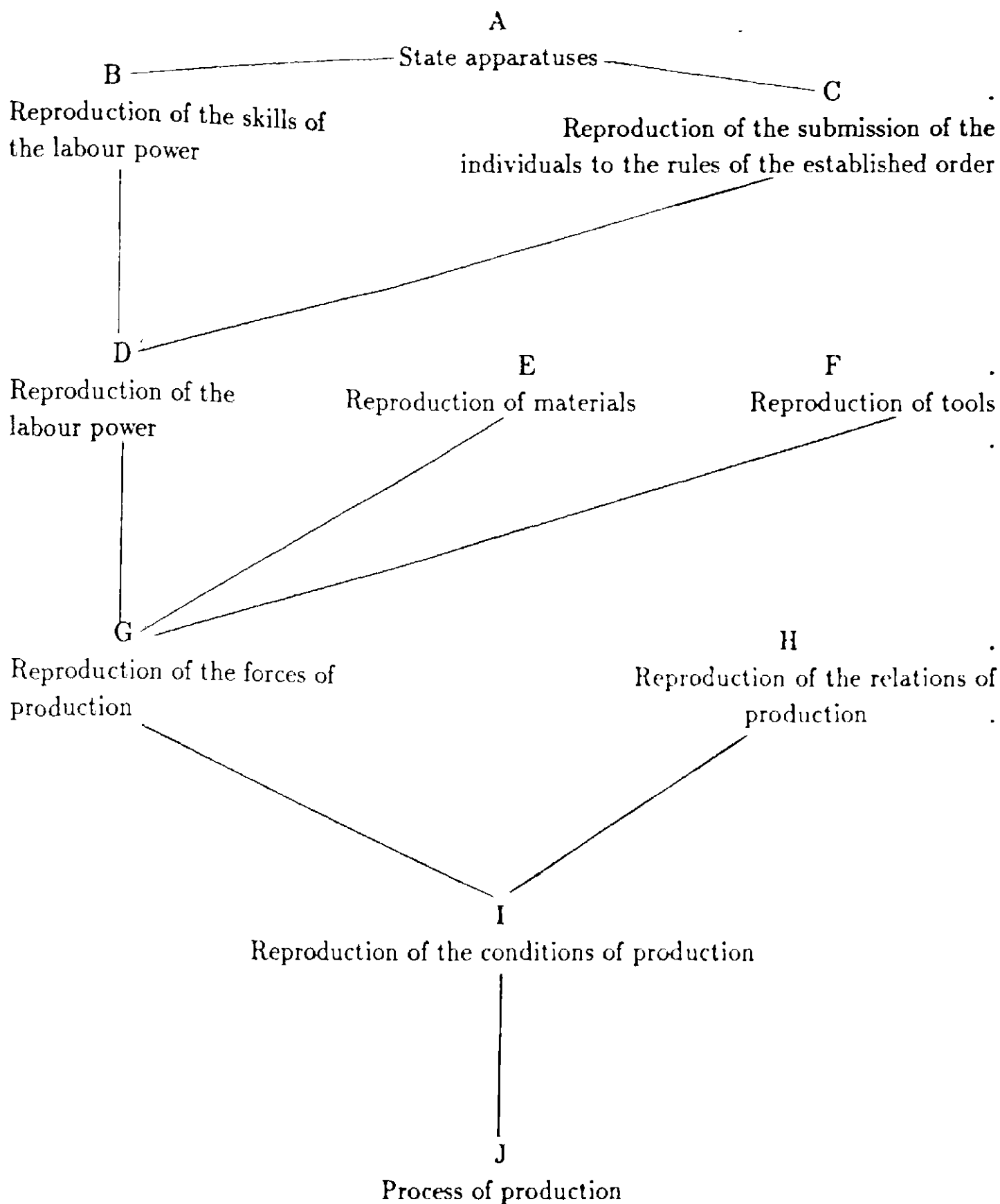
This is to say that the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills but also, at the same time, reproduction of its relation to the established order. The relation that the labour power requires to have with the existing order is the relation of submission; the labour power should be submissive to the established order, (labourers should be ready to work according to the rules of the established order). So, a reproduction of the relation of the labour power to the established order means, in

Althusser's language, "a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order".⁵ Submission to the rules of the established order is the submission to ruling ideology. Every system reproduces this submission; it ensures through different institutions such as schools, church, army etc., the submission of the individuals to the ruling ideology. All the individuals must be 'steeped' in the ruling ideology; to put it in Althusser's own words, "all the agents of production, exploitation and repression....must in one way or another be steeped in this ideology in order to perform their tasks 'conscientiously' — the tasks of the exploited (the proletarians), of the exploiters (the capitalists), of the expliters, auxiliaries (the managers), or the high priests of the ruling ideology (its 'functionaries'), etc.,"⁶

The institutions, through which the reproduction of the submission of the individuals to the rules of the established order is carried out are state apparatuses. For a better understanding of Althusser's theory of state apparatuses we shall illustrate the whole idea discussed above as follows:

⁵Ibid, p. 6.

⁶Ibid, p. 7.



['A' refers to the institutions through which 'B' and 'C' take place. 'B' plus 'C' is equal to 'D'. 'D' along with 'E' and 'F' constitutes 'G'. 'I' follows from 'G' and 'H'. 'I' is the ultimate condition of every 'J'.]

Althusser argues further that there are two kinds of apparatuses: Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). RSA contains the institutions such as Government, administration, army, police, courts, prisons etc., which function by force to guarantee the submission of the individuals to the rules of the established social order. ISA contains different religious, legal, political, educational, cultural institutions which function not by force but by 'ideology'.⁷

What does Althusser mean by saying that ISA's function by ideology?. Let us follow his example: children at school learn different techniques and knowledges. In learning them they also learn the 'rules' of good behaviour, i.e., the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he 'destined' for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience which actually means the rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by the class domination.⁸ In short, the Educational ISA moulds the individuals as the good citizens of the established social order. Thereby, as Althusser assumes, it reproduces the submission of the individuals to the rules of the established order, to the ruling ideology. As different from other State apparatuses which use 'violence' to ensure the subjection of people to the ruling ideology, educational ISA functions by 'ideology', i.e., it imposes the rules of the established order upon the individuals and make them assimilated into the system.

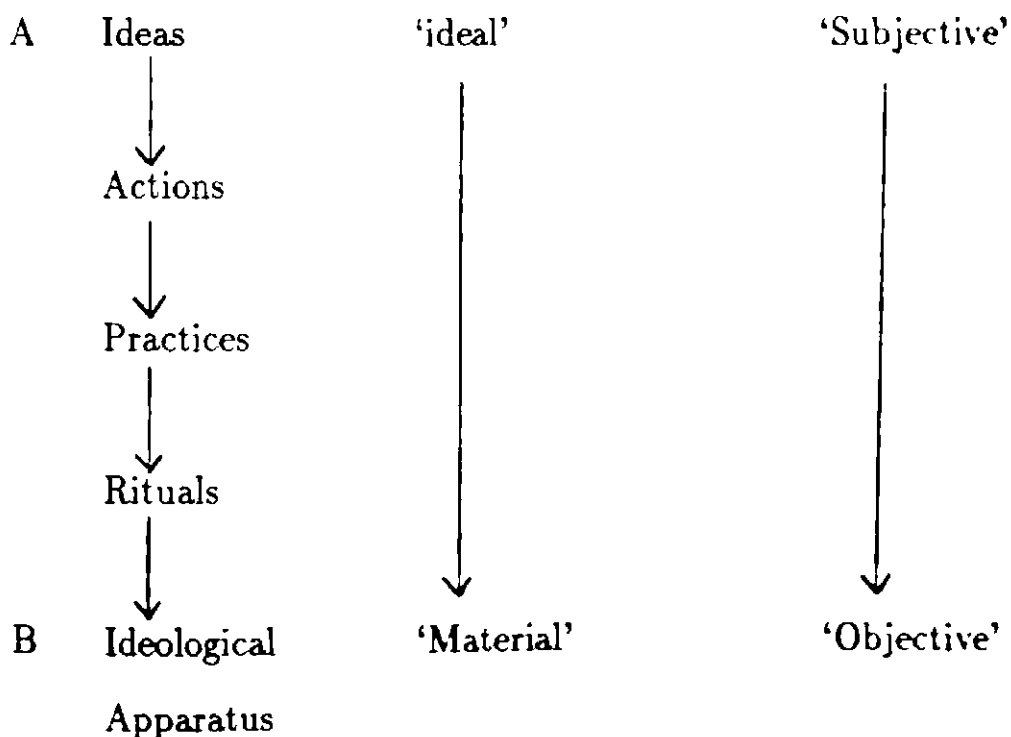
We shall not go into the empirical details of the functioning of different ISAs, as it

⁷Althusser lists the following institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses: The religious ISA (the system of the different churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private schools), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different parties), the trade union ISA, the communication ISA (Press, Radio and Television, etc.), the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, Sports, etc.) Ibid. p. 17.

⁸Cf. Ibid. p. 6.

is not our concern. What concerns us is the clarification of Althusser's claim that the existence of an idea which is inscribed into, or governed by a ritual is to be conceived in terms of the material existence of an ideological apparatus. In the light of the above discussion, we shall explore the connection between ideas and ideological state apparatus.

We have seen that ideas exist in actions. Actions are inserted into social practices. Practices are governed by rituals within the material existence of an ideological state apparatus. Precisely, this is to say that an idea is to be understood as the instance of an ideological apparatus. For example an individual's belief in God is inscribed into certain practices which are governed by a 'form of life', i.e., a religion. Religion, in Althusser's account is an ISA; it functions as an ideological instrument of the state to ensure the subjection of the individuals to the established order. An individual's belief in God therefore is to be understood as an instance of religious ISA. It ceases to be subjective and turns to be an objective practice, a concrete instance of an ideological apparatus. It becomes 'material'. The whole content of Althusser's thesis of the 'materiality of ideas' can be illustrated as follows:



Ideas are inscribed into rituals which are defined by the material ideological apparatus. 'A' therefore is ultimately defined by 'B'. To put it in Althusser's own words: ".....Where only a single subject (such and such an individual) is concerned, the existence of the ideas of his belief is material in that *his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject*".⁹ Obviously, the rejection of the subjectivity of ideas, in Althusser's sense aims at the dismissal of the empiricist hypothesis that knowledge is the subjective representation of the reality. In other words, this rejection provides the methodological foundation for a non-representational view of knowledge in which ideas are not to be understood in terms of the category of representation, but as the concrete instances of different material ideological apparatuses.

To accept such a non-representational conception is to reject the sociologist mode of interpretation of ideology. That is, if 'idea' is not the representation of the reality, then ideology can never be the 'distorted representation of the reality'. Then, what is ideology?. Althusser answers by putting forth a new theory according to which ideology is a representation of the imaginary relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence.¹⁰ This theory, in its depth, is highly complex and thus, the assumptions implied in it need to be analysed thoroughly.

For the sake of convenience we shall break the above thesis into two premisses. 1) Ideology represents the relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence. 2) The relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence is 'imaginary'. In considering the first, we would have to face the fundamental question, namely, what makes

⁹Ibid, p. 43.

¹⁰Cf, Ibid, p. 36.

the difference between 1) 'the representation of the reality' and 2) 'the representation of the relationship of individuals to their conditions of existence'? Perhaps, Althusser's conclusive break with sociologism lies in its answer. Because the theory of ideology that Althusser propounds advances the second idea as opposed to the first one. The first one, Althusser seems to assume, implies the sociologist hypothesis i.e., idea is the reflection of the reality, whereas, the second one presupposes the 'materiality of ideas', i.e., the thesis that ideas are to be understood as being inscribed into the social practices governed by the material existence of the ideological apparatus.

This becomes more clear when Althusser refutes the sociologist interpretation by arguing that ideology represents not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them) but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that are derived from them, that it represents not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but individual's relation to the real relations in which they live.¹¹

Ideology, thus, is a form of relationship of the individuals to the real relations of production. This relationship is not 'representational'. Individuals are related to the relations of production, not in an abstract manner, but in the concrete realm of their practical life process. To borrow the term from Paul Hirst, it is a 'lived relationship'.¹² To proceed from here on it is necessary for us to have a distinct view of this 'lived relationship'.

1. Lived relationship is not in the mode of 'reflection of the real'; it is a real relationship.

¹¹Cf. Ibid, pp. 38-39.

¹²Cf. Paul Hirst, *On law and Ideology*, p. 32.

2. It is not false or distorted, since it is a concrete form of individual's existence in a society.

We shall reflect upon each of the above. The first one precisely says that 'lived relationship' is the real relationship. Obviously, the expression 'real', here, refers to that which excludes the abstract 'reflection of the real'. Individuals' relationship to the relations of production is not a representational one. It is a relationship in which they live. Individuals do not merely represent the reality; they 'live' the reality. Individuals and the relations of production are mediated through life in a concrete manner. Consequently, the question of falsity or distortion does not arise at all in such a relationship. X can be false or distorted in relation to Y, only when there exists a possibility for X to represent Y. In other words, the question of distortion arises only in a relation where X is the representation of Y. The relationship of the individuals to the relations of production is not that of an abstract form in which the former represents the latter, but that of a concrete necessity. For example, in a society where capitalist relations of production exist, an individual can live only by involving himself in it. More clearly, living in a capitalist society without being involved in wage-labour (which is the real relation) is virtually impossible. It is a concrete necessity for each individual to have a 'lived relationship' with the existing relations of production. Ideology, for Althusser, is this lived relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence.

A question naturally arises, namely, why should the relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence be called as ideology?, or why is the 'relationship' necessarily ideological?. Althusser has not tackled this question convincingly. He has introduced the concept of 'imaginariness', according to which the relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence is necessarily 'imaginary'. Althusser is not very precise on this

point and therefore the doctrine of 'imaginariness' remains a little obscure. We shall try to have a close look on it and see the implications behind this concept.

We have already seen that, in Althusser's account, ideology is the real, lived relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence. This relationship, Althusser further argues, is necessarily in an imaginary mode. How can a real relationship be imaginary?. Althusser answers that the notion of 'imaginariness' does not in any way imply the 'unreality' of ideology. The relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence is real in the concrete sense of the term but, at the same time, it is imaginary because it does not reveal the most fundamental nature of that relation. In other words, it does not make explicit the real conditions of existence, but does reveal the *relation* of the individuals to their conditions of existence. "What is represented in ideology is therefore, not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals, to the real relations in which they live".¹³ Ideology is imaginary, precisely because, the real nature of the relations which govern the existence of individuals is blurred and only the relation of individuals to their conditions of existence is represented.

We shall make this point clear with the help of an example which has been given by Althusser himself. For workers in a capitalist society freedom is a lived relation. They have to believe in freedom because it is a necessary condition for their existence as free labourers. Their existence under capitalist mode of production is dependent on their formal ability to sell their labour power to whoever they choose. Freedom, therefore, is not an 'ideal', but the lived relationship of the worker to his conditions of existence. But this relationship is in an 'imaginary' mode, because it conceals the fact that the labourer

¹³Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology*, p. 39.

has been exploited by the very act of selling his labour-power; or, in other words, it does not reveal the real relations of production. It is clear here that freedom is both real and imaginary. It is real because, it is the lived relationship of the worker to his conditions of existence. It is imaginary because the worker lives in relation to his conditions of existence in such a way (imaginary mode) that he can never simply recognise these conditions.¹⁴

For a better understanding, we shall make use of Paul Hirst's interpretation regarding the imaginarity of the individual's relationship to their conditions of existence. Paul Hirst introduces the notion of 'as if', in order to make the implications of Althusser's concept of imaginarity explicit. Individuals 'live' their relation to the conditions of existence 'as if' they were true. It is not the case that the subject simply thinks that his conditions of existence are true. It is not a matter of *reflection* on the part of individuals of their conditions of existence, but it is their relation to them. "The imaginary does not represent anything other than what it is, and it can not be false since it is not an idea or conception of things, but it is a part of social relations which has a definite effect. In living 'as if', subjects do not live in illusion, this 'as if' is the *reality* of their existence as subjects".¹⁵

The following points can be derived from the above discussion.

1. Ideology is the relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence.
2. The relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence is an 'imaginary' mode.
3. It is 'imaginary' because, individuals live the relation to their conditions of existence in such a way that they can not simply recognize the real nature of these conditions.

¹⁴See Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 234.

¹⁵Paul Hirst, 'On Law and Ideology', p. 34-35.

4. The 'imaginary' does not mean 'falsity' or illusion, since it is the reality of individuals' existence as subjects.

It is clear that Althusser's position of ideology is different from the conventional sociologist position. In sociological approach, ideology is the (distorted) representation of the 'real', which exists independently, outside the realm of representation. According to Althusser, ideology does not represent anything outside its realm, precisely because 'it has no outside'.¹⁶ It is not something apart from real, which consists simply in reflecting it, but real in itself, as it is the lived relationship of the individuals to the 'real' (conditions of existence). The so called 'real' is not something isolated from individual's recognition structure, since individuals are always in their relation to it. Reality for them is their relationship to their conditions of existence. There is no end to this relationship. As ideology is the form in which men relate to their world, there is no end to ideology. 'Human societies secrete ideology as the very element and atmosphere indispensable to their historical respiration and life'.¹⁷

Ideology is the necessary form, in which individuals 'live' their relation to the conditions of existence. It is not the case that individuals 'represent' something in an imaginary mode, since individuals are already in the imaginary relation (ideological) to their conditions of existence. Therefore, in Althusser's analysis, ideology does not represent anything outside itself. Or, in other words, ideology represents nothing but itself. To say that 'A' represents nothing but itself is to say that A does not represent at all. Ideology, therefore, is not a representation. Therefore, the question of truth and falsity, or of distortion and reality does not arise at all. Thus, it can be very well said that the conventional sociological position of ideology as the distorted representation of the real

¹⁶Cf. Louis Althusser, *Essays on ideology*, p. 49.

¹⁷Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 232.

clearly disappears in Althusser's analysis.

The relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence is not determined by the individuals; they are necessarily in the relation in such a mode that they can never recognize it. It amounts to saying that the place they occupy in the social totality, or the relationship they have to the totality of their social conditions of existence is outside their choice. Then, what does determine their relation to their conditions of existence?. Althusser's answer is the 'process' i.e., the totality which provides their conditions of existence. Subject is not an 'essential' category in the totality, but a constituted category. He is recruited or assigned by 'process' to have a 'space', a specific relationship. But, it is quite clear that Althusser does not mean, when he argues that the relationship of the subject to the totality is determined by the totality, that social totality is something independent of the subject. What he implies is that subject is not the essence, but the effect. It is not the origin or the author of the process but only a support to the process. As a support of the process the subject becomes a part of the totality. ".....Social totality is not a process constituted by a subject, and that subjects occupy a place in it other than origin or author".¹⁸ Precisely, this is the underlying meaning of Althusser's concept of social totality as a 'process without a subject'.

Concept of over-determination

Does the above idea correspond to the deterministic thesis of the conventional Marxism, that the forms of subjectivity are determined by the objective social conditions?. Althusser's answer would be undoubtedly in the negative, because, as a critic of sociological model, he wishes to avoid the idea of a determinant base. He is quite conscious

¹⁸Paul Hirst, *On Law and Ideology*, p. 33.

of the fact that, to agree with the determination thesis is to argue in favour of the base/superstructure model i.e., the superstructure is determined by the economic base structure of the society, (which would amount to denying his own theory of ideology). For resolving this difficulty, Althusser develops the theory of over-determination, which precisely says that social totality is the unity of a structured whole containing what can be called levels or instances which are distinct and “relatively autonomous”, and co-exist within this complex structural unity, articulated with one another according specific determination, fixed in the last instance by the level of instance of the economy”.¹⁹

The three points implied in the above passage can be stated separately, for a distinct view of Althusser’s theory of over-determination.

1. Social totality cannot be simply described as a whole which is composed of two structures, superstructure and basestructure, — in which the former is determined by the latter, but it is a complex relation of *structures*, levels or instances.
2. The different structures which constitute the complex social whole are neither totally independent nor totally ‘determined’, but they are levels or instances which are ‘relatively’ autonomous, yet co-exist within the complex structural unity.
3. Different levels or instances of the social whole are ‘over-determined’, or they are articulated with one another according to specific determination, fixed in the last instance by the level or instance of the economy.

In the sociological model of Marxism, we have seen that society is the totality of relations which can be divided into realms. One is the realm of ideological relations, i.e., legal, political, cultural etc., and the other is the realm of economic relation i.e., the

¹⁹Louis Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading capital*, p. 97.

relations of production. Economic relations constitute the base structure of the society which determines or conditions the ideological superstructure. All forms of ideological relations, forms of social consciousness, i.e., legal, political, cultural in a social system are, therefore, ultimately determined by the economic infrastructure of the society. The whole system can be explained in terms of the relations of production which form the real foundation of the society. Althusser tries to reject this position by arguing that social totality can never be explained as a system composed of two structures which are related in terms of fixed determination. The relation between different structures in a social whole is not that of simple correspondance, but of a complex nature. Each structure — each set of social relations, determines and is determined by other relations. It is not the case that one is always determined by the other. The idea of determination can be replaced by the idea of 'over-determination', according to which different social relations co-exist in a social totality in the way in which they both determine and are determined by each other. The position which regards one set of relations as the real foundation and the other as superstructural is untenable, precisely because, in a social totality, everything which forms the inseparable part of the whole is real, ideology is as real as economy, and nothing can be thought of by abstracting it from other forms, levels or instances.

The above argument entails that the social totality can never be divided into different water-tight compartments. Different sets of social relations are inseparable parts of the social whole. They are not different structures, but levels or instances of the complex structural unity or of the social totality. Ideology, therefore, is an instance of the social totality. What is an instance?. Surely it stands for a 'level' of social totality where a specific practice is involved. For example, the legal system of every social set-up forms a

level of social totality in which a specific practice is involved. The law of property and the law of contract,²⁰ constitute the legal system of capitalist mode of production, and forms the level or the instance of that particular social totality. Legal system is inconceivable without other instances, i.e., political, economic instances of the social totality. It is articulated in social totality in association with other instances. This 'association' is not in the form of 'determination', but in the form of 'over-determination', that each instance is being determined by, and determines, the other instances in the social totality. The form of this relation differs in each society, according to the way in which the different practices are articulated in each social totality. Feudal social relations are different from capitalist relations, precisely because the way in which different practices, i.e., legal, political, economic, are articulated in the feudal social set-up is different from that of capitalism. Therefore, 'instance' can be defined as "the way in which a specific practice is articulated into the social totality".²¹

Ideology is the instance of the social totality. An instance is related to other instances in the totality, in the way in which it is both determined by, and determines the other instances. This idea, that an element in a social whole is both 'determined' and determinant is what Althusser mean by the concept of over-determination. We shall see more clearly, how different elements are related in a social totality, with the help of concrete examples.

Every mode of production necessarily presupposes the existence of a legal system, which not merely justifies the established social set-up, but provides its conditions of existence. Economy of any social formation can not exist without presupposing the

²⁰See Louis Althusser, *Reading capital*, - p. 230.

²¹Paul Hirst, *On Law and Ideology*, p. 28.

existence of a legal system. As Althusser points out, the capitalist economy is founded upon a specific legal system; the basic elements of which are the *law of property and the law of contract*. The idea of a capitalist mode of production is just impossible without presupposing the two above mentioned laws, precisely because they provide its conditions of existence. They cannot be considered as the expressions of the economic infrastructure, or as the superstructural phenomena determined by the base structure. They are as real as the economy itself. They play the fundamental role in the capitalist social system, that the economic practice is impossible without presupposing them.

Let us again take the concept of freedom as an example. The liberal ideas like freedom and equality are most fundamental to the moral, political and legal value system which provide the ideological conditions of existence of capitalist economy. As Althusser points out, it is a concrete necessity for a capitalist to have a 'living faith' in liberal ideology, precisely because the whole economic structure of the capitalist mode of production depends on the freedom of the labourer to sell his labour power to whoever he chooses. In a society where the workers are constrained by feudal ties, the capitalist mode of production is just impossible. Freedom, therefore is not merely an 'ideal', or an expression of the capitalist economy, but the ideological presupposition of its very existence. Capitalism presupposes liberal ideology as its condition of existence.

So, different practices, i.e., legal, political, ideological, economic, and the instances through which they are articulated in the social totality are mutually dependent, and necessarily related in the way in which each presupposes the existence of others as its conditions of existence. The whole superstructure of ideological and political relations is necessarily required for any mode of production in order to exist as a specific social system, as a social totality. Economy can never be 'pure', abstracted from its superstructural —

legal ideological, political — conditions of existence. Conventional sociological approach therefore is inadequate because it fails to notice the phenomenon of over-determination of all the elements in a social totality by all others, and it divides the social totality into two abstract 'realms' — superstructure and base structure. Althusser argues that the dualistic theory of sociological model presupposes the philosophical materialist or empiricist hypothesis that everything mental (ideology) can be ultimately reduced to material (economy). Determinism implies reductionism and the only way to get rid off the fallacy of determinism in social theory is to accept the doctrine of over-determination.

It may be rightly pointed out that the whole of Althusser's break from conventional Marxism lies at this point, i.e., in his theory of over-determination. But from a deeper perspective, it will become clear that the theory of overdetermination neither denies the primacy of the economy nor it asserts the autonomy of the superstructure. Althusser retains the primacy of the economy by arguing that social totality is a complex relationship of levels, or instances, i.e., political, ideological etc., fixed in the last instance by the level or instance of the economy. Obviously, any theoretical position which establishes the determinatory primacy of one element over other elements in a totality, is incapable of advancing the idea of the the autonomy of different elements. But, Althusser's theory is not sociological reductionism. The vital significance that Althusser gives to the political and ideological superstructure, should not be overlooked. As Abercrombie comments, "Althusser's concept of mode of production is a systematic attempt to establish both the independent significance of the superstructure and the primacy of the economy".²² Althusser's concept of social totality will be critically examined in the last part of this section. Now we shall move to the next important contribution of Althusser's neo-positivist

²²Nicholas Abercrombie, *Class, structure and knowledge*, p. 99.

scheme, i.e., the doctrine of the epistemological distinction between science and ideology.

Ideological knowledge and scientific knowledge

We have seen that, in Althusser's view, individual's relation to their conditions of existence is in an imaginary mode. Ideology represents this imaginary relationship. We have also seen that the nature of their relationship with their conditions of existence, or the imaginary modality of their very life process, is not determined by the individuals, but by the social totality. Subject is not the origin of the process, but a part of it, or an element in the totality. He is not prior to the process. He is already in the process. In other words, subjectivity is inconceivable apart from the process. Subject becomes the subject only in terms of his concrete existence as an element in the social totality. So 'imaginariness' of his relationship to the conditions of existence is not dependent on 'subject', but rather "the subject exists through the imaginary relation — in recognition it becomes a subject".²³ To conceive the subjectivity as something prior to the 'imaginary', according to Althusser, is to agree with the classical philosophical category of 'pure subject', as the essence, or as the author and origin of social process.

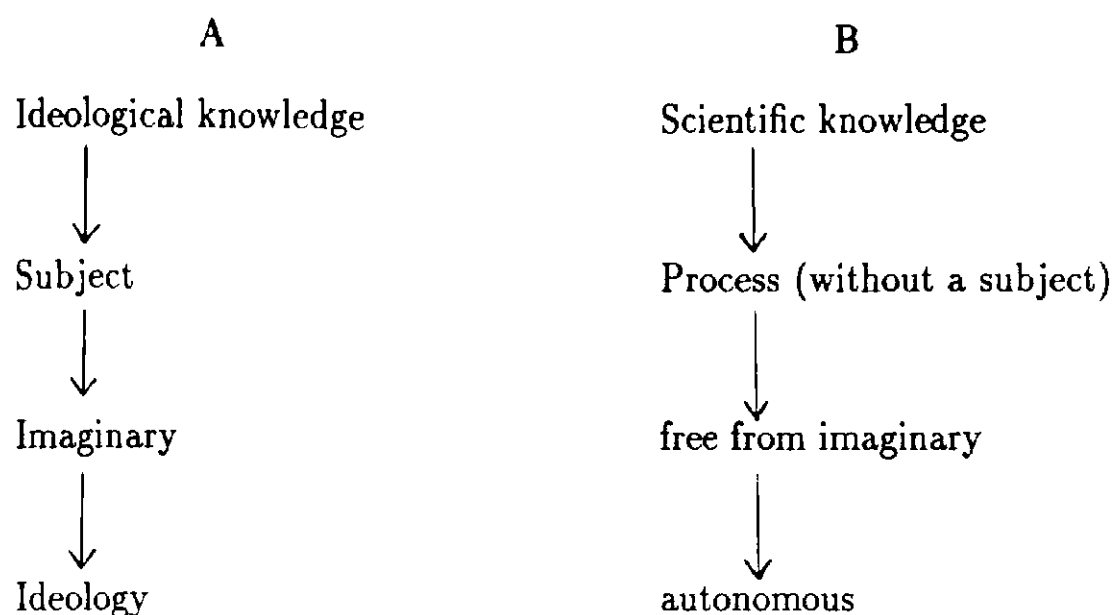
So, the very concept of subject implies the imaginary modality in which an individual lives. A subject is the subject who exists through the imaginary relation. The impossibility of conceiving the pure subject necessarily follows that every knowledge, form of recognition by the subject, is imaginary and therefore ideological. Pure knowledge by the subject is a mere abstraction, because subject can never be outside the 'imaginary'. Ideology is the very nature of the life process of the subject. Since the imaginary relation of individuals to their conditions of existence is the foundation of ideology, there is no

²³Paul Hirst, *On Law and Ideology*, - p. 57.

end to ideology. All knowledge, forms of reflection or of recognition by the subject are ideological. Precisely, this is the idea behind Althusser's notion of ideological knowledge.

One may question Althusser's thesis of ideological knowledge by pointing out that it is not fundamentally different from the sociological relativistic position of knowledge, according to which all knowledge is biased towards the class interest of the knower, and therefore is ideological and relative. Relativism, as we had discussed earlier, unavoidably involves the self-negatory conclusion that there can be no absolute criteria for determining truth and falsity of any knowledge or systems of belief. Althusser was well aware of these theoretical difficulties, and therefore he tried to reject relativism outrightly by introducing the doctrine of the epistemological distinction between science and ideology. Althusser's answer to the above objection would be that such an objection can be levelled only when we presuppose that every knowledge is ideological. The notion of ideological knowledge, in Althusser's sense, does not imply that all knowledge is ideological, or there can be no knowledge which is free from the imaginary mode. It only implies that all knowledge *by the subject* is ideological or, there can be no knowledge *by the subject* which is free from the imaginary mode. So, knowledge which is not essentially by the subject, can be free from 'imaginary' and also from 'ideology'. Such knowledge is 'scientific knowledge'. Scientific knowledge is radically different from ideological knowledge, because the former is 'autonomous', whereas latter is relative. Ideological knowledge presupposes a subject, whereas scientific knowledge does not presuppose a subject but a 'process without a subject'. More clearly, knowledge in the former category is always by the subject, while in the latter, it is by the process — i.e., by science which is a process without a subject.

The above idea can be expressed in the following way:



Subject, in Althusser's sense, is inconceivable without the imaginary relation, as it exists necessarily in the 'imaginary'. Every thing by the subject is in the 'imaginary'. Ideological knowledges are nothing but the forms of recognition that the subject has in the imaginary relation. They can not just go beyond the 'imaginary' precisely because of their inability to transcend the realm of subjectivity. They are necessarily closed, and "are condemned to repeat the closure which constitutes the recognition structure. They are condemned to repeat the forms of the imaginary in which the subject exists and lives as a subject".²⁴ The feature of ideology, therefore, is its closed structure which does not permit any development beyond its structure. The way in which questions are asked in a closed system of ideology is simply to confirm the assumptions of the system. The problems which are tackled in the system are condemned to be inside the system, as they are not permitted to transcend the system. Science, on the other hand, Althusser argues, has an open structure, because it does not represent the forms of recognition which constitute the imaginary relation in which the subject lives. The system which

²⁴Ibid. p. 37.

does not represent the forms of the imaginary, in Althusser's sense, lies outside the realm of subjectivity, or in other words, it goes beyond subjectivity. Science transcends the imaginary, and therefore it goes beyond subjectivity. Thus, Althusser calls science as a process without a subject.

We shall have a close and distinct view of Althusser's conception of science as the process without a subject, as it is crucial to his doctrine of the epistemological distinction between science and ideology. The notion of 'process' corresponds to the notion of 'social totality' where the subjects are not 'essential' categories. Subjects are not the authors of the social totality; they act as agents of the different social practices in the historical process of production and reproduction. Social totality can not be reduced to the inter-subjective relations.²⁵ Because it is not constituted by the subjects. Subjects occupy a place in the totality, or act in the totality as the agents of different social practices. Subject becomes the part of the social totality (process) not as the author of it, but as a support of this process. In short, subjects are not *constitutive*, but they are to be considered as *agents*. They are not the essences, but the support of the process.

'Constitutive subject' is primarily a philosophical category, which, according to Althusser, has been used in the idealistic schemes for denoting the abstract concepts like, pure spirit, pure consciousness etc. 'Subject' in idealist philosophy is essentially 'pure', and free from all the determinations of the external world. It exists primarily as a pure internal substance, or as the transcendental ground of all experiences. In other words, idealism conceives subject as "Origin, Essence, and Cause; and *responsible* in its internality for all the determinations of the external 'object', of which it is said to be the internal subject".²⁶ Althusser rejects this conception by arguing that individuals are not

²⁵Cf. Ibid - p. 33.

²⁶Louis Althusser, 'Remark on the category: process without a subject or goal (s)', *Essays on Ideology*,

constitutive subjects; they do not constitute the social totality, but rather, they work in the social totality not freely, but as the agents of different social practices. They are not 'free', because the role which they occupy in the social whole is not determined by them, but by the totality. They act in the social process, and as a support of this process they become a part of the totality. So, the notion of 'constitutive subject', according to Althusser, is a philosophical myth.

Althusser broadens his attack on the idealist conception of subject as the pure essence by arguing that 'subject-form' is actually the form of historical existence of every individual of every agent of social practices.²⁷ An individual, in a particular social system has a specific subject-form which has been imposed on him by the system. For example the imposed subject-form of the individuals in a slave-owning system is different from the subject-form of the proletariat in a capitalist system. In other words, the subject-form which has been imposed on the individuals in a slave-owning system is different from the subject-form which capitalist system imposes on each of its individuals. 'The agent-individuals thus always act in the subject-form, as subjects.'²⁸ Subjectivity is not something above, or beyond the system, or something unaffected by the system. On the other hand, it is formed by the system. Individuals act in a system, in a specific 'subject-form' which has been imposed by the system. This subject-form enables each individual to occupy a specific role in the process, and to support the process. As the support of the process they become the part of the process. Therefore, 'subject' is not the essence but the support of the process.

Now we shall come back to our discussion on science and scientific knowledge. What

p. 135.

²⁷Cf. Ibid. p. 134.

²⁸Ibid. p. 134-135.

does it mean when Althusser says that science is a process without a subject?. We have seen that, Althusser's notion of the 'process without a subject' positively implies the conception of 'subjects' as the supports of the process. This conception explicitly implies the negation of the 'constitutive subject'. Althusser's view of science is founded on this non-idealistic theory of subject, two fundamental themes of which are: one, subject is an agent and the support of the process, two, reality (totality) is a process where no essential or constitutive subjects are involved. It is quite natural when we claim that no essential subjects are involved in the field of science, that one may raise some doubts basing on common sense, like 'what is the status of a scientist?', and 'what is the nature of scientific discoveries?' etc.

Althusser's answer to these possible doubts would be as follows 1) Scientist is the support of the process called science, not the author of it. 2) Scientific discoveries do not belong to a 'subject', since there are no essential subjects involved in the process, but they belong to the process. The scientists are related to the process called science in such a way that the former acts in the latter, and as supporters of the process scientists become the part of the process. It naturally follows that, if 'subject' in the field of science is not the author of the process, then the scientific discoveries do not belong to the 'subject', but they belong to the totality - the process, of which subject is an element. Again, if it is admitted that subjects are the support of the process, and as support they become the inseparable part of the process, we have to agree that the category of subject has meaning only in the process. It has no meaning outside the process, because it exists as the element of the process, or it has *reality* only as the support of the process. To be a subject is to be a support of the process. So, the discoveries in the field of science belong only to the process, because there is no subject outside or beyond the process.

Scientific knowledge presupposes the process, rather than a subject. Ideological knowledge, as we have found, presupposes a subject who lives necessarily in an imaginary mode. Imaginariness is the foundation of ideology. All forms of recognition, forms of thought or of reflection by the subject, therefore are necessarily ideological. They can not transcend the imaginarieness, as they can never go beyond subjectivity. Ideological knowledge, as Althusser argues is necessarily 'closed'. Scientific knowledge, on the other hand, is open, because it does not presuppose a subject, and therefore, it does not represent the forms of recognition by the subject. In other words, it lies completely outside the realm of subjectivity. Precisely, this is what Althusser implies when he says that there is an epistemological break between ideology and science. Science comes into existence, Althusser observes, through the epistemological break, i.e., by breaking the space of recognition, the imaginary, or the realm of subjectivity. "This process (science) begins with a critique of the forms of recognition, and goes beyond subjectivity and the imaginary, so that, because it is a process without a subject, it transcends the imaginary relation and therefore transcends closure".²⁹

It is quite clear that, by introducing the doctrine of the epistemological distinction between science and ideology Althusser offers a theoretical solution to the problem of relativism. We have observed that, in the conventional sociological version of Marxism where the doctrine of the class determination of knowledge has been accepted as the methodological ground for analysing ideology, relativism is an unavoidable consequence, that, to argue that knowledge is determined by the class interest of the knower, is to argue that every knowledge is relative, since everybody belongs to a class and has class-interests. Relativism involves the self negatory conclusion that there are no criteria for

²⁹Paul Hirst, *On Law and Ideology*, p. 37.

determining truth and falsity of any piece of knowledge, including those of the propositions of the theory which advocates the relativity of knowledge. Althusser offers a solution to overcome this theoretical difficulty.

For him there is a branch of knowledge which is not relative, i.e., scientific knowledge. Science, in direct contrast to ideology, is an autonomous practice. It is a process where no essential subjects are involved. Scientific knowledge does not represent the forms of recognition. It, on the other hand, breaks that. It comes into existence through the radical break, from the space of recognition or from the realm of subjectivity. It is completely outside the realm of subjectivity, or rather it is free from the imaginary. It is this break makes science an autonomous practice.

The science - ideology distinction is crucial not only in assessing Althusser's contributions to Marxist epistemology, but also to have a factual understanding of the peculiar nature of Althusser's reading of Marxism. What makes Althusser's reading peculiar, or characteristically different from that of conventional Marxist's?. The answer is simple. Althusser's reading is not merely interpretative, but reconstructive. The programme of reconstruction is supposed to be consisting in rejecting the sociologistic and reductionist mode of analysis of social phenomena dominant in classical Marxist theories. Positively speaking, Althusser introduces a new Marxism which consists, not in providing new solutions to the classic problems, but in introducing a new set of problems and, also in providing a new mode of analysis (scientific) to these problems. For example, Althusser's conception of ideology as the structure of social relations, in contrast to the classic sociological theory of ideology, raises a new set of problems, i.e., "the problems of the investigation of a definite area of social relations which is relatively autonomous from the

other social relations and which has significant political consequences".³⁰ Althusser calls his method, or his version of Marxism as 'scientific'. The doctrine of 'scientific Marxism', as he claims, presupposes a radical distinction between the two phases of Marx's thought, early and latter. The 'early' Marx is Hegelian, that is, the works written by young Marx are thoroughly under the influence of Hegelian metaphysics and therefore, they can be called as 'ideological'. The latter Marx is scientific in the sense that the later stage of Marx's thought can be brought out as the result of a methodological transition, or of an 'epistemological break' from Hegelian essentialist tradition. This transition is epistemological, because it breaks the space of recognition, the realm of ideology, and creates the possibility of openness, i.e., the science. Understanding the true nature of Marxism is impossible without taking into account the epistemological break in the thought of Marx. The Hegelian interpreters of Marxism, according to Althusser, fail to perceive this break, and they confuse the essentialist notions of negativity, human essence, alienation etc., with the scientific notions of later Marxism. The wrong synthesis of Hegelian and Marxist categories, Althusser observes, is due to these confusions.

There are lot of theoretical difficulties with this position which would become clear when we trace out the developments of the Hegelian interpretations of Marxism. Such interpretations are fundamentally based on the Hegelian categorical structure that Marx retains through out his intellectual life. We have discussed the logical structure of Marx's thought in the first chapter which we found as very much Hegelian in character. The discussion in the next chapter would be a re-assertion of the Hegelian foundation of Marxism, which would obviously be critical of Althusser's doctrine of 'discontinuity' or break in Marx's thought. Before that, we shall critically evaluate Althusser's claims,

³⁰Cf. Ibid. p. 39.

particularly his major claim that he has developed a new Marxist theory which escapes the fallacies of sociological reductionism. A critical study would enable us to perceive the true nature of Althusser's neo-positivist enterprise.

Critique of Althusser

In this section, we do not attempt to criticise Althusser's theoretical scheme in a general perspective, as it is out of our concern. What matters to our interest here, is Althusser's claim that the methodology which has been accepted in his neo-Marxist scheme is anti-empiricist and anti-sociologist. As we have seen earlier, Althusser's major attempt is to overcome the deterministic - reductionistic fallacies of classical Marxism. This has been made possible by him through the introduction of the three fundamental doctrines, namely 1) Doctrine of ideology as the representation of the 'lived' relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence. 2) Doctrine of over-determination i.e., the different structures in the social totality are 'overdetermined' by each other. 3) Doctrine of the 'epistemological break', i.e., the epistemological distinction between science and ideology. Here, in this section, we shall critically evaluate these doctrines, and try to bring out their fundamental presuppositions, which are epistemologically oriented towards empiricism. Precisely, the objective of this critical study is to place Althusser within the empiricist tradition of Marxism. But it will be too simple to argue that Althusser follows the same mode of analysis which has been followed by sociological Marxist's like Manneheim, by overlooking the revolutionary implications of his theoretical scheme and the new dimensions he gave to the theory of ideology, which turned Marxism away from the simple deterministic modes of handling ideology. What we intend to argue is that Althusser's scheme is revolutionary in the sense that it rejected the simple determination theories of classical Marxism, and it developed Marxism into a more complex theory,

but still it is not something unconventional, precisely because, the very methodological ground upon which his new scheme has been built is empiricist. So, Althusser's theory can be rightly placed within the tradition of positivist Marxism, and also with respect of the dynamic contributions that Althusser made to overcome the reductionistic fallacies of positivistic Marxism, it can be named as neo-positivism.

Ideology and representation

We shall begin with the two theses which have been introduced by Althusser to refute the empiricist concept of ideology as the false representation of the reality, namely 1) ideology is not reflection in some realm of 'ideas'; it is a social practice. 2) What is represented in ideology is not the real relations, but individuals relation to the real relations. The first thesis involves the idea of the materiality of ideology, according to which, ideas are not spiritual entities which consist merely in reflecting the real, but they are real in themselves, as they exist concretely in the form of objective social practices. The second thesis embodies Althusser's rejection of the empiricist notion reflection/real or subject/object duality which, according to him, necessarily follows the deterministic thesis i.e., ideology is determined by the objective reality. Apparently, these two theses provide a characteristically different mode of analysis which would enable us to perceive ideas, not as isolated entities but as part of social practices, as objective social factors, and by this, to go against the compartmentalisation of reality into two structures, subjective and objective, (idea and Matter). But, do they really alter the whole problematic of matter/idea or object/subject dualism of the classical empiricism?. Do they really indicate the meaning that ideology (idea) is concretely real in the sense in which the material relations (Matter) are real, that the former is not epi-phenomenal or something always determined by the latter?. An affirmative answer to these questions

would undoubtedly enable us to agree with Althusser's claim that his scheme is anti-empiricist in the strict sense of the term. But, that is not the case here, when we analyse Althusser's concepts logically and get realised that they also retain certain empiricist caterogies which entail the classical subject/object structure of knowledge. This retention is apparantly visible in Althusser's defenition of ideology itself. Ideology, Althusser argues, is the representation of individual's relationship to their conditions of existence. In other words ideology represents the relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence. Obviously there is a seperation between the process of representation/reflection and the thing represented or reflected. In the epistemological sense, ideology which 'represents', and the relationship which is represented belong to two different realms.

Also, in Althusser's observation, the nature of ideology is dependent on the nature of the 'relationship'. The individuals, living in fedual relationships differ in their ideological 'practices' from the individuals of capitalist system of relations. Evidently, the process of representation is determined by the objects represented. More concretely, the ideology which represents individual's relationship, is determined by what is represented, i.e., the relationships. Ideology, in this sense, becomes the epi-phenomenal reality, which exists as a realm of images and expressions of something more fundamental than itself, of something which is the source of these reflections and images, i.e., the determinant base.

We shall explain the above point some more clearly in the following way. Suppose 'A' is the representational mode, and 'B' is the 'reality'. From the statement "what is represented in 'A' is always 'B'", it logically follows that 'A' is nothing but the representation of 'B' and changes in the forms of 'A' (A^1, A^2, A^3) correspond to the changes in the forms of 'B' (B^1, B^2, B^3). (To say that ideology always represents the 'relationships' is to say that different forms of ideology correspond to the different forms of relationships).

If this necessary and universal relationship of correspondance is admitted, then there is nothing wrong in assuming that A is determined by 'B'. The only way to avoid the idea of determination is either to deny the universality and necessity of the relationship of correspondance or to argue that both A and B are identical. Rejecting the necessity and the universality of the relationship between A and B amounts to the denial of the first premiss itself, i.e., what is represented in A is always B. The only possibility left for Althusserian's to save their theory from the charges of determinism, is to argue that A and B are identical. Again, the problem arises that if they are dicentical, then why should the category of representation be inserted to signify the relationship between A and B?. If A and B are identical, and A represents nothing outside itself, then it amounts to say that 'A' does not 'represent' at all. By inserting the category of 'representation',³¹ to signify the relationship between ideology and the individual's relationship to their conditions of existence, Althusser retains the subject/object structure of empiricist epistemological tradition. "The subject (whether through experience or esoteric knowledge) recognises the represented in or through its representations. The representation becomes an *image* of the represented, a reflection of the object (motivated by or measured against the object)".³²

The consequence of admitting the category of representation is to throw overboard Althusser's concept of the materiality of ideology. The thesis of the materiality of ideology is originally meant to destroy the classical conception of ideology, i.e., as the superstructural phenomenon composed of ideas, images, mental reflections of something 'objectively' real. The so called ideas, according to this thesis, are necessarily inscribed into the objective

³¹See Paul Hirst, *On Law and Ideology*, p. 69.

³²Ibid. p. 69.

social practices, and they exist 'within the material existence of an ideological apparatus'. They do not belong to a spiritual realm, a realm of abstract mental reflections; rather, they are to be understood as concrete social practices. Ideology, in this sense, is not the representation of the real, but real in itself, as the Matter/idea distinction is 'untenable' in describing different instances of the social totality. It is not the abstract reflection of the concrete social reality, but itself a reality - a concrete social practice, as the abstract/concrete distinction is out of question. But the concept of representation, as it entails the possibility that the 'represented' determines the process of representation and, therefore, that the representation becomes the 'image' or the reflection of the represented, practically denies the essence of the concept of the materiality of ideology. Obviously, the reflection is that which is necessarily dependent on the object reflected. Ideology, being placed under the category of representation, becomes identical with the realm of reflections or images which is not real in the sense in which the object reflected or represented is real. In short, ideology 'ceases to be' a social practice or a concrete form of social relationship, and becomes an image whose form is externally given, or merely a form of recognition.³³

Althusser's argument that ideology is not the representation of the reality - i.e., the material conditions of existence of the individuals, but the representation of individuals relationship to their conditions of existence, do not, in any way, alter the classical subject/object structure of knowledge. Certainly, it provides a new dimension to the problem, by shifting the attention from the simple idea/reality structure to a more complicated representation/relationship structure. Obviously, what has been altered here is not the subject/object structure (representation/represented structure) of knowledge,

³³Cf. Ibid. p. 71.

but the structure of the 'represented'. In the simple theory of classical empiricism, what is represented in ideology is the material conditions of existence, whereas, in Althusser's scheme it is 'individual's relationship to their conditions of existence'. In the former case, the 'represented' is a bare, dead object, while in the latter, it is 'dynamic'. But, as far as the manner in which this 'object' is related to 'ideology' is concerned, both the former and latter do not differ, as both of them share the empiricist concept that knowledge presupposes the subject/object, or representation/represented structure, in other words, the 'recognition structure'.

The theory which entails the 'recognition structure' of knowledge, i.e., the concept that knowledge is the experience of the subject of the object through 'recognition', leads to the sociologist mode of analysis in which the forms of subjectivity can be ultimately reduced to the objective social conditions. If knowledge is the experience of the subject, and the experience presupposes the representation/represented structure, then, as we found, the represented, the 'object', gets an autonomous status, in terms of which all the forms of its 'representations' can be explained. Obviously, in such a framework, knowledge becomes epi-phenomenal, that it becomes absolutely dependent on, or determined by the 'object' which exist independently, as merely an entity knowable to the subject through 'recognition'. In conventional sociology, the reductionist mode of analysis can be plainly observed, not as the remote consequence of its procedure, but as the very methodological ground of the whole procedure, because, the epistemological foundation of sociology has been provided by the empiricist theory. We have seen, when we discussed the methodology of the sociology of knowledge, especially of Mannheim's, that ideology according to sociologist Marxists is the distorted representation of the reality and that every knowledge is ideological in so far as knowledge is the experience of the

subject and all 'subjects' are biased towards their respective 'class' positions. Society, as they conceived, is the objective reality which determines the place of the subject within it. The experience of the subject is conditioned by its place, i.e., the class position in the society, and consequently every knowledge is biased towards the class positions of the subjects and therefore is necessarily ideological.³⁴ This reductionist mode of analysis has been challenged by Althusser in a thorough going manner by introducing a relatively new mode of analysis of social relations which has provided the foundation for a new brand of Marxism i.e., 'structural Marxism'. The central aspect of his structural Marxism is the substitution of the 'essential subjects' with the "constituted subjects".

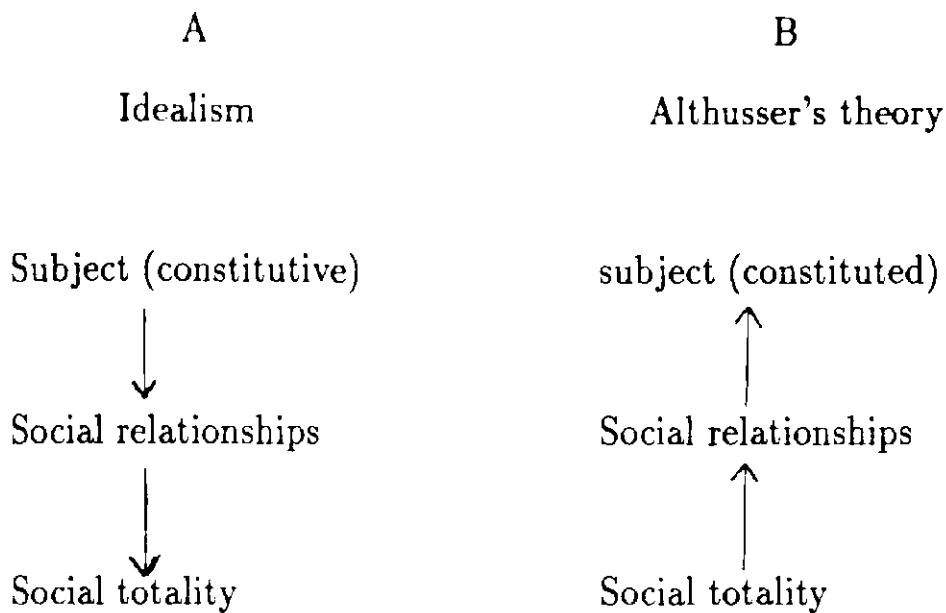
'Constituted subject' and sociology

Althusser argues, that the idea of 'subject' as the 'given' category is a philosophical myth. Subjects do not exist prior to the social relations as the authors or the origin of any reality. The concept of human subject as the 'pure ego' endowed with an experience of the real, involves two absurd presuppositions, namely 1) Reality is something 'out there', existing objectively outside the 'subject' and 2) knowledge is the experience of the 'subject', of the real (object). Althusser's rejection of empiricist and sociologist mode of analysis consists in eliminating the two above mentioned presuppositions from the Marxist scheme. This elimination is made possible primarily by assuming two contrary positions, namely 1) subject is not the essential category, but constituted. 2) The reality (subject's conditions of existence) is not presented directly to experience, as the individuals are related to their conditions of existence (reality) in an imaginary mode. In short, the two doctrines, i.e., the doctrine of the 'constituted' subject and the doctrine of imaginarieness provide the ground for Althusser's break from empiricist and sociologist

³⁴See the discussion on Mannheim's Theory, Chapter II, p. 56-63.

mode of analysis and for the construction of his new scheme, which is called structural Marxism. But in a deep perspective, it can be pointed out that these two doctrines themselves involve certain assumptions which are, in a demonstrable way, empiricist and also sociologist. It can be shown clearly that Althusser's position also is methodologically oriented towards the reductionist mode of analysis, and thus, in a broad sense, can not be claimed as anti-empiricist or anti-sociologist.

In contrast to the idealistic conception, Althusser argues that subject is not an 'essential' category but a 'constituted' category. All the idealistic theories, according to him, presuppose the category of subject as the starting point, the pure origin from which the social categories can be derived. Subject, thus, is said to be the author of social relationships, and these social relationships are constitutive of the social system, i.e., the totality. In other words, social totality, according to idealistic theories, can be reduced to inter subjective relationships. Althusser reverses the whole procedure by giving primacy to the social totality i.e., the process without a subject, and placing all the categories within it as the elements which are over-determined by each other. Thus, subject becomes a derivative category constituted by the social relationships; these relationships being constituted by the totality. The category of constitutive subject gets dissolved and the category of constituted subject takes its place. The conception of the subject as the author gets replaced with the conception of the subject as the element in the social totality. The whole idea involved in Althusser's methodological reversal of the idealistic procedure can be illustrated more clearly in the following way



Social totality constitute a definite form of life, i.e., a form of relationship, through which alone the subject exists. This 'form of life' as we found, is in an imaginary modality because it does not reveal the real conditions of existence, but individual's relation to their conditions of existence. This is to say that what is represented in the form of life is individual's relationship to their conditions of existence. As the individuals are necessarily in the relationship to their condition of existence, they can not just stay away from the imaginary modality of living. They exist through it, act in it and become part of the totality. The very 'subject-form' of the individual is constituted by the form of life, i.e., the imaginary modality of relationship through which alone the individuals exist. Or, rather, the 'subject-form' is imposed on each individual by the social relation in such a way that by assuming that form the individual becomes the part of the system, and as the part of the system it becomes the support of it. "Ideological social relations.....impose the subject-form on each agent- individual. The agent-individuals always act in the subject-form, as subjects."³⁵ According to Althusser, the social totality constitutes subjects through the process called interpellation. Ideology interpellates concrete individuals

³⁵Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology*, - p. 135.

as subjects. The subject-form therefore is that which is imposed on the individual by the totality through the ideological relations. Subjects necessarily act in the subject-form, and become the supporting element of the totality.³⁶

The agent-individual, therefore, is always within the 'subject-form' which has been imposed on it by the system. Obviously, the role of action of the individual in the totality is completely outside the choice of the individual; it is determined by the social totality. Just as an element in a system has no meaning outside the system or apart from the role it occupies in the system, the subject is what it is only in the totality. It is a meaningless category outside the totality. Subject therefore is constituted subject. It can be identified with its role i.e., the role of a supporting element in the totality, which is determined by the factors outside the realm of his subjectivity. Precisely, Althusser wishes to say that it is the totality which forms subjects or, in other words, the forms of subjectivity can be ultimately reduced to the totality. It is quite clear here that the dissolution of the category constitutive Subject presupposes the method of reductionism, certainly, not in the simplistic manner as with the case of sociological Marxists like Mannheim, but in a more subtle, and hence complex manner.

In conventional sociological mode of analysis, it is plain that the forms of subjectivity are the effects of the ground reality, i.e., the society. Society is conceived as a system of places or class positions. It is the primary determinant of the subjectivity or, the concrete base of all the forms of subjectivity. Because it creates the place, the social position from which experience is generated. Knowledge, in sociologist account, can be identified with subject's experience of the real. As the experience is conditioned by the class positions of the subject, all the forms of knowledge, viz., ideas, concepts, patterns of thought and

³⁶See Ibid - pp. 44-45.

theories are 'biased' and therefore are false or distorted. This distorted representation, i.e., the false knowledge of the real determined by the position of the subject in the real, is called ideology. All the forms of subjectivity then are ideological and therefore are reducible to the class positions of the subjects, which are determined by the society. Althusser modifies this version by arguing that subjectivity is not a pure form, but it is to be understood in terms of the subject-form which is imposed on each individual by the ideological social relations. It is to be understood in terms of the subject-form which is 'constituted' by the social structure — the ground reality. There is nothing wrong in arguing that the ground which constitutes has a primacy over the effects constituted. This primacy is, certainly a determinatory primacy, because the role of action of subject is absolutely determined by the 'ground'. So, the determined/determinant structure can be very well observed in Althusser's scheme. certainly, not in the conventional sense in which the former is abstract and the later is concrete, but atleast in the sense that former is the effect of something more concrete than itself.

The view of human subject as a constituted category does not, in any way, alter the sociological mode of analysis, but on the other hand it reasserts it. The central presupposition of sociological approach is that the social relations can never be reduced to the realm of intra personal relations, but instead they are to be viewed as objective structures independent of the human subject. The role of subject in the social formation, according to the sociological analysis in general, is not of the nature of the origin of structures, but, precisely, of the nature of the product of the structures. That is to say that subject is the 'effect', and the ground or the structure which constitutes this effect has the causal priority; it has the status of a determinant base. In Althusser's account, the constitutive ground is the mode of production, the social totality. The structure

of the mode of production produces a system of relationships which imposes a definite subject-form on each agent-individual, and, thereby constitute the 'subject'. Thus, it can be rightly maintained that Althusser's theory does not alter sociology; it fundamentally presupposes the methodology of the sociological approach. It presents it in a relatively novel form, which we brand as neo-positivism.

'Over-determination' and determinism

The aim of Althusser's neo-positivist scheme is to revive the sociological model of Marxism on a more secure ground. Central to this project is an opposition to any form of philosophical analysis which assumes the subject as its starting point. Social totality is not a system constituted by the subject, but is an objective reality — a process without a subject. Instead of considering the way in which social reality is constructed out of the actions of individuals, we should look at the manner in which subjects are constituted by society. Such a programme, as we found, necessarily involves the effect/cause structure, or the base/superstructure model which more or less defines the sociological Marxism, the central theme of which is that the superstructure is determined by the economic base structure of the society. It is true that Althusser does not favour the simple determination theory of conventional Marxism as his introduction of the doctrine of over-determination is intended to replace it. But, in a deep perspective, it can be pointed out that Althusser's thesis of over-determination does not alter the principle of economic determinism, but it makes it more sophisticated. The concept of over-determination makes the base/superstructure relationship complex, by providing autonomy to the superstructure and, at the same time, retaining the primacy of the economy. The primacy of the economy is established by the concept of 'determination in the last instance', and the autonomy of the superstructure by the concept of ideology as the condition of existence

of the base.

Althusser argues that the superstructure is not merely the reflection of the base-structure, but, rather, it is the condition of its existence. Economic relations, in every social totality, presuppose certain ideological relations as the conditions of their peculiar existence. For example, in the capitalist mode of production, the elements of the economy, viz., the labourer, the means of production, and the non-labourer, are combined in such a way that the “non-labourer is the owner either of the means of production or labour power, or both, and is thus enabled to appropriate the surplus product”.³⁷ Althusser calls this particular relation of elements, as ‘relation of property’. What enables the non-labourer in the relation of property to appropriate the product is the ‘legal system’ which is implied in the economic structure itself. In other words, the relation of property, or the economic relations in the capitalist mode of production, presupposes certain kind of legal relations, through which alone they can exist. It is not the case that legal system reflects the economy, or the superstructure merely represents the base structure. Superstructure serves as the condition of existence of the economy. The conception of a pure economy is impossible, as every economic relations are always associated with certain legal, political and ideological structures. “...The relations of production cannot therefore be thought in their concept while abstracting from their specific super-structural conditions of existence”.³⁸

Precisely, this is the central idea of Althusser’s conception of over-determination. Different relations, viz., economic, political, ideological, do not form different water-tight

³⁷Nicholas Abercrombie, *Class, structure and knowledge*, p. 96.

³⁸Louis Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading capital*, p. 177.

compartments, but they constitute various instances in the social totality, which are over-determined by each other. Ideology is not the 'reflection' which is always determined by what is reflected. It has a concrete effect on the economy, as it provides the conditions of existence of the economy. As an instance in the social whole, it has an autonomous status but, as Althusser insists, this autonomy is a relative autonomy, because it cannot exist in absolute independence from the economy. It is fixed in the last instance by the level or instance of the economy.

The thesis that the ideology is the condition of existence of the economy does not in any way mean that ideology is primary, because that would definitely result in a position where the whole conception of the base — superstructure model would be upside down. Obviously, Althusser does not want to say that the legal system can be claimed as having causal primacy over the economy. Legal system, in a specific social totality serves as the condition of existence of the economy but, ultimately, the economy specifies what form the conditions take. For example, a particular legal system which enables the labourer to possess the product of his labour power does not serve the purpose of the economy of capitalism. Capitalist economy needs a legal system which involves the relation (property relation) where the non-labourer owns the product of the labour power. So, the form of its 'condition of existence', i.e., the nature of the ideological relations, is determined by the economy itself. Therefore, the ideological conditions are 'fixed' in the last instance by the level or the instance of the economy. It is clear that, in stressing the idea of the determination in the last instance by the economy, Althusser is at risk of disposing of a principle which more or less defines the sociological model of Marxism i.e., the principle of the primacy of the economy.

The whole idea of Althusser's principle of over-determination can be summarised

as follows: Every economy must have superstructural forms. Superstructural forms, viz., ideological, political instances, are not merely the 'reflections' of the economy, but, they have a concrete effect on the economy. The economy can not be thought of in abstraction from its superstructural forms. Ultimately, the economy is primary, because, all other instances in the social totality are fixed in the last instance by the level of the economy. Certainly, this conception modifies the simple-determination theory of conventional Marxism where ideology has been treated merely as a passive reflection of the economic-base. Althusser assigns a kind of autonomy to the ideology by treating it as a relatively free instance in the social totality, and thereby, a concrete form, in which it can be claimed to have a specific effectivity on the economy. So, Althusser's theory can be considered as the modified version of the sociological Marxism. Surely, his theory does not alter the basic presuppositions of the sociological Marxism such as the ideas of base-superstructural model, and the primacy of the economy, but retains them. Therefore, it can be very well maintained that Althusser is not an anti-sociologist thinker; his scheme is not against sociology, but it is a new brand of sociology.

Science-ideology distinction: A positivist mode of theorising

Relativism is one of the unavoidable consequences of any kind of sociological method. The theory of social determination of knowledge inevitably results in treating ideology either as a body of ideas systematically biased towards the interests of a particular social class, or as an imaginary relationship of the individuals to their conditions of existence (where what is represented is not the reality, but individual's relationship to the reality). In both the views, knowledge is something determined by the position of the subject in the society, and therefore, is necessarily relative. To argue that every knowledge is determined by the class position of the knower, or by the relationship of the knower to

his conditions of existence is to argue that every knowledge is relative, since everybody belongs to a class and has class position or, since every subject lives necessarily in a 'relationship' — relationship to his conditions of existence. As we had seen earlier, the relativistic theory logically follows the self-negatory conclusion that there are no criteria for determining truth and falsity of any proposition including those of the propositions of the theory which advocates the relativity of knowledge.

If every knowledge is ideological and relative, then what would be the nature of Marxist theory?. This has been a troubling problem for all sociologist interpreters of Marxism. Althusser offers a solution to this problem by introducing the doctrine of the epistemological break between science and ideology, and thereby, establishing Marxism as a science free from ideology. The basic tenet of Althusser's position is that scientific knowledge is produced by the totality — the process without a constitutive subject. It lies outside the realm of subjectivity, completely beyond the 'recognition-structure' of the subject whereas ideology is knowledge by the subject. Scientific knowledge is free from ideology.

If it is admitted that science lies outside the realm of ideology, then it follows that scientific knowledge is not superstructural or, is free from the determination of any other practice than itself. Science does not presuppose a subject, and therefore, knowledge in science is not by the subject; it is not produced through the process of recognition. So, scientific knowledge is not of the nature of 'perceptual knowledge', in which the subject recognises the external object and that the validity of the knowledge can be tested against the outside world. An alternative way of putting this is to say 'knowledge of the external world', presupposes a perceiving subject and a perceivable object, and thereby, a verifying procedure — i.e., testing the knowledge against the object. But,

since scientific knowledge does not presuppose a knowing subject, and an object known, it does not involve the procedure of testing the knowledge against the object which lies outside the system of knowledge. It has no outside in the sense in which the perceptual knowledge has an outside (object of perception). Science, therefore, as Althusser assumes, has a 'radical inwardness' in which the security of knowledge is defined by the internal procedures of vigour and systematicity, not by efficacy in dealing with the real world.³⁹

Althusser derives from this that there is a radical distinction, an epistemological break between scientific knowledge and ideological knowledge. Ideological knowledge, as it is of the nature of representation presupposes the subject/object structure; its constructions are based on social and practical experience in the real world. Science has nothing to do with practical observation, precisely because, it has no subject/object structure; it is a process without a subject. Science is autonomous and its concepts do not have any connection with those based on observation. In other words, science works on concepts, not on facts or objects. These concepts form the system — the objective internal reference system — through which alone the scientific theories can be viewed. It is purely an objective system, where there is no subject involved, as the author or origin of any concept or theory. Science, in this sense, is not a human practice; but it is to be understood as an objective structure of concepts where human-beings are only agents "who act out the role that is set for them by the concepts".⁴⁰

Althusser's concept of science as the process without a subject is to be understood on the basis of what we have already noted of the sociological idea of how the subject in society is to be viewed. Human beings, in Althusser's observation, do not have any

³⁹Nicholas Abercrombie, *Class, structure and knowledge*, p. 91.

⁴⁰Jack Lindsay, *The crisis in Marxism*, p. 93.

'creative' role in history; they do not make history. They act in history according to the roles assigned to them by the structure of relations in the social formation. The category of subject has no 'meaning' apart from its role in the total system. So there is no constitutive subject, but only constituted subject remains. There is no producing subject, but only the product of the process of social formation. In the field of science, subject does not exist as the creative source, but it remains as the effect of the process. Therefore, it can be very well maintained that, in Althusser's analysis, only the creative subject is removed, but the created subject remains. What has been altered by Althusser is not the subject-object analysis, but the rationalist mode of analysis in which subject is prior to the object. He has adopted an empiricist and sociologistic mode of analysis in which subject is an 'effect', not the source.

Althusser's analysis is epistemologically empiricistic, precisely because, it conceives 'subject' as a derivative category, an effect constituted of the objective ground. The 'effect' is separated from the ground in such a manner that the latter gets the epistemological primacy over the former. This distinction corresponds to the classical empiricist problem of subject-object duality, also to the crude materialist thesis, i.e., all that is subjective — ideas, consciousness etc., can be ultimately reduced to matter, to the material social circumstances. So, it can be very well argued that Althusser's refutation of subjectivism is pregnant with the empiricist-materialist theoretical presuppositions, which have been rejected by Marx himself through the introduction of the concept of praxis. Althusser's theory fails to grasp the praxis element, the active interpenetration of the 'subjective' and the 'objective', and thereby, it results in treating them as two discrete, ahistorical categories.

Althusser's claim that the social structure has to be understood as an objective system independent of subject, shares the methodological presuppositions of sociologism. Every sociological approach, as we discussed earlier, starts with the basic assumption that the social reality can never be reduced to the realm of inter-subjective relationship, but it is to be understood as an objective structure independent of the human subject. Empiricism provides the epistemological ground for sociologism, because, the conception of 'subject' as the product of social circumstances is the methodological necessity for the construction of every sociological theory. Without presupposing the ground/effect duality, which necessarily corresponds to the object/subject duality of classic empiricism, the construction of a sociological theory (in the positivist sense) is just impossible. Althusser's construction of social theory depends primarily on the sociologist notion of subject, as the effect, not as the essence. His project of eliminating subject from the analysis of social structure therefore is not radically different from the sociologist's programme of reducing subjectivity to the objective social reality.

So, Althusser's conception of science as the system which is radically independent of all the subjective variables presupposes an 'alienated mode of theorising'.⁴¹ 'Alienated mode' is nothing but the ahistorical manner of looking things, i.e., the manner in which the subject and object are treated as separate and independent of each other. As it has been pointed out by many, especially by the non-positivist critics, the alienated mode of theorising leads Althusser to a kind of objectivism which necessarily results in treating the 'structure' as purely an objective entity, alien to the subject. This criticism has been developed primarily from Marx's conception of human praxis — the constitutive human activity, of how human beings practically construct their lives and thereby produce the

⁴¹Roslyn Wallach Bologh, *Dielectical Phenomenology*, p. 253.

so called 'structures'. Althusser fails to see the importance of the praxis element, and this really, as non-positivist critics argue, leads him to the positivist camp where subject and object are treated as alien, ahistorical categories.

The positivistic orientation of Althusser's scheme becomes more clear when we look deep into his idea of the distinction between science and ideology. By separating science from ideology, as we saw, Althusser draws a strong epistemological line between perception and knowledge. Ideology depends wholly on the mechanism of perception, whereas true knowledge i.e., scientific knowledge, comes into existence through the epistemological break from ideology. This is to say not only that knowledge is distinct from ideology, but, more importantly, that knowledge is possible only when there is a 'break' from ideology. Obviously, it results in a scientistic position where science is treated as superior to any other disciplines, viz., ideology, metaphysics, religion etc.

Scientism is a positivist doctrine according to which science is 'the' form of human knowledge. True knowledge is necessarily scientific knowledge and that which is non-scientific is non-sensical. This is precisely to say that truth is identical with science. As Habermas says, the fundamental conviction involved in the scientistic approach is that "we can no longer understand science as *one* form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science".⁴² Obviously, such an identification follows that the non-scientific disciplines such as metaphysics, religion, ideology etc., do not represent knowledge in the true sense of the term. Therefore, necessarily they are to be considered as inferior to science which alone embodies the truth.

Positivism, as a science-oriented mode of philosophizing, is methodologically founded

⁴²Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and human interests*, p. 4.

upon the idea that science must be kept radically free from non-science. Certainly, the scientistic notion of science as the only genuine form of human knowledge underlies this conception. Positivist's critique of theological and metaphysical doctrines, as it is obvious from the history of western positivism especially of Saint-Simon, August Comte, Mill and Spencer, fundamentally shares the scientistic assumption that there is a radical distinction between the science and non-science. This assumption is more explicit in modern positivist's treatment of metaphysics, particularly in logical positivist's project of the elimination of metaphysics.⁴³ Althusser's science/ideology distinction runs parallel to the science/metaphysics distinction of both classical and modern positivism, not merely in the sense that he draws a dividing line between two levels discourse but, more importantly, in the respect that he assigns a kind of supreme status to science, an 'autonomy' within which it develops independently of the subjective variables, as 'the' form of true knowledge.

By giving an autonomous status to science, Althusser is forced to be sharing most of the fundamental assumptions of the positivist theory of science, especially the assumptions regarding the 'value-freedom' of scientific practice. Positivists in general, view science as value-free. The criteria of validity for scientific theories, according to them, involve no reference to the acceptance or rejection of particular moral or political commitments: whether a theory is true or false can be determined independently of such normative stand points.⁴⁴ The reason is plain. That the problem of values comes only

⁴³Saint Simon, Comte and the positivist movement in general advocated the development of a new, positive outlook, founded upon the conviction that there must be a demarcation between scientific and non-scientific statements. Spencer also tried to develop a system basing on the distinction between common-sense and scientific knowledge. It can be very well argued that it is this distinction that provided the ground for the logical positivist's demarcation between meaningful and meaningless sentences. The logical outcome of this scientistic procedure is a kind of reductionism, the tendencies of which can be plainly observed in Neurath's 'Physicalism' and in Carnap's 'unity of science'.

⁴⁴Cf. Russell Keat, *The politics of social theory*, p. 18.

when we establish a direct connection between science and the human subject (who lives in certain systems of value) or when we refer to a relation between the structure of science and the recognition structure of the human subject. Positivists clearly denies such a relation, and declares that the statements of scientific theories do not refer to what is directly observable; they are independent of the 'subject' and therefore, value-free. Althusser also, in the same vein, assumes that the scientific knowledge is non-ideological, because science is value-free. Scientific practice excludes ideology, because, while the latter depends on the values, perspectives and interests of any social group or social class, the former is independent of 'subject' and therefore its validity is not derived from human practice, but it is determined by its own structure, 'the objective internal reference system'.

The conception of science as a self-subsistent world of facts, radically separated from the human subject, or from the human praxis, lead Althusser to an objectivistic position. Objectivism, as we mentioned earlier, is an alien mode of theorising in which subject and object are viewed as two discrete, unmediated categories. To conceive the object as independent of the subject is to conceive it as a positive unit, or as a 'given unalterable fact. Such a conception, as Habermas puts, results in 'concealing the apriori constitution of the fact'.⁴⁵ Practically, it amounts to the denial of praxis — the practical life activity through which human beings shape the objective reality. The denial of 'praxis' leads Althusser to the denial of the dialectical content of Marx's method. The result, as we found, is a 'positivist' reading of Marxism, a deterministic mode of interpretation in which Marx's theory is nothing more than a materialist — sociological theory.

⁴⁵Cf, Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human interests*.

Communism is the 'definitive' resolution of the antagonism between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history

Karl Marx

Chapter - 4

AGAINST POSITIVISM: KNOWLEDGE AND IDEOLOGY

This chapter is an attempt, primarily, to understand Marx's epistemology in a non-positivist perspective. In the previous chapters we have tried to critically examine the various positivist Marxist theories of knowledge and ideology and, to prove that how they basically contradict the Hegelian content of Marx's thought. In our discussion, in the second chapter, we have shown how the spirit of positivism is exemplified in the sociological schools of Marxism, especially in the field of sociology of knowledge. We have noticed, in Althusser's scheme, the revival of positivism on the ground which is not fundamentally different from that of sociologism. Here we explore the non-positivist orientation of Marx's epistemology by viewing the problem of knowledge and ideology in a fundamentally different way from that of empiricism and sociologism.

Explicitly, it amounts to an enquiry into the Hegelian foundation of Marx's thought. Ofcourse, such an enquiry would be a continuation of the attempt of tracing out the methodological link between Hegelian and Marxian logic. We have discussed about this link in the first chapter.

The assumptions which we derived from our critical assessments of various positivists, in second and third chapters, would help us to the present enquiry where our sole concern will be to construct a non-positivist Marxist account of knowledge and ideology. In order to do this we will especially seek support from the two prominent non-positivist Marxist theories. They are the theory of reification of George Lukács and the theory of one-dimensionality of Herbert Marcuse. Note that in our discussion we will be confined only to the epistemological dimensions of the two theories. The reason for taking these two theories has a justification. In our finding, the interpretations offered by these two theories undoubtedly reveal the true content of Marx's thought — the content that

speaks for the Hegelian rootes expressed in the theoretical structure of Marx's conceptual/epistemological scheme.

Praxis and historicity: towards a non-formalist paradigm of rationality

A non-positivist approach towards Marxist epistemology would definitely be based on two interrelated cardinal principles, each of which has its roots in Hegel's dialectical logic. They are as follows:

1. The principle of praxis. This principle clearly implies the rejection of the empiricist conception of passive subjectivity and the notion of autonomy of the objective domain.
2. The principle of historicity which precisely says that a fact is not to be viewed merely in terms of its given form, but in terms of its essence (historical content) which makes it what it is.

To conceive knowledge as the reflection of a pre-existing reality is to assume that thought is dependent on being, that the reflection is determined by what is reflected. This leads, as we had seen, to the view which advocates for the passivity of thought and the autonomy of the object. Such a conception, as Marx points out in 'Theses on Feuerbach', explicitly implies the defect of the materialist approach, i.e., the defect of conceiving reality in the form of an independent object, and of treating man merely as product of the objective circumstances, not as the producer. Human subject, when viewed from a crude materialist perspective, turns to be a passive natural being co-existing with the objective world. He merely 'represents' the world, never controls or transforms it. In other words, the subject ceases to be the being of praxis whose essence is supposed to be consisting in the creative interaction with the nature, in the practical transformation of

the reality. Man loses his creative subjectivity, his self-consciousness, i.e., the consciousness of himself “as a social being, as simultaneously the subject and the object of the socio-historical process”.¹ The view that object is a pure datum, an autonomous fact, as Marx explicitly maintains, is an ahistorical view. It is the outcome of a crude materialist perspective which, by its nature, refuses to understand man as the being of praxis, as the creative, transformative being. It refuses to understand objects in relation to man, that is, objects as the properties of human praxis. The object alien to the subject is an abstract category which lies outside the human praxis — the concrete realm of the historical life process of man —, and thus turns out to be an ahistorical fact. Empiricism is an ahistorical mode of thought. The only alternative to it is the dialectical view that substitutes the traditional notion of reality with a historicist one in which the so called object is considered to be a property of human praxis, not an autonomous fact.

Obviously, the redefinition of the concept of object as the essential correlate of human praxis provides the methodological foundation for Marx's critique of empiricism. Also, it becomes clear, especially when we go through his philosophical works like ‘Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts’, that such a redefinition constitutes the epistemological ground for Marx's construction of the philosophy of praxis. The philosophy of praxis fundamentally relies upon the idea of the dialectical mediation between subject and object. Marx seems to believe that the theory of dialectical mediation is methodologically impossible without presupposing the historicist notion of objectivity. This is, to put it explicitly, the concept of labour as both the process of humanising the objective nature and the process of naturalising the man is possible only when we assume the historicist

¹George Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 19.

view that object is essentially a human object. "It is only when objective reality everywhere becomes for man in society the reality of human faculties, human reality, and the reality of his own faculties that all *objects* become for him *objectifications of himself*. The objects then confirm and realise his individuality, they are his own objects,"²

In what sense the objects become the reality of human faculties? Marx would answer this question by saying that it is precisely in the sense in which man 'needs' objects. Man's need of objects is not merely a matter of his biological behaviour but a matter of ontological necessity. Without objects, man as a being who exists primarily by transforming nature into the means of his subsistence, cannot survive at all. So the relation of man to the object is not an external or accidental relation, but an internal relation. To say that the objects are the objects of human need is to say that they are "essential objects which are indispensable to the exercise and confirmation of his faculties".³

Bertell Ollman's analysis regarding the nature of Marx's theory of needs can be suggested here for a better understanding of the above problem. Ollman explicitly opposes the empiricist idea of the external relation between the subject and the object, i.e., the relation in which the subject merely perceives the object. Marx's concept of praxis in general and the theory of needs in particular, according to Ollman, suggest an alternative approach to the whole problem. According to this alternative approach, the relation of the subject to the object cannot be described merely in terms of perception. It is to be understood as an essential internal relation. The object everywhere is not an object of contemplation, not merely a fact to be perceived, but an object of need for human beings. Nature is not a separate reality outside the sphere of human life, it is an 'aspect'

²Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, Trans & Ed. by T.B. Bottomore pp. 160-161.

³Ibid, p. 189.

of praxis, an element in the historical life process of human beings. In the true sense, as Marx maintains, it does not appear as an objective reality alien to, independent of the subject. On the contrary, it becomes 'the inorganic body of man'.⁴ Ollman derives from this that the category of need as discussed by Marx cannot be just ruled out as merely a fact of human physiology. It is to be viewed as a category which transcends the passive subject-object relation and affirms the ontological relation between them. To put it in Marx's words, "... the need of a thing is the evident irrefutable proof that the thing belongs to my being, that the existence of this thing for me and its property are the property ... of my being".⁵

Needs are satisfied through labour. When human beings transform the objective nature through labour, they 'objectify' their needs. They shape the nature according to their needs. Explicitly, needs motivate labour, the 'shaping' of nature. The result is a 'humanised' nature. 'Man contemplates himself in a world that he himself created'. The objects which man encounters with are the objects shaped by himself, the 'human objects'. The fundamental exigency of philosophy of praxis is the unity of subject and object, i.e., the unity which is expressed in the real process of production in which objects appears as the product of the subject. Needless to say that agreeing with the position of subject-object unity in the real process of production is equal to denying the traditional notion of object as an external, unalterable fact. Also, it is equal to rejecting the empiricist concept of subject-object relation which involves a mere reflexive correspondence of thought and things. To sum up, if we say it in terms of theorisation, the concept of praxis replaces the conventional mode of theorising which is precisely based on an ahistorical notion of subject and object with a fundamentally different, new mode

⁴Ibid pp 126-127.

⁵Quoted in Bertell Ollman, *Alienation*, p. 275.

of theorising which essentially presupposes the subject-object mediation in the real practical process. This process involves, not merely a relation of correspondence between thought and reality, but a dynamic relation in which the former actively contributes in shaping the later.

The other of the two principles mentioned earlier which would provide the methodological ground for a non-positivist epistemological enquiry within the framework of Marxist theory is the principle of historicity. Historicity, here refers to the Hegelian essentialist thesis according to which every fact is to be understood not merely in terms of its given form, but in terms of its essence, i.e., the underlying necessity which makes the fact what it is. The obvious epistemological implication of this thesis is against the empiricist mode of analysis in which reality is treated as discrete particulars devoid of any content or essence. Failure to perceive the essence of the given facts, according to Hegel, as we had seen, results necessarily in a static, ahistorical view of reality which leaves no space for a dynamic conception of being, the being as becoming.⁶

In the same way, Marx's critique of the classical political economy can be observed plainly as an essentialist enterprise through which he tries to establish the point that any method which does not attempt to unearth the real essence of the facts would necessarily be ahistorical. Classical political economists, Marx observes, fail to capture the essence of the facts that they deal with (eg. money), and this failure leads them to the ahistorical view of reality according to which all the facts that appear as 'given premises', are real in themselves. They think only in terms of appearing forms, since the very method they pursue (which Marx labels as analytic method) is incapable of "elaborating how various

⁶See our discussion in the first chapter p. 33.

forms came into being",⁷, that, it merely enables them "to reduce them to their unity by means of analysis, because it starts with them as given premises".⁸

How the analytic method of classical political economy subjects to Marx's criticism can be understood more clearly if we attempt to have a close look on the exact nature of Marx's historicist analysis of capitalist economy. Obviously, such an attempt would also enable us to perceive the connection between the Hegelian essentialistic method and the dialectical method employed by Marx even in his later works such as *Grundrisse*, *Capital* etc.

Marx begins his analysis of the capitalist mode of production with the 'commodity'. The very opening passage of *Capital* i.e., "The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails presents itself as 'an immense accumulation of commodities', its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of commodity",⁹ itself shows Marx's intention to analyse the capitalist system of production as a system of commodities. The term commodity can be broadly defined as the form that products take in a system of exchange, i.e., in a system where the product gets alienated from the producer and become the property of exchange. When a product becomes the property of exchange, i.e., the commodity, no longer it exists as having any 'use value' for the producer. Because it cannot be consumed by the immediate producer, but by someone else who obtains it through exchange. The labourer brings his product to exchange, and himself depends on other producer to provide him with his means of subsistence. He produces not for his use, but for exchanging it with others. In

⁷Karl Marx, Theories of surplus value, in *capital*, Vo. IV, Part III, Progress, Moscow, 1971, p. 500.

⁸Lukács puts the whole idea in clear terms by saying that the Unscientific nature of seemingly so scientific method of all positivist theories consists in its failure to see and take account of the *historical character* of the facts on which it is based. See George Lukács, *History and Class consciousness*, p. 6.

⁹Marx, *capital 1*, in *Portable Karl Marx*, p. 437.

other words, he creates use-value for others. Marx observes that in such a system the product appears in a different form, i.e., in the form of commodity, and the actual value of the product appears in its exchange-value i.e., the value of commodity.

To say that a product in a system of commodity relations appears to be having exchange-value is not to say that it loses its use-value. Use-value is the content of every product of human labour. It is the essence, the real value of the product. Value of the product, according to Marx's theory, is nothing but the human labour expended to produce it. Use-value, therefore, is the human content of every product. But what happens when the product assumes the form of commodity is that, it "splits in two: without losing its material reality and use-value, it is transmitted into an exchange value".¹⁰ In other words, the product, under the capitalist system assumes a different form — the commodity form, which can be characterized not merely in terms of the use-value, or the usefulness of the product, but in terms of the exchangeability of the product. So it can be rightly maintained that the commodity is the unity of use-value and the exchange-value.

When we say that commodity is the unity of use-value and exchange value, it does not imply any clear cut separation between them, since it is obvious that what only has use-value can have exchange value. Exchangeability depends primarily on the usefulness of the product. What is represented in the use-value i.e., the human labour is also represented in the exchange-value, though in a different form. Thus "what the commodity has is the twofold character of labour".¹¹ This is to say that use-value and exchange-value

¹⁰Henri Lefvbre, *The sociology of Marx*, p. 47.

¹¹Marx says "The best thing in my book is first (and on this depends all understanding of the facts) *the two-fold character of labour* according to whether it is expressed in use-value or exchange-value, which is brought out at once in the *first chapter*", from the letter which Marx wrote to Engels on August 24th 1867 (Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe* Part 3, Vol. 111, p. 410) Quoted in *Political theory* by Michael Wolfram, Bannev Press, 1933, p. 38.

refer to the twofold character of labour. The labour which produces the thing is twofold in nature: It is the content of the product, i.e., the use-value, and also it is expressed as the social form i.e., the exchangeability of the product. The commodity — the product assuming the exchange-value, is the social 'form' of labour; the use-value — the concrete labour, being the content of it. That is, the commodity is not an independent fact, real in itself, but a form whose essence is the actual concrete labour i.e., the use-value of the product. What follows from this is that the unity that constitutes the commodity form is actually the unity of form and content, the social form of labour, i.e., the exchangeability, and this concrete content i.e., usefulness. To understand the commodity in isolation from its historical content, the labour which creates its use-value, is to abstract the form from the content, fact from the underlying necessity, or appearance from the essence.

Any attempt to analyse the commodity relations or the developments of market economy, merely in terms of the principles which are no way capable of penetrating and revealing the real 'ground' of them would, as Marx says, result in a kind of 'fetishism' where the commodity is a mysterious thing - a form or 'symbol' to be worshipped (not in anyway to be penetrated).¹² Revealing the real essence by penetrating the 'givenness' of the facts is the method of essentialist, historicist dialectics, whereas the mere analysis of the given facts without going beyond the immediacy of them to the level of their historical constitution is precisely the method of empiricism in general, and of fetishist thinking in particular. The 'method of analysis' employed by the classical political economists, especially in their treatment of 'money', according to Marx, is 'fetishistic', in so far as it does

¹²Marx uses the term 'fetish' in a special sense. It refers to an object of worship to which religious people (in the pimitive era) attribute supernatural properties. Fetish, in Primitive Society, appears as an independent being endowed with all the properties of its objective characters. In the same way, the commodity appears as an independent thing. Marx says "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the products of that labour; ..." Marx, *capital* Vol. 1, *Portable Karl Marx*, p. 446).

not reveal the essence which constitutes the content, the actual inner connections of the society or, rather, it veils the actual relations of production by the outer manifestations (money-form, commodity form etc.). The failure of classical political economy, therefore is due to the inadequacy of their method, the method of analysis which is 'fetishistic' in character. For resolving the riddles of both money fetish and commodity fetish, therefore, Marx says, "we have to perform a task never even attempted by bourgeois economics. This is, we have to show the origin of this money-form, we have to trace the development of the expression of value contained in the value relation of commodities from its simplest, almost imperceptible outline to the dazzling money-form. When this has been done, the mystery of money will immediately disappear".¹³

Exploring the real underlying essence of the different categories of Market economy is undoubtedly a historicist enterprise. It is historicist not merely in the sense that such a procedure consists primarily in tracing the historical development of different categories (money-form, commodity-form etc.), but most importantly in the sense that it refuses to see any reality appears to us, as 'natural'; it comprehends everything as 'historical'. It is true that the procedure of observing everything as 'historical' is necessarily coupled with the procedure of tracing the historical development of the categories. But in a deep perspective, the former implies a more intense meaning than the latter, i.e., the meaning in which Hegel identifies being with becoming. The historicity of the 'fact', in Hegelian sense, lies in its dialectical nature, i.e., in its identity as the unity of opposites'. Each being is a unit of essence and appearance. Essence contradicts with its appearance, and for resolving this contradiction being has to go under the conceptual necessity of

¹³Karl Marx, *capital* Vol. 1, Trans Moore and Aveling, Penguin, London 1976, p. 139. Money form can be described as a general equivalent form of exchange value. In a broad sense, money form and commodity form are equivalent. The value (exchange) of the commodity is money. In other words, the form in which the value of commodities appears as exchange value is money.

becoming another. Each fact is only a stage in its own inherent process of becoming. Being is becoming, precisely in the sense that each being has to go beyond its 'given form'. Reality is historical, as everything real is subject to the process of transformation out of conceptual necessity. In the same vein, Marx assumes that commodity-form is a reality, which is necessarily historical; it is the unity of concrete labour, and its social form, the essence and appearance. The essence contradicts with its appearance, use-value with the exchange-value, and for resolving this contradiction it has to transcend its present form. Historicity, therefore, lies in the very nature of the category of 'commodity'. All the categories of Market economy, treated in this perspective, contain historicity in their very nature. This is, by their very nature they have the potentiality to destruct their own existing forms and to go beyond themselves to the new forms. Actually the whole of Marx's enterprise of criticising political economy is methodologically founded upon this historicist thesis, the purpose of which, according to McBride, was to show that "the actual system contained tendencies that were at once potentially destructive of the existing system itself- and potentially generative of a new, non-primitive system".¹⁴

What makes Marx's historicist programme methodologically different from the conventional historical analysis which consists merely in tracing the historical developments of different categories, therefore, is its Hegelian essentialistic orientation. Hegel's essentialist method, as we had seen earlier in the first chapter, consists not in discovering the essence 'behind' every phenomena, but on the contrary, in treating everything as the manifested form of its own inner necessity. The procedure involved in it is not that of 'from appearance to essence' but 'from essence to the appearance'. Essence is the starting point. It is the concrete necessity which makes the appearance what it is. It is

¹⁴William Leon McBride, *The Philosophy of Marx*, p. 16.

the concrete universal which lies in every particular. It is the ground of a particular's particularity. Marx's employment of the method which proceeds from the abstract to the concrete i.e., from the constitutive praxis of human beings to the empirically analysable categories, which conceives the constitutive praxis as the essential ground without which the concrete particulars (commodity, money, exchange, capital) cannot be understood, explicitly shows the Hegelian orientation.

Obviously, grasping the origin and the evolution of a category, is equal to the tracing of the developments of its inner contradictions. Because, according to Marx's dialectical logic, everything evolves through its own inner contradictions i.e., the contradiction between the essence and appearance, form and content. Essence (labour) manifests in a social form (exchangeability), yet conflicts with it and, for resolving its inner contradiction it goes under the conceptual necessity of changing into another. Evolution, therefore, is actually a process of development of the inner contradictions of the thing, that is to say, the revelation of its true nature, the essence. Hence, to trace the historical development of a thing is to grasp the process of revelation of its essence.

The ahistorist mode of approach, according to Marx is 'fetishistic' in character. That is, it conceives objects as 'forms' devoid of any human content, as supra human reality. It embodies an objectivistic mode of thought, where object is said to be autonomous, a pure datum. It embodies, therefore, a denial of praxis. Rejection of historicity implies the rejection of essence. The ahistoricist unessentialist way of looking things, according to Marx, is the chief characteristic of all kinds of formalistic approaches, especially of the approach of classical political economy.

Formalism, in Marx's sense, is to be understood as a mode of thought which is

implied in a specific mode of living. The system of commodity fetishism where the human existence is governed by things, forms the basis of formalism. In a system where man is a slave to the objects, human rationality becomes formalist, submissive to the objective domain. Consciousness ceases to be creative; it becomes passive. The problem of false consciousness or, the problem of formal rationality, therefore, is to be discussed on the basis of Marx's theory of commodity Fetishism.

The concepts of fetishism, reification and alienation are interrelated. They all refer to the crisis of human existence in a particular socio-historical situation where the products of human labour appear to be objective, independent things, whose autonomous laws control and subjugate the human subjects. It is true that these notions have important conceptual differences especially that between 'fetishism' and 'alienation', atleast in the sense that they stand for two different aspects of the capitalist mode of production. Fetishism, precisely is the process of 'commodification', i.e., the creation of 'Pseudo things' which appear to be autonomous — real in themselves. Alienation is the estrangement of man from his products, activity, life and himself; it refers to a total split in human subjectivity. Fetishism is an objective process in a restricted sense in which it refers directly to the process of 'objectification'. Alienation, on the other hand, denotes the subjective side, i.e., the estrangement of the human subject from his products. But the concept of 'objectifications indirectly refers to estrangement of man' from his products. And, similarly, the concept of alienation indirectly refers to commodification of the things. In other words, both of them refer to the objective and subjective aspects of the same 'reality', i.e., the mode of production of the capitalist social system. To put it more explicitly, capitalist system of production results, objectively in the phenomenon of fetishism of commodities, and subjectively in the phenomenon of alienation. Both the

concepts, alienation and commodity fetishism, have been briefly discussed elsewhere in this study, and the further details of which are out of our concern. What is left to be worked out here towards developing a non-positivist theory of knowledge within Marxism is a conceptual framework which concretely integrates concept of objectification with the notion of false consciousness. That is, a framework which theoretically incorporates both the problem of fetishism and the problem of knowledge (or the problem of Ideology in particular). This is to say that the work we need to undertake now is to show, in concrete terms, the relation between fetishism and Ideology. We are concerned with the problem: how the fetishistic mode of production results in the 'false-consciousness' of the people. We shall move in this direction by considering the epistemological aspects of the theories of two major non-positivist interpreters of Marxism namely, (1) the theory of reification of George-Lukács, and (2) The theory of 'one dimensionality' of Herbert Marcuse. In dealing with Lukács' theory of reification, the method we follow would be to expose the theory first and then to proceed to its epistemological presuppositions which embody a critique of the positivist paradigm of rationality. More clearly, first we would present Lukács' problem of reification and then show how the problem of reification is related to the problem of knowledge. In other words, after the exposition, we would come to the point that how Lukács' critique embodies a critique of positivist concept of knowledge i.e., of the paradigm of formal rationality in general and of the sociologistic epistemological assumptions in particular.

(1) Reification and the critique of formal rationality

Lukács, theory reification is to be understood as a conceptual edifice built upon Marx's view of commodity fetishism as exposed in *Capital*. We have seen earlier that Marx's exposition of the phenomenon of fetishism presupposes a historicist critique of

the methodology of classical political economy. Lukács' critique of formal rationality can best be understood as an extension of this historicist programme of Marx; an extension which comprehends all the realms of human existence in the Capitalist society, including non-economic institutions as well. It is true that Marx's critique of political economy has obvious implications for the study of culture, and in particular, for the understanding the problem of rationality. But in Lukács' view, they are to be philosophically reconstituted in order to develop Marxism as an effective critique of the capitalist culture; a critique which moved positively would an alternative paradigm of rationality.

Lukács' interpretation of Marxsim is, therefore, of the nature of a philosophical reconstitution. This reconstruction has two aspects; (1) Formulation of an alternative (dialectical, historicist) paradigm of rationality on the basis of a methodological redefinition of the 'cultural' implications of Marx's theory; (2) Critique of the 'fetishist' culture of capitalism, and thereby its underlying principle i.e, the paradigm of formal rationality. The Formulation of the dialectical historicist paradigm of rationality, as we said, is grounded on his redefinition of the underlying concepts of Marx's theory of Capitalism. The critique of formal rationality is, in Lukács view, in fact the critique of the general form of Capitalist social life. Because, capitalism is not merely an '*economic*' in the technical sense of the term, but a 'cultural system' which subsists primarily in terms of a cultural paradigm, i.e., the paradigm of the formal rationality. First, we discuss how the theory of reification has been developed by Lukács through the reconstruction of Marx's assumptions.

Reification: a Brief sketch

The problematic of Reification, according to Lukács, lies in the heart of Marx's critique of capitalist system in general and that of phenomenon of commodity fetishism in particular. Fetishism, in Marx's formulation, is a phenomenon specific to a particular system of production where the products of labour assume an independent objective value and appear as commodities. In such a system, as we had seen earlier, the 'independent' value which the products assume, i.e., the exchange-value, appears to be the actual value. In other words, the real value, i.e., the human labour expended to produce the product, does not appear as it is, when the products become the commodities. It gets transformed into a new form — the exchange-value (money, price etc) — which appears to be the objective character of the products. That is, the essence of the commodity-form of the products or, rather, the substratum of the historical praxis of human beings (who produce the commodities in a given social framework) becomes concealed by the 'appearance', i.e., its appearance in the form of commodities. The content, the real value produced through the constitutive praxis of the human beings, gets substituted by the form, the exchange-value, which, as Marx observed, actually is the social form of labour. The substitution of exchange-value for the actual value, form for the content, appearance for the essence, according to Lukács, results in a major crisis — a crisis in the whole of human affairs, in thought, knowledge, consciousness and relationships etc.

Lukács says that this is to be understood as a 'cultural crisis', rather than a mere economic problem. Its roots are to be found in the irrationality of the total process of capitalist production, in the capitalist construction of human life. Precisely, the term 'Reification' refers to this crisis of human culture in general under the fetishistic mode of production of capitalism.

The commodities in which the social character of man's labour appears as the objective character, according to Lukács, constitutes an autonomous realm of facts. It is 'autonomous' because, the mutual relationship between the commodities and the laws controlling their movements in the market are completely the internal properties of the system. They simply appear to be independent of any source or activity which lies outside the realm of 'appearance'. The real source, i.e., the realm of constitutive praxis of human beings, gets divorced from the 'appearance', the realm of the products (commodities) of constitutive praxis, and becomes 'controlled' by it. This to say that the world of products gets separated from the world of production or, in otherwords, labour gets divorced from man and "becomes something objective and independent of him, something that controls him by virtue of the autonomy alien to man".¹⁵ Therefore, man who works in a capitalist society is an alienated subject. His labour has been taken away from him and immediately transformed into an objective power which controls him from above. Subject, being divorced from its activity, has only a passive 'Subjectivity', a contemplative existence, in which it can be only a mechanical part incorporated into a mechanical system¹⁶ and can never be "the authentic master of the process",¹⁷ i.e., the being of praxis. The result, according to Lukács, is reification in all the forms of human life, i.e., in consciousness, Ideas, relationships, etc., which lead the whole of capitalist culture to an innevitable crisis.

Obviously, there are two aspects to this phenomenon of reification. The objects, i.e., the commodities, appear to have an autonomous reality, an objective being. The laws governing their relationships, (the movements of commodities on the market) appear to

¹⁵George Lukács, *History and class consciousness*, p. 87.

¹⁶Ibid p. 89

¹⁷Ibid p. 89

be the internal properties of the world of their autonomous existence. They assume a supra historical power and confront man whose activity is actually the source of them. Lukács calls this as the objective aspect of the phenomenon of reification. From the point of view of the subject, the process of commodification is equal to the process of alienation. The more the products 'objectified', the more man's activity becomes estranged from himself. Labour in the market economy, therefore no longer belongs to the subject, it becomes an objective category lies completely outside the realm of subjectivity. As Lukács points out, "It turns into a commodity which, subject to the non-human objectivity of the natural laws of society, must go its own way independently of man just like any consumer article".¹⁸

Reification, therefore, is a process of commodification (Objectively) and of alienation (Subjectively). The reified object and the alienated subject stand opposite to each other, as two unmediated categories. Reality ceases to be an organic unity, becomes fragmented into two worlds, the world of commodities and the world of subjects. Commodity is a non-human object or, in other words, it is what it is only when it ceases to be a human object and becomes an autonomous thing. Subject is 'non-objective' in the sense that it is alien to the activity of constituting or creating the object. Fragmentation of reality therefore appears objectively in the non-humanisation of commodities, and subjectively in the 'non-objectification' of the subject. The 'non-humanisation', according to Lukács, consists in abstracting the commodity form from the human content, in detaching the form from content, the world of commodities from the human substratum. Precisely, this is the process of abstraction of labour. The 'non-objectification' consists in the destruction of subjectivity of the individual worker and also in isolating workers from

¹⁸Ibid, p. 87

one another. We shall discuss these two aspects of reification in detail.¹⁹

The non-humanisation of commodities is actually a process where by the products of human labour become 'non-human' by assuming certain properties which originally they don't possess. For eg, Money is not an original property of the product, since the activity of production "aims at the creation of use-values, not the exchange-values".²⁰ When the products become commodities, they assume money as their property. "It is only when their supply exceeds the measure of consumption that use-value ceases to be use-values, and becomes means of exchange, i.e., commodities"²¹. Money, therefore, is an external form that the product assumes in the course of its historical evolution. Capitalism i.e., the system of reification abstracts external property from internal substance, form from content, and treats it as an independent category. Money becomes the original, independent value of the product; the content of product, i.e., the historical constitution of its use-value becomes eliminated from it. Commodity becomes a non-human object, since its human content has been eliminated from it. The non-humanisation of commodities, therefore, is the "elimination of the qualitative human and individual attributes of the worker"²² under the system of capitalism.

When the qualitative human attributes become eliminated, the commodity ceases to be the object of the work-process it turns into a 'reified form'. The unity of the product as a *commodity*, no longer coincides with its unity as use-value.²³ The product loses its qualitative content, appears as a quantitative shadow of itself. Thus, the property of human praxis becomes the property of market, whose 'non-qualitative value' can be

¹⁹Cf. Andrew Arato and Paul Breins, *The Young Lukács and the origins of Western Marxism*, p. 117

²⁰George Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 84

²¹Ibid 84

²²Ibid 88.

²³Ibid 89.

determined in terms of formal, pure methods — the methods of formal rationality, which exclude all the categories of quality, value and norms regarding the nature of the product. In other words, it rests merely on quantification and calculability. Labour, Lukács, points out, ceases to be a qualitative praxis, i.e, the creation of use-values, becomes 'formal' as it turns to be appeared in the market goods as a mere quantitative element. Man's creative and self creative activity turns to be a mechanical activity of producing 'things' through abstract, specialised operations which have to be completed within calculated and imposed time periods. It, thus, ceases to be the 'free activity' and becomes an imposed-mechanical operation determined by the law of the market.²⁴

Labourer in such a condition, is a mechanical element incorporated into the system. He does not work consciously as the author of his activity and the creator of the object, but as merely a supporting element of the system. He finds the system already pre-existing and self-sufficient, it functions independent of him and he has to conform to its laws whether he likes it or not.²⁵

The 'non-humanisation' of objects, thus, necessarily entails the 'deactivation' (non objectification) of subjects. The other side of the process where the object gets a supra-human reality is the alienation of the subject from the world of objects. Man estranged from the world of objects, from his own objectified activities, is a 'passive' subject. He exists in a vacuum where there is no object that he can possess or control. But, in that

²⁴Lukács considers this process of mechanisation as the part of the process of rationalisation "On the one hand, the process of labour is progressively broken down into abstract, rational, specialised operations so that the worker loses contact with the finished product and his work is reduced to the mechanical repetition of a specialised set of actions. On the other hand, the period of time necessary for work to be accomplished (which forms the basis for rational calculation) is converted, as mechanisation and rationalisation are intensified, from a merely empirical average figure to an objectively calculable work-stint that confronts the worker as a fixed and established reality" (Ibid p. 88).

²⁵Ibid p. 89.

vacuum, he can only perceive the objective world passively. In other words, his existence as the creator of objects turns to be inauthentic, as the very activity of creation takes an objective (non-human) form and moves away from him. Human subjectivity, thus, gets reduced to the state of contemplative existence, to the state of the mechanical existence of a mere natural being. The deactivated subject, therefore, is a being of contemplation, not a being of Praxis; he can never control the world of objects, but can only have a mechanical passivity towards it. His subjectivity can never be a creative source of the process, but can only be a mechanical element in it.

The deactivation of the subject, according to Lukács, is to be understood in a still wider sense in which it also implies the atomisation of individuals from one another. In line with Marx, Lukács argues that the social relationships among the workers in a system of commodity production are carried out through the exchange of commodities. Commodity exchange, as we saw, is an objective process determined by the laws alien to man. The producer does not have any active role in that process, precisely because commodity is a 'non-humanised' category (and also the subject of production is a 'non-objectified' category). Therefore, the social relationships carried on through the exchange of commodities, assume a non-human objectivity, stand alien to man as they turn to be the part of a reified process. Obviously, the subject standing alien to the objectified relationships is an 'Isolated' individual. So, it is not only the case that the social relationships among the commodities do not in any way indicate the relationships among men but also, the former is possible only in the absence of the latter. Atomisation of workers is not a consequence, but the precondition of the social relationships of the commodities. The more the social life depends on commodity production and exchange, the more the workers become 'de-socialised'. The more the social interaction among the commodities

increases, the more the interactions among the workers get decreased. Lukács derives from this that the growth of commodity production and exchange, i.e., the development of capitalist mode of production, is based on the process of atomisation or desocialisation of the individuals i.e, the progressive abstraction of the individuals from their collective existence.

Reification of consciousness and formalism

Through the process of both deactivation and atomisation, Lukács observes, reification penetrates into the soul of the worker of capitalist social system. The worker, thus, becomes the passive (deactivated) individualised (atomised) spectator of a process in which his fragmented activity is the object, of a process that he can observe, but never he can control or transform.²⁶ Capitalism reproduces this scheme of the fragmentation of the subject of production continuously. Because, as we found commodity production requires the separation of the workers both from their objectified activities and natural communities. Large scale commodity production requires the workers to be increasingly isolated from each other. It requires the process of labour to be broken down into abstract, specialised operations so that the worker loses contact with the product and his work is reduced to a mechanical set of actions²⁷. The activity of reproducing this scheme in capitalist social system, Lukács says, is carried on through its bureaucratic administrative set up. The role that the bureaucratic administration plays in reproducing the whole scheme of the fragmentation of the subject of production is that it adjusts one's way of life, mode of work, and hence of consciousness, to the general socio-economic premises of the capitalist economy²⁸. This process of adjustment, according to Lukács, is the process

²⁶cf Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the origins of Western Marxism*, p. 119.

²⁷cf. George Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 88

²⁸cf Ibid p. 98

of rationalisation.

Capitalism rationalises its system of production by adjusting the mode of life of the worker to its social set-up. This process, as Lukács observes, reaches a stage where the worker can only 'accept' the capitalist reality as a 'pre given' and permanent system, where he can recognise himself merely as an element in the system, a part whose role is just to confirm the system. That is to say that rationalisation creates a mode of existence in which each subject has to live by admitting the fragmented reality in the subjective and objective aspects. "Just as the capitalist system continuously produces and reproduces itself economically on higher and higher levels, the structure of reification progressively sinks more deeply, more fatefully and more definitively into the consciousness of man".²⁹ The more the system gets rationalised, the more the consciousness of the individuals becomes reified. More reified the consciousness becomes, human rationality turns to be more and more abstract and formal. Abstract, because it turns to be a form of recognition of the given facts as the abstract categories (totally detached from their underlying reality). Formal, because, it turns to be lost in the immediacy of the formal structure of the facts (the real, historically dynamic, material 'substractum' being placed always outside the realm of enquiry). We shall explain this point that how the 'reification of consciousness' entails the formalisation of rationality, some more clearly.

We have seen earlier that the non-humanisation of the products is the essential precondition of the existence and development of the system of commodity exchange. In order to be the category of the system of exchange, the product has to be detached from its human essence, treated as a pure formal 'thing' with no material substractum. When the products get non-humanised, the subjects of production become totally alien from

²⁹Ibid p. 93.

their objectified activity and hence deactivated. Deactivation of the subject, as we saw, presupposes the atomisation of men from another. Capitalism reproduces this scheme of mechanisation and the individualisation of the workers through rationalisation, i.e., by making the mode of consciousness of the people adjusted to its mode of existence.

The worker who lives as an isolated, mechanical element in the system becomes the part of the system, whose mode of consciousness becomes completely adjusted to the formal, reified structure of the system. This is to say that man turns to be a 'reified' being, whose consciousness can never penetrate the immediacy of the facts. His rationality turns to be 'formal' as it can never go beyond the appearance to the essence, to the historically dynamic substratum. Formal rationality is the mode of perception of the given facts as 'real in themselves', as abstract categories detached from the ontological substratum. It is the formal, reified mode of viewing reality. Reified consciousness, as Lukács assumes, thus, implies the formal reified rationality.

Lukács thus, seeks the roots of reified consciousness in the structure of the capitalist labour process. More concretely, it is the capitalist transformation of the work process, i.e., the reification of labour, Lukács assumes, which is the ground for all forms of reification, reified thought and formal rationality. So Lukács' critique of reification as exposed mainly in *'History and Class Consciousness'*, evidently involves the critique of the paradigm of capitalist rationality. Marx's critic of analytic method of classical political economy obviously lie at the heart of Lukács' critical enterprise; 'analysis' i.e., the objective analysis of the given facts, has been considered by him as the methodological expression of the paradigm of formal rationality. We had seen earlier that Marx's attack on classical political economy is due to the inadequacy of its method to penetrate into the real structure, i.e., the historical substratum of human praxis, of the phenomenal

forms (commodity forms). The phenomenal forms, according to Marx, are forms immediately presented to our senses, empirically real, but the true method — the dialectical historicist method — does not restrict itself to the province of sense data. For, its very goal is transcendence of the ‘immediacy’. So Marx’s is a transcendentalist attack on the empiricist mode of thinking. It can be very well observed here that, Lukács also, in the same vein, adopts a Hegelian anti-empiricist³⁰ epistemological position in attacking the paradigm of formal rationality.

The paradigm of formal rationality, in Lukács’ Marxism, is criticised mainly for two reasons: (1) ‘Loss of ontological substratum’ (2) Freezing of the given”³¹. The first one refers to the methodological failure of any kind of formalistic approach which does not account the structure of human praxis as the ground reality which makes the appearance (for eg: commodity) what it is. The second one refers to the fallacy of Perceiving the phenomenal forms as irreducible and unalterable facts. Obviously, the first one indicates the undialectical attitude implied in formalistic paradigms whereas the second one indicates therein ahistorist tendency. Undialectical approach denies the dialectical unity of form and content, essence and appearance. Ahistoricism dehistoricises the facts by abstracting them from their historically dynamic inner core. The denial of the dialectical unity of form and content results in treating the forms as the reality devoid of any content or ontological substratum. Ahistorical abstraction follows a conception of reality as something ‘fixed and permanent’. In short, the paradigm of formal rationality, according to Lukács, results in viewing reality as that which is immediately presented to our empirical observation.

³⁰See Chapter 1, p.

³¹Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the origins of Western Marxism*,, p. 120

Lukács' critique of empiricist mode of analysis consists in regarding the subject essentially as a being of praxis, not of thought. Such a conception, as we had observed earlier, is an outcome of the methodological reconstruction of the traditional abstract concepts of subject and object, which provided a firm ground for a dialectical historicist epistemological approach, in which the 'historical subjectivity and objectivity are no longer seen as externally related independent domains, but rather as functional elements in systems of social practice'.³² Explicitly, the thesis of the dialectical unity of thought and reality discards the possibility for a dualistic conception of knowledge, more concretely, the correspondence theory of truth. Lukács' treatment of the paradigm of formal rationality, therefore, is to be understood on the basis of his dialectical critique of the empiricist mode of thinking.

Critique of sociology: Ideology as a form of reified rationality

The rejection of the empiricist concept of knowledge naturally implies the rejection of the empiricist theory of Ideology which has been dominant among the thinkers of positivist schools of Marxism. The conception of Ideology as the false representation of the real is logically possible only when we conceive knowledge as representation. The category of representation splits reality into two independent domains - subjective and objective. The subjective domain consists in representing the real passively, and hence related to the objective reality externally, only through the 'formal correspondence'. The objective domain lies completely outside the realm of subjectivity, as a 'given fact' which can only be represented. 'False representation' is a category which refers to a break in formal correspondence between subjective and objective domains. Ideology as the false representation of the real, therefore, can only be a formalistic concept. Lukács'

³²Andrew Feenberg, *Lukács, Marx and the sources of critical theory*, p. 137

replacement of the category the external, formal relation between (subject and object) with that of the internal, dialectical relation in which former contributes in shaping the later, thus, implies the rejection of the positivist mode of interpretation of Ideology.

When the reality is viewed as human reality, the question of reflexive correspondence does not arise at all. The problem of Ideology, then, ceases to be a problem of false representation of the reality. Lukács seems to believe that the whole of this problem is to be dealt in a fundamentally different way from that of conventional Marxism, that the question of 'false consciousness' is to be understood as the question of false (reified) reality. Ideology, for Lukács, is a form of reified rationality which is presupposed in a reified system. It is not the effect of the process, but the very precondition of it. False rationality is a concrete aspect of the reified process, (the irrationality of the total process).

The conception of Ideology as a concrete aspect of reified social process implies not merely the rejection of empiricism but, more importantly, the objectivist mode of analysis which has been followed both by the conventional sociologist and in the 'neo-positivist' schools of thought. Needless to say that the notion of reified reality explicitly indicates the negativity of reality. Objectivism, as we had explained elsewhere, is a mode of approach where reality is conceived strictly as an objective structure, a positive fact, external to the realm of subjectivity and values and hence value neutral. The thesis of the value neutrality of facts is central to positivist social theories in general as they all depend fundamentally upon the assumption that society is an objective structure which is to be viewed as an independent domain of reality conceptually separated from any ground or source prior to it. Consequently, since, society is an objective fact which can never be reduced to the human relationships and activities, and the activities of human

beings are not prior to the social structure, human activities are determined by the social structure. Conceiving society as a human product therefore, is unsociological, for human beings, are the products, not the producers of the social structure. Althusser has made a concrete exposition of this idea in the course of his neo-positivist interpretation of Marx's social theory, precisely by arguing that social totality is a process without a subject. The concept of society as a structure constituted by human beings according to Althusser, presupposes an Idealist stand point, i.e., the idea that 'subject' is the absolute starting point, and consciousness is the source of reality. In scientific Marxism, he says, subject is an element in the process an effect not the essence.³³

Lukács, challenges the positivist conception of the primacy of the social structure, not superficially, but fundamentally by rejecting the epistemological distinction between fact and value and thereby attacking the objective, value neutral status of the society. This is made possible by him through the dialectical historicist redefinition of the traditional philosophical categories of subject and object. The object, according to his redefined scheme of subject-object relation, is not a pure datum, but essentially a product of human praxis. Obviously, when the object ceases to be an independent fact, the whole conception of reality as an objective structure external to the human subject gets replaced by a new conception in which what is real is a constituted category, a human object. To say that reality is a human product, not an external fact is to say that the domains of subjectivity and objectivity, values and facts, are inseparable from each other. The fact-value complementarity thesis³⁴ evidently invalidates the very procedure of conceiving society as an objective, value neutral fact, and thus, points to the impossibility of the

³³see the discussion on Althusser's notion of the process without a subject p. 104.

³⁴An expression used by Armitabha Dasgupta, in his article, Unity in Marx: towards a Methodological Reconstruction, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vo XXVIII, No 5, Jan 30, 1993 PE 48.

sociological mode of approach.

The whole of Lukács' attempt, contrary to that of sociologists is to penetrate the immediacy of the facts, to go beyond the 'given fact', to its historical source, or in other words, to view the structure of facts on the basis of their ontological substratum. Ontological substratum, in Lukács' sense, refers to the realm of constitutive praxis of human beings. The Hegelian-Marxist procedure of viewing the appearance on the basis essence, treating the forms on the basis of their content, is explicit here when Lukács says that facts are nothing but the historical forms of the manifestation of human essence, praxis, the (historically) dynamic inner core of every being. Society, in such a perspective, cannot be the primary reality; it is necessarily a historical form, the content of which is the constitutive praxis of human beings. The 'autonomy' of the social structure clearly disappears when society is viewed as the product of human praxis. Understanding human praxis as prior to society opposes the sociological mode of approach; it provides a new mode of approach which more or less resembles the cultural approach according to which social structure is the product of culture — the totality of human activities. Lukács' Marxism, therefore, is of the nature of a cultural theory, the critical content of which has been developed, later by various cultural interpreters of Marx's social theory, especially by the thinkers of Frankfurt school.

The fact-value complementarity thesis of Lukács, leads not only to the impossibility of sociologist mode of theorizing, but more importantly to the impossibility of positivism, especially to the impossibility of the positivist conception of science and scientific knowledge. Explicitly, the impossibility of a positivist conception of science is because of the untenability of the fact-value distinction. Facts, according to Lukács' observation, are the properties of human praxis, inseparable from the realm of subjectivity and values.

Science, therefore, does not have an independent realm apart from that of human praxis. Scientific knowledge which depends on facts does not constitute an autonomous domain; nor does it work by its own internal logic which is devoid of any social basis. In short, science as a body of factual knowledge is not value-neutral, since facts are human facts, not the 'non-human' objects devoid any value. Positivism views scientific knowledge as autonomous, obviously because the value neutrality thesis implies the conception of facts as forms devoid of any content and, thereby, the radical separation of the domain of facts from the domain of values — the realm of human praxis.³⁵ Thus, the fact-value complementarity thesis of Lukács' Marxism discards the possibility of a positivist conception of science and scientific knowledge; it provides an entirely different conception, where science is to be understood as human praxis and scientific knowledge as an aspect of human praxis.

The conception of science as human praxis leaves the space for a cultural critique of science and scientific knowledge. Because, when the human praxis takes the form of a reified process, science also becomes reified, surely not as the consequence but as the part of the process. In other words, science in a reified system of human praxis is a reified science. Scientific knowledge within the system of capitalist mode of production — the system where the paradigm of formal, reified rationality is prevailed — is reified knowledge, i.e., ideology. Critique of the paradigm of formal rationality, therefore, is the critique of 'false science' and false knowledge. Thus, it can be very well maintained that Lukács' concept of science, when it is viewed from the background of capitalist reification is a critique of reified science; his theory of scientific knowledge is a critical theory of Ideology. It is this critical theory of Lukács, which has provided, to a great

³⁵Althusser's celebrated distinction between science and ideology also, as we had seen, involves the value neutrality thesis of positivism. See Chapter 3, p. 104-107.

extent, the basis for the 'Frankfurt school' of Marxism i.e., the school of Hegelian-Marxist thinkers who developed a full-fledged critique of modern industrial society and its forms of rationality.

(2) Theory of one dimensionality and the critique of positivism

It has been commonly accepted that Frankfurt school's critique of industrial society and technological rationality is rooted in Lukács' interpretation of Marxism, precisely in Lukács' theory of reification. It is explicit from the previous section that Lukács' theory of reification entails a critique - a dialectical historicist critique of formal rationality. The methodology of such a critical enterprise has been derived by Lukács both from Hegel and Marx, from Hegel's essentialist critique of empiricism and Marx's attack on the analytical method of classical political economy. By this, Lukács establishes an epistemological link between Hegel and Marx and points out that the non-empiricist orientation of their respective methods provides us with a platform where we can have a Marxist-Hegelian critique of positivism in general and the paradigm of formal rationality in particular. We have seen that the paradigm of formal rationality is the result of an objectivist mode of thinking; it is an inseparable aspect of the reified mode of life where subject is a mere mechanical element in the objective system. Herbert Marcuse's theory of one dimensionality is a still more effective critique of objectivism and its concrete societal form (in the advanced industrial societies), i.e., the technological rationality. Here we shall have a brief exposition of Marcuse's thesis of one dimensionality mainly to highlight its non-objectivist (non-positivist) epistemological foundation. Such an exposition in effect would substantiate our claim that the problem of knowledge and Ideology within the framework of Marxist theory is to be viewed fundamentally from a non-positivist angle.

The following discussion would consist of three sections. In the first section, we will briefly discuss Marcuse's theory of one-dimensionality. In the second section, we will try to show how Marcuse criticises the paradigm of one-dimensional rationality which is implied in different positivist doctrines. Third section will attempt to highlight Marcuse's concept of knowledge and ideology.

One-dimensionality: an exposition

As Kellner, in his study of Marcuse's critical theory points out, 'one dimensional' is a concept describing a state of affairs where the subject is assimilated into the object and follows the dictates of external, objective structures, thus losing its abilities to discern more liberating possibilities and to engage in transformative practice to realize them.³⁶ Explicitly, such a state of affairs in Marcuse's sense refers to the advanced stage of fetishist (capitalist) production, extreme form of reification, where alienation becomes more pervasive than ever before resulting in the total disappearance of the subject as the creative principle, where the process of commodification reaches the stage in which object exercises complete control over the subject. The disappearance of the creative subjectivity is the appearance of the mechanical subjectivity. Because, it is beyond dispute that the subject alienated from its activity is a passive element, a mechanical part of the mechanical system. The more social life depends on commodity production and exchange, subject becomes more and more alienated from his creative essence and becomes more and more mechanised. In the advanced stage of capitalism where the process of commodification reaches its peak, subject totally loses its subjectivity and turns to be a positive unit, an element in the objective system. The dialectical tension between subject and object disappears and a unity between them gets established. The duality

³⁶Cf. Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the crisis of Marxism*, p. 235.

between reason and actuality gets replaced by a wrong synthesis in which what is actual is reasonable.³⁷ Reality, thus, ceases to be bi-dimensional, becomes one-dimensional.

One-dimensional reality, from the subjective point of view, is a state of affairs where man is the part of an objective system, a supporting element which lacks the dimension of negativity and individuality and thus one-dimensional. On the other hand, from the objective point of view, it is the one-dimensional technical society, a given fact devoid of any content; all forms of subjectivity being assimilated into it. One-dimensional man is no more a 'subject', since he is merely a positive element in the objective structure who lacks the dimension of negativity. One-dimensional society is an objective system devoid of any human content since human subject has been assimilated into its formal structure. The objectified subject and the non-humanised object, therefore, do not appear as separate realities, as they constitute one monistic 'whole', i.e., the one-dimensional reality. Technological world, Marcuse observes, appears as a one-dimensional reality.

The unity of subject and object provides the conceptual ground for the one-dimensional technological world. Marcuse argues, even the concept of alienation turns to be meaningless in such a social context where subject gets identified with the object, the individuals get identified themselves with the existence which is imposed upon them. "This identification is not an illusion but reality. However, the reality constitutes a more progressive state of alienation. The later has become entirely objective; the subject which is alienated is swallowed up by its alienated existence. There is only one dimension and it is everywhere and in all forms,³⁸ to be precise, in a social context where subject is swallowed up by its objective existence, alienation turns to be objectification, alienated subject turns

³⁷Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 434.

³⁸Ibid, p. 11.

to be one-dimensional man. There is no space, according to Marcuse, even to mark a difference between alienated subjectivity and mechanical objectivity of the system, as they become one and the same reality — a monistic whole.

The system where the subject is assimilated into the object, as Marcuse assumes, denies the primacy of human agency, the creative ability of man to produce objects and to recognise his own self. In other words, the technological civilisation where subject appears as object results in the total denial of 'praxis', the fundamental nature of human existence. Following the humanistic viewpoints of early Marx, especially those of 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', Marcuse believes that the essence of man is labour. Surely, labour, for Marcuse, is not merely an economic category, but an ontological one; it is an activity in which basic human powers are manifest: it develops one's faculties of reason and intelligence, it exercises bodily capabilities, it is social and communal activity, and it exemplifies human creativity and freedom.³⁹ The denial of human essence invariably follows a total empiricist conception of man according to which subject is the effect, not the essence. In advanced industrial civilisation, Marcuse observes, empiricism assumes its extreme form, i.e., the form of a total objectivism in which the category of subject is equal to the category of object and there can be no separation between subjective and objective domains. The total objectivism of technological world is virtually different from 'ordinary' objectivism, because while the former refers to the 'objectified subject' of the one dimensional world the state of affairs where subject is merely an object, the latter stresses only on the primacy of the objective domain. So, Marcuse's attack is not merely on objectivism but on the total objectivism of technological civilisation.

³⁹Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the crisis of Marxism*, p. 82. For a clear exposition of concept of labour as an ontological category, see Kellner's discussion, in his same book, on Marcuse's essay 'on the philosophical Foundation of the concept of Labour', p. 87.

The absorption of subject into object gives rise to an objectivistic conception of man, the concept of one-dimensional man. The assimilation of thought into actuality, in the same way, gives birth to a pattern of one-dimensional thought. More concretely the unification of reason and (objective) reality results in an objectivistic paradigm of rationality, i.e., in the terminology of Marcuse and the other thinkers of Frankfurt school, the technological rationality. Explicitly, the concept of one dimensional man stands against the metaphysical concept of subject-object duality which postulate an active subject controlling the world of objects. One-dimensional thought is contrasted with the philosophical thought which is, as Kellner describes, a "bi-dimensional thought which presupposes antagonism between subject and object so that the subject is free to perceive possibilities in the world that do not yet exist but which can be realised through human practice".⁴⁰ Technological rationality is opposed to the critical rationality which presupposes an autonomy of the subject and an ability to negate and transcend the 'given' state of affairs. Thus, as Marcuse observes, a kind of antimetaphysical, undialectical and uncritical mode of approach comes into existence. This uncritical mode finds its philosophical expression in positivism and, particularly, in operationalism and contemporary analytic philosophy. The following chart shows the points of contrast between Marcuse's critical theory and positivist's uncritical approach.

⁴⁰Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the crisis of Marxism*, p. 235

	Critical theory		Positivism
1.	Critical Rationalism; duality of subject and object	1.	Total objectivism; assimilation of the subject into the object
2.	Metaphysical, autonomous subject	2.	One-dimensional man
3.	Bi-dimensional thought	3.	One-dimensional thought
4.	Critical Rationality	4.	Technological Rationality

Operationalism and behaviorism: critique of positivist paradigms

The conceptual assimilation of the subject into the object is made possible by the positivists through the procedure of translating all that is subjective into the objective, the internal to the external, the metaphysical to the physical, the conceptual to the factual etc. The result is identification of reason and reality (essence and appearance, universal and particular, concept and fact, body and mind etc.) and, practically, absorption of man into the material world of functional process. The man absorbed into the material reality has only one-dimension — the positive dimension, by which he can only be a positive element in the functional process; the second dimension — the power of negativity which makes him free from the objective reality and thereby enables him to go beyond its given limits, becomes eliminated. The elimination of the critical reason, according to Marcuse, is the part of the process of 'assimilation', because the identification of reason and reality entails the repulsion of the non-'conformist elements' — the elements which cannot be absorbed into the reality — from the faculty of reason. Technological society in Marcuse's account, 'functionalise' human reason by eliminating its critical content. The result is "a pattern of *one-dimensional thought and behaviour* in which Ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and

action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe".⁴¹

According to Marcuse, positivist mode of analysis, especially the operationalist and the behaviourist mode of approach presupposes the paradigm of technological rationality, i.e, the pattern of thought which restricts the meaning of concepts to the representation of particular operations and behaviours. This restriction helps the assimilation process of 'technological civilisation'. Marcuse argues that operationalism, behaviourism and the other positivist-neo-positivist enterprises commonly adopt a rigid empiricist stand-point in the treatment of concepts. In *One dimensional Man*, Marcuse gives an elaborate account of these enterprises with an attempt to highlight their socio-political commitments. We shall restrict ourselves to Marcuse's critique of empiricism in the treatment of concepts of both operationalist and behaviourist perspectives, precisely for the reason that the central concern of our study of Marcuse is to understand the methodological link between the theory of one-dimensionality and the critique of positivism.

In the operational point of view, the concept is synonymous to the corresponding set of operations. Marcuse illustrates this point with an example borrowed from p.W. Bridgman, the author of *The logic of Modern Physics*. The logic of Modern Physics, for Bridgman, is the logic of operationalism. The concept of length, for the physicist is nothing more than a set of physical operations. To find the length of an object we have to perform certain physical operations. This is to say that the performance of certain physical operations is the only way to know the length, and, therefore, the concept of length involves nothing more than the set of operations by which length is determined. In line with Bridgman, Marcuse argues that such a perspective restricts the meaning of concepts to the representation of particular operations and, also, more

⁴¹Herbert Marcuse, *One-dimensional Man*, p. 12.

importantly, restricts us from using “the concepts of which we cannot give an adequate account in terms of operations”.⁴² It has become a ‘habit of thought’ in the modern age, in philosophy, sociology, psychology and other fields to eliminate the ‘mysterious concepts’ from our scientific, rational discourse by showing that no adequate account of them can be given in terms of operations and behaviours.

Logical positivist’s project of the elimination of metaphysics and the identification of philosophy with the method of science, according to Marcuse, is an operationalist project. The verifiability theory of meaning, which insists that the meaningful propositions must be ‘verifiable’ in terms of objective empirical evidence fundamentally relies upon the operationalist method of restricting the meaning of concepts to the possible representations of particular operations. Verification is an empirical operation; the concepts of which no adequate account can be given in terms of this operation are meaningless. Metaphysical propositions are non-sensical because the concepts they refer to cannot be translated objectively, verified in terms of objective empirical evidence. In other words, the conditions of meaningfulness of a concept and the condition of its verifiability are identical. And, hence, that which does not have the verifiability condition and that does not have a meaning in any possible condition, is a meaningless concept, a metaphysical fantasy which has to be eliminated from the realm of meaningful discourse.

Positivism, thus establishes an identity between meaningfulness and verifiability, a positive unity between concepts and empirical facts. It makes the assimilation of thought into the reality, the absorption of the subjectivity into the objectivity possible. This process of absorption explicitly entails the repulsion of critical subjectivity, the elimination of the critical reason which in its content is irreconcilable with reality. Positivist thinking,

⁴²p.W. Bridgman, *The logic of Modern Physics*, p.31, quoted in *One-dimensional Man*, p. 13.

therefore, is a conformism to the structure of technological society where individuals are merely the functional elements. The operationalist method of identifying the concepts with the operational contexts conforms to the 'functionalisation' process of technological civilisation, i.e., the identification of subject with its role of function in the total system. Marcuse puts it as follows: "To the degree to which the given reality is scientifically comprehended and transformed, to the degree to which society becomes industrial and technological, positivism finds in the society the medium for the realisation (and validation) of its concepts—harmony between theory and practice, truth and facts. Philosophic thought turns into affirmative thought; the philosophic critique criticizes *within* the societal framework and stigmatizes non-positive notions as mere speculations, dreams or fantasies".⁴³

The assimilating trend of logical positivism has been carried out by later thinkers especially by those of analytic school, to its logical extreme, to the form of a linguistic behaviourism which, according to Marcuse, provided the methodological ground for a one-dimensional philosophy. The method of behaviourism, in general, is the method of reducing all that is subjective to the behavioural patterns which are objectively verifiable. Linguistic behaviourism is a mode of thought which strives to avoid any kind of subjectivity, to rule out any subjective valuation and to establish an operationalist mode of analysis where everything can be translated into operational descriptions and thereby analysed empirically. It is by all means an objectivist mode of approach as it endeavours to arrive at an objectivity through the total assimilation of the inner world into the outer world. Marcuse, thus, assumes that the one-dimensional philosophy of the technological world is the philosophy of total objectivism in which the subject prior to, or separated

⁴³Herbert Marcuse, *One-dimensional Man*, p.172.

from the object (reason which shapes and transcends the reality) is an absurd, meaningless notion and all that we can talk about 'the subjective' is possible only in terms of operations.

The operationalist tendency can be very well observed in all the projects of contemporary positivism, especially and more explicitly, in logical behaviourist's attack (Gilbert Ryle's) on the cartesian notion of mind and in the functionalist's (Later Wittgenstein's) elimination of subjectivity. In course of his attack on the concept of mind as the 'ghost in the machine', Gilbert Ryle aims at the elimination of the supposedly non-physical mental states by reducing them to actual behaviours. This is with the presupposition that Linguistic behaviour is the way to escape from the 'dualistic fallacy'. More clearly, the presupposition is that, our talk about our mental affairs can be reformulated in such a way that any reference to an inner life would be substituted by a set of dispositional statements about people's outward behaviour. Descriptions of mental states, according to Logical behaviourism, is translatable into the language of behaviours, into an 'objective language'. The subjectivity of meaning involved in the mental predicates can then be discarded outrightly on the ground of the behaviourist thesis that mind is not a 'private' entity, a 'ghost in the machine', since all that is mental can be translated into physical and understood objectively.⁴⁴

The behaviourist tendency of functionalist approach is quite explicit, in Wittgenstein's critique of the notion of private language. All arguments for establishing the possibility for a private language, according to Wittgenstein, presupposes the cartesian

⁴⁴"For the logical behaviorist, when some one is angry this does not consist in some private state, without physical location, of which he alone can be aware. Rather, to be angry is to behave in an angry way: to be flushed, trembling, banging the table, or abusive". Anger, therefore is not to be understood as a state of mind, but as a pattern of physical behaviour. Cf. *The philosophy of Mind*, Edited by Jonathan Glover, p. 7.

concept of body-mind dualism. Mind-body dualism is evidently fallacious, because, for him, mental activities cannot be separated from physical behaviour. In order to attribute subjective experiences of any sort to an individual, Wittgenstein says, there must be certain grounds on the basis of which it may be done. An expression describing a subjective experience is meaningful only insofar as we can invoke a set of criteria for its application. What is the meaning of the phrase "so and so has toothache"? For clarifying the meaning of this expression, we must point out certain kind of behaviour, say, holding the cheek, and holding the cheek in this case functions as the criterion for the application of the descriptive expression "so and so has toothache". And if someone asks, "why toothache corresponds to holding the cheek?", it can be answered only by referring this action of holding the cheek as a socially determined convention for the use of the above expression.⁴⁵

Marcuse does not go to the details of different functionalist theories, or in particular to the Wittgensteinian model of language, precisely because what matters to his interest is the methodological foundation of functionalism, that is, the behaviourist method of identifying mind and body, thought and expression, abstract and concrete etc. Philosophical behaviourism which restricts the meaning of thought to the representation of particular behaviour, according to Marcuse, provides the foundation for linguistic functionalism in general and the philosophy of later Wittgenstein in particular, in which meaning is identical with the use. The identity of thought and expression implies the identity of concepts and words or, rather, the assimilation of the concepts into the words. Marcuse says that once the thought gets identified with expression, concepts is assimilated into the words, then "the former has no other content than that designated by the word in the

⁴⁵Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books*, p. 24.

publicised and standardized usage.⁴⁶ The meaning of the concepts, then, is the function, the use of the words.

As we observed earlier 'assimilation' implies the 'repulsion' of the irreconcilable elements of that which is assimilated. To assimilate the concepts into the words is to eliminate the 'other' dimensions of the concepts which are irreconcilable with words. Thus, Marcuse argues, in the functionalist framework, when the concept gets identified with the word, the 'second dimension' of it gets eliminated. The 'second dimension', according to Marcuse, is the dimension of the historical totality (Universality, abstractness) which is the real content of the concepts, "(Abstractness is) the very life of thought, the token of its authenticity".⁴⁷ The concept devoid of the dimension of the historical totality, the dimension of Universality, is a false, 'reduced' concept. Where these reduced concepts govern the analysis of the human reality, individual or social, mental or material, Marcuse maintains, they arrive at the empiricist dogma of the absolute reality of the particulars, a false concreteness — a concreteness isolated from the conditions which constitutes its reality.⁴⁸

For a better understanding of Marcuse's critique of the functionalist treatment of concepts, it is necessary to have a close view of his notion of 'concept' especially, his perspective that all the cognitive concepts have the dimension of 'historical totality'. It is true that Marcuse is not very precise on the notion of historical totality, but in a close view it can be observed that the implicit meaning of it is that of Hegel's notion of universal (which makes the particular what it is) and the Hegelian Marxist's, particularly Lukács' concept of totality (as the condition which constitutes the reality of the 'concrete'.)

⁴⁶Herbert Marcuse, *One-dimensional Man*, p. 86.

⁴⁷Ibid p. 134.

⁴⁸Ibid. pp. 106-107.

is a social fact, the essence of which lies in the historical substructure of human praxis i.e., in Marcuse's account, the 'historical totality' of the commodity form. The concept of commodity, in its content transcends the commodity form towards its 'reality' - the human substructure and, therefore, it has a 'transitive' meaning. All cognitive concepts refer to the historical totality and comprehend the historical content of the facts. Thus, they have the dimension of historicity, i.e., in other words, the 'transitive meaning'.

The elimination of transitive meaning is the basic feature of the functionalist mode of analysis. To eliminate the transitive meaning of the concepts is to repel the recognition of the factors behind the facts, the comprehension of the historical content of the facts. To repel the recognition of the historical content of the facts is to dissolve the dialectical tension between the facts and the reality, the appearance and the essence, and to assimilate the later into the former. As a result, we find a mode of thought which lacks the dimension of historicity, a one-dimensional language where the concepts are operational devices; the meaning of the concepts restricted to the representation of particular operations and thus lacking the historical dimension.

One-dimensional thought and language, according to Marcuse, delimits the universe of discourse and behaviour into its own preconstructed frame of reference which leads to conformism. The so called therapeutic method of linguistic philosophy which intends to solve the philosophical problems through the clarification of the correct use of the words, in the same manner, Marcuse argues, leads to conformism, "the levelling and crippling of man's thought, which makes him become the impotent tool of the forces that control the established functionalist system".⁵⁰ The method of analysis in Linguistic Philosophy, especially in Wittgensteinian formulation, aims at the "correction of abnormal behaviour

⁵⁰G.A. Rauche, *Contemporary Philosophical Alternatives and the crisis of truth*, p. 29.

in thought and speech, removal of obscurities, illusions and oddities or at least their exposure".⁵¹ The removal of obscurities and illusions, as we saw, are nothing but the removal of transcendental concepts of which there is no adequate account in terms of operations and behaviours and, for the same reason, which cannot be translated in term of objective empirical evidence. More clearly, that which purports to be eliminated by the therapeutic analysis of linguistic philosophy is the non-operational thoughts and concepts, which are irreconcilable with the immediate facts and, thus, which contradict the prevailing universe of discourse and behaviour. Evidently, such an elimination, i.e., the elimination of the non-conformist thought, as Marcuse argues, aims at an adjustment. That is, making human reason adjusted to the established universe of discourse and behaviours, common usage, common sense and conventional thought and behaviour. This is more or less similar to the method of a conservative psycho-analyst who strives to cure the patient whose mind and behaviours do not conform to the terms of the prevailing social order and make him capable of functioning normally in this world. Marcuse's objection to the analytic method in philosophy is that it lacks the dimension of criticism, the conceptual transcendence of the immediate facts; the function of philosophy being 'critical', not 'therapeutic'. "The philosopher is not a physician; his job is not to cure individuals but to comprehend the world in which they live — to understand it in terms of what it has done to man and what it can do to man".⁵²

Against the analytic mode of thought, Marcuse defends philosophical thinking which, according to him, is essentially dialectical and critical. Philosophical thought, in Marcuse's sense, is 'bi-dimensional', because it presupposes the dissociation of reason from reality, the subject from object and thus, the autonomy of subject and thought. It is

⁵¹Herbert Marcuse, *One-dimensional Man*, p. 170.

⁵²Ibid, p. 183.

dialectical, obviously because, the very essence of it lies in the dialectical tension between reason and reality. Also, it is critical. Because, the autonomous subject or reason presupposed in it is a creative principle which transcends the established universe by using concepts, norms and values that criticise the established form of life—the form of society and discourse. The dialectical logic, Marcuse assumes, stands directly opposed to the logic of analysis, by virtue of its bi-dimensionality, dualistic approach, more concretely its concept of reason as a creative principle superior to the reality; it substitutes analysis by criticism, the description of the facts by the ‘transcendence’ of the facts.⁵³

What is to be observed in both Hegel’s and Marx’s systems, according to Marcuse, is the authentic continuity of the dialectical thrust of the traditional western thought. Hegel’s celebrated distinction between essence and existence, universal and particular and his emphasis on the priority of the former over the later, undoubtedly presupposes the concept of the supremacy of reason. Essence contradicts the existence; the ‘rational structure’ of being puts its existing structure into question and, thus, being goes under the conceptual necessity of ‘becoming’. Reason is, here, necessarily critical; it criticises the existing form of being and motivates movement. Evidently, it is the dynamic principle behind the dynamic structure, i.e., the historicity of being. Dialectics of being (i.e., the ontological) turns to be the dialectics of becoming (i.e., the historical). The greatness

⁵³Philosophy, according to Marcuse, has always been bi-dimensional, it developed outside the one dimensional logic, positivism. The commitment of positivism is to science not to philosophy. The central concern of western thought has been to demonstrate the antagonistic structure of reality and to establish reason as the subversive power. In classical Greek philosophy, including Plato’s system, true discourse is the discourse which reveals and expresses reality as distinguished from appearance. Aristotle, according to Marcuse, challenged the distinction between the concept and fact, thought and reality, and established a different system of logic where reason is not a transcendental principle supreme to the reality, but a positive element in it. “It canonized and organised thought within a set framework beyond which no syllogism can pass—it remained analytics”. It provided the methodological ground for formalist philosophy, the one dimensional mode of thought. However, bi-dimensional thought, Marcuse says, remained the central character of western philosophy, which developed alongside and even outside the formal logic. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *One-dimensional Man*, p. 139.

of Hegel, Marcuse assumes, lies in this transformation, that is, in his transformation of 'dialectics' into the historical principle, Philosophical thought into critical revolutionary rationalism.

The critical revolutionary elements of Hegel's dialectics have been taken over by Marx, and developed into a critical theory of capitalism. Marx's thesis that capitalism is a system which is bound to perish because of its inner contradictions, and which has to give way to a higher form of social order that would realize the unactualised potentialities in the existing social order, according to Marcuse, presupposes the Hegelian distinction between essence and existence, and the concept of reason as a critical dynamic force. The contradiction of the capitalist system, in Marx's sense, is the contradiction between the essence and existence, between the true form and the appearance, i.e., the antagonism between the human productive praxis and the world of products (Labour and value, historical substractum of human praxis and the structure of commodities). Human praxis constitutes the essence of every social form and, when society fails to satisfy its potentialities, its existence is seen to be deficient in relation to its higher potentialities. And, thus, that society perishes and gives way to a new order, i.e., the new stage of the realisation of the potentialities of man.⁵⁴

Revolution is precisely this dialectical process of the realisation of human essence. It is an inevitable process; the transition from capitalism to socialism is a historical necessity since the former entails the possibility of the later in the form of unrealised potentialities of its labour process, and thus carries the seeds of its own destruction, its revolutionary transformation. This logic of social change, as Marcuse points out, is the authentic continuation of Hegel's dialectical logic, particularly the Hegelian concept of

⁵⁴cf. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, p. 47.

essence as the critical dynamic principle.

Methodologically speaking, Marx's critique of capitalism implies the critique of capitalist rationality, i.e., the paradigm of one dimensional rationality the basic feature of which, as we had seen, is the suppression of the historical, critical dimension of thought. Marcuse's observation is that this critique is to be understood in a wider sense, i.e., as a philosophical critique of positivism, involving a dialectical historicist alternative to the positivist method of analysis. Again, this philosophical critique of positivism is to be rightly viewed as the continuation of Hegel's dismissal of the empiricist logic. Hegel's attack on empiricism, we had discussed elsewhere in detail, is due to its ahistorical approach towards reality, i.e., its uncritical acceptance of the given facts as the absolute reality by failing to see that the highest potentialities of facts and their fully realised essence perhaps do not still exist.⁵⁵ To put it more clearly, Hegel criticises the methodological failure of empiricism, i.e., its methodology, prevents to penetrate the appearance and, thereby, to perceive the other dimension of the reality. In Marcuse's terminology, Hegel's, therefore, is a bi-dimensional critique of the one dimensional philosophy.

The elements of a 'philosophical critique' of the paradigm of one-dimensional rationality can be plainly observed in Marx's attack on the method of analysis of classical political economy.⁵⁶ The thinkers of classical political economy, (i.e., Adam Smith, David Ricardo etc.), according to Marx, attempt to analyse the categories of market economy merely in terms of the principles which are no way capable of penetrating and revealing the real ground. Analytic method presupposes the formal logic, the principles of which restrict themselves from going beyond the formal structure of the facts to their

⁵⁵Cf. Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the crisis of Marxism*, p. 133.

⁵⁶See, Herbert Marcuse, *studies in critical philosophy*, p. 4.

real content. Lukács, as we had seen in our discussion on the theory of reification, rightly observes this and recognises the elements of the critique of formal, reified rationality in Marx's treatment of the analytic method. Marcuse goes further by arguing that, in the advanced industrial societies, where the world of objects (commodities) not merely controls the subjective world but absorbs it into its functional structure, and becomes the only reality — a world without an 'other', the paradigm of formal rationality assumes the extreme form, i.e., the form of functional or technological rationality. Technological rationality is necessarily 'formal insofar as' it does not recognise the 'content' as the 'other' dimension of the facts, but more than that it is functional, it implies a 'total objectivism', since its presupposition is not the object alien to the subject, or the form separated from the content, but the object into which everything subjective is integrated or the form into which the content is assimilated. The object into which the subject is absorbed as its element is no more a form; it turns to be 'real in itself' — the one-dimensional reality. Positivism of technological society, therefore, according to Marcuse, is one-dimensional in the strict sense in which it presupposes the one-dimensional reality.

It is clear from above that Marcuse follows Lukács, in attacking the ahistorical, undialectical nature of positivist approach. In this respect Marcuse's reading of Marx stands quite close to that of Lukács. But no way it means that the philosophical positions of both can be synthesised in a very easy manner. Unlike Lukács, whose Marxism concentrates on the unity of subject and object, Marcuse lays more stress on the autonomy of subject or the supremacy of reason over reality. Lukács' notion of reification refers more to a process of alienation produced by the material condition of the capitalist society, whereas Marcuse's theory refers directly to the one-dimensional reality of the advanced industrial societies where the subject gets assimilated into the object, and thus, even the

validity of the concept of alienation seems to be questionable. For Lukács the abolition of alienation is the unification of subject and object. For Marcuse, the negation of the 'one-dimensional reality' is the realisation of the duality of subject and object. Consequently, 'revolution' in Lukács' Marxism is the process towards the realisation of the unity, whereas in Marcuse's account, it is the process of the realisation of the autonomy of reason.

In a close view it can be rightly pointed out that the above points do not indicate any fundamental difference between Lukács' and Marcuse's non-positivist philosophical positions. Lukács' concept of the unity of subject and object does not, in any way, refer to 'one-dimensional reality', the object into which the subject is assimilated; it is, on the other hand, the concept of the dialectical mediation — the dialectical unity where the subject ceases to be alienated and passive, and becomes active and creative. And, evidently, Marcuse's dualism does not imply the idea of a contemplative subjectivity. On the contrary, it presupposes the principle of creative subjectivity, the supremacy of thought. Both Lukács' and Marcuse, therefore, fundamentally assume a non-positivist epistemological position of treating subject as the creative principle, the source not as the effect. We shall discuss this point more clearly in our concluding chapter. Here, we shall sum up our discussion of the theory of one-dimensionality by highlighting its major presuppositions regarding the problem of knowledge and ideology.

Towards an anti-positivist conception of knowledge and ideology

It is beyond doubt that, the concept of knowledge implied in Marcuse's theory of one-dimensionality is anti positivist. For positivists, as we had seen earlier, true knowledge (scientific knowledge) is objective or object centric; it can never be ideological since

subject is external to the object and has no contribution over the object. Explicitly, the fundamental thrust of this approach is to eliminate subjectivity from the realm of knowledge or, in other words, to 'de-subjectify' knowledge. Marcuse confronts with a new form of positivism which basically engages in the same project of the elimination of subjectivity, but through a different method — the method of assimilating everything subjective into the objective. The positivism of technological world, i.e., the new form of positivism, according to Marcuse's theory, is more anti-subjectivistic than that of 'pre-technological world'. Operationalist concept of knowledge is more objectivistic than classical positivist's concepts of knowledge. The paradigm of technological rationality as different from that of formal rationality of positivism, presupposes a total objectivism in which there is nothing called subjective; subjectivity being absorbed into the objective domain. The critique of technological rationality, in Marcuse's sense, therefore, is the critique of the (total) objectivistic conception of knowledge, the critique of the advanced form of positivist epistemology.

Knowledge, in Marcuse's account, is not to be understood merely in terms of the category of representation, but viewed essentially as the transformative activity which presupposes the active human agency, the 'autonomous' subjectivity. To identify the subject with the object is to dissolve the autonomy of the subject, and thus to conceive all that is subjective as dependent on the objective or to treat knowledge as that which is dependent on the facts. The result obviously is empiricism which pictures knowledge as an activity that consists of representing the facts as they are, but not of going beyond or criticising them. To conceive knowledge merely as the reflection of reality is to conceive consciousness as receptive (to repel the critical content of human thought) and to treat man as a passive being, the product, not the producer. The autonomous subject enjoys

freedom from the objective world, the freedom which enables it to criticise the world and transcend it. The concept of autonomous subjectivity is the concept of transcendental, critical reason. True knowledge is 'critical' as it presupposes critical reason which, by its nature, contradicts the given reality and goes beyond it. True theory is 'revolutionary'; its function is to criticise, not to describe, the given world. Explicitly, the idea of critical theory, in Marcuse's sense, is rooted in this epistemological conception, the critical rationalist conception of knowledge.

The epistemological position that 'true' knowledge is the critical activity that consists of transcending the world, not merely of describing it, logically follows the thesis that ideology, in the sense of false knowledge, is uncritical and affirmative. In this precise meaning, the notion of ideology can be identified with the Marcusean notion of one-dimensional knowledge. One-dimensional knowledge is that which presupposes the identity of thought and reality and, thus, lacks the dimension of criticism. The unification of thought and reality, the assimilation of the subject into the object, as we saw, implies the repulsion of the critical content of thought and subjectivity. Knowledge, thus becomes uncritical and 'objective'; its function becomes restricted to the description of facts. Thought ceases to be bi-dimensional and negative, turns to be affirmative. A conformist mode of analysis, which is methodologically committed either to repel the transitive concepts — the concepts that by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action, or to reduce them to terms of this universe, comes into existence. Such an analysis, Marcuse says, "commits itself to a false consciousness, it's very empiricism is ideological".⁵⁷

⁵⁷Herbert Marcuse, *One-dimensional Man*, p. 117.

True knowledge differs radically from ideological knowledge by virtue of its bi-dimensional nature, its capability of going beyond the given state of affairs. Ideology is false-consciousness; it is a form of affirmative rationality which lacks the dimension of criticism and transcendence. The problem of the distinction between knowledge and ideology thus, in Marcuse's sense, is that of the distinction between bi-dimensional knowledge and one-dimensional knowledge. Explicitly, this formulation is contrary to the epistemological position of positivist Marxism, especially that of Althusser's neo-positivism, according to which ideology refers to the subjective knowledge and true knowledge to 'the process without a subject'. What is false knowledge in Althusser's Marxism becomes authentic (philosophical) knowledge in Marcuse and what Althusser calls as true knowledge (scientific) becomes ideological for Marcuse. In other words, (Althusser's) positivist interpretation gets replaced by a non-positivist interpretation, 'scientific' Marxism by a 'philosophical Marxism'.

To be radical is to go to the root of the matter. For man, however, the root is man himself.

Karl Marx

Chapter - 5

**CONCLUSION:
AN EMERGING FRAMEWORK**

In the concluding chapter, we argue that an epistemological synthesis of Lukács' and Marcuse's theories would provide an adequate framework for a non-positivist Marxist theory of knowledge. Our attempt of synthesis is made on the basis of the respective theories of rationality of Lukács and Marcuse. We have seen that both Lukács' and Marcuse's theory of rationality is internally linked to the theory of creative subjectivity. So, our attempt is to synthesise the systems of both the philosophers on the basis of their respective theories of rationality and subjectivity.

Lukács' theory of rationality is of the nature of a critique of formal rationality. Formalistic theories, Lukács argues, imply a paradigm of rationality which is restricted to the province of appearances, which, by its nature, is incapable of penetrating the 'givenness' of the facts into their real essence. That is, formalistic enquiries do not go beyond the given facts, precisely because the fundamental assumption involved in such enquiries is that the reality is that which is given, or, a given fact is real, devoid of any content.

To view commodity as an autonomous fact devoid of any human content, according to Lukács, is to detach the domain of products from the domain of production. That is, to separate the domain of objects from the domain of the historical substratum of human praxis, or, to alienate object from praxis. In the system of 'fetishistic' production, the product assumes a non-human objectivity, appears to be an independent fact. Or, from a subjective point of view, the producer becomes alienated from the product, becomes a passive subject. The picture of reification, according to Lukács, is the picture of the separation of the product from the producer. 'Reified' mode of thinking is the formalist mode of thinking which fundamentally assumes the denial of the concept of object as the product of praxis and, thereby, the concept of the separation of the subject from the object.

Objects assuming supra-historical power become the objects of 'worship', that, human consciousness becomes submissive to the domain of objects. Reason ceases to be the power of controlling the world; it turns to be something controlled by the objects. Thought becomes a mode of representation of the given facts. It loses its critical content; it ceases to be an activity of penetrating the immediacy of the facts. Explicitly, Lukács' critique of reified rationality implies a critique of passive subjectivity. Consequently, Lukács' alternative paradigm of rationality involves an alternative theory of subjectivity.

Lukács' alternative paradigm is a dialectical - historicist one. The fundamental principle of it is the principle of the dialectical unity of subject and object. The concept of subject-object unity implies the meaning of the concepts of praxis and historicity. On the one hand, it means that object is not an autonomous fact but the product of praxis, and, on the other, objects are historical forms, not real in themselves. Dialectical enquiry does not stop at the level of the perception of the facts, as the sole aim of it is to go beyond them to the realm of their historical constitution, or, to see them as the manifestations of human essence. Dialectical historicist paradigm replaces formalism with essentialism, empiricism with critical rationalism of Hegelian variety. Consequently it replaces the theory of passive subjectivity with the theory of creative subjectivity.

The question of establishing the unity of subject and object, for Lukács, is a practical question. That is, such a unity gets established only in a society where man is not alienated from his labour or, where the objects are recognised to be the manifestations of human essence. The transition from capitalism to socialism, in Lukács' Marxism, is a movement towards the unification of subject and object. Revolution is the movement towards the replacement of the concept of subject-object duality with that of their dialectical unity.

Marcuse's theory of rationality is implied in his critique of one-dimensional rationality. One-dimensional rationality, in Marcuse's sense, refers to a mode of approach specific to one-dimensional societies where subject is assimilated into the object. It refers to an extreme variety of formalism, a total objectivism in which object is not a category independent of subject but a category which assimilates the subject into itself and becomes a one-dimensional reality. One-dimensionalism presupposes subject-object identity. It implies the concept of subject as a mechanical element of the objective system. More clearly, the paradigm of One-dimensional rationality implies the concept of mechanical subjectivity. Marcuse's critique of one-dimensional rationality presupposes a critique of the theory of mechanical subjectivity.

Marcuse's alternative to positivism is dialectical philosophy. Dialectical philosophy is 'bi-dimensional', that, the paradigm presupposed in it is the paradigm of bi-dimensional rationality. Bi-dimensional thought understands the dialectical tension between subject and object. Subject, according to its framework, is a 'free' category conceptually prior to the objective domain. By virtue of its independence from the objective world it assumes the power of negation, i.e., the power of criticism and transcendence. It criticises the given world, and goes beyond it. This power of going beyond the 'given' constitutes the essence of subjectivity.

The method of bi-dimensional scheme is the method of 'transcendentalism'. It is against the ready acceptance of the given. The basic thrust of it is to go beyond the existence to the essence, the existing structure of the world to the 'rational' structure. It is the method of transcendence of the given reality towards the realisation of reason. Concept of revolution, in Marcuse's Marxism, is this concept of the transcendence of the given and of the realisation of reason.

It can be rightly derived from the above discussions that the fundamental thrust of both Lukács' and Marcuse's method is that of transcendental humanism, that of the method of going beyond the given reality towards its 'human essence'. The obvious presuppositions of this method are 1) Hegel's critical rationalism, i.e., the conception of reason as the power that 'governs' reality, and 2) Marx's philosophy of praxis, i.e., the conception of man as the being who shapes the reality. Both Lukács' critique of reification of capitalism and Marcuse's critique of 'one-dimensionality' of advanced industrial society presuppose a critique of the conception of passive, mechanical subjectivity on the one hand, and of the paradigm of formal rationality on the other. It is true that the paradigm which is criticised in Marcuse's scheme is characteristically different from the paradigm which Lukács criticises, that, the former is of an extreme variety of formalism. This is because of the fact that Marcuse confronts with a more complex social situation where reification reaches its peak — a stage appearing as the 'one-dimensional reality'. This, but, does not, in any way, indicate a methodological difference between Lukács' and Marcuse's respective approaches towards formalism; they both rely fundamentally upon the essentialist method in formulating an alternative paradigm of rationality i.e., the paradigm which invariably presupposes the idea of free, creative subjectivity.

The concept of subject-object unity that Lukács speaks for is not contrary to the Marcusean idea of duality, though it seems to be so. Lukács' concept is actually the concept of a dialectical mediation between subject and object; it does not, in any way, imply the idea of subject-object identity. The very idea of dialectics implies the tension between subject and object and thus stands against the notion of identity. Marcuse's criticism is leveled against the trend of dissolving the dialectical tension between subject and object; it is against the identity theory, not against the theory of dialectical mediation.

The basic thrust of Lukács' dialectical scheme is to redefine the concept of object as an essential correlate of human praxis, or, in other words, to view the objective reality as the human product. Subject and object get mediated in the activity of production. It is only in a society where subject is not alienated from the object, where man is recognised to be a free, creative being, the subject-object unity gets established. More clearly, the essential requirement for the establishment of subject-object unity is the creation of a situation where the creativity of the subjective domain is recognised. So, to say that revolution is a movement towards the establishment of subject-object unity is to say that it is a movement towards the realisation of the creativity of the subject.

It is clear from above that the underlying theme of Lukács' Marxism, like that of Marcuse's, is the dynamic conception of subjectivity which invalidates, at a methodological level, the objectivistic mode of theorising of positivism. Positivism is criticised in Marcuse's Marxism as a one-dimensional mode of theorising in which the dimension of subjectivity gets eliminated. Revival of bi-dimensional paradigm, in Marcuse's sense, is the revival of the dynamic conception of subjectivity. That is actually the revival of a Hegelian-Marxist paradigm which, on the one hand, acknowledges the creative essence of the subjective domain, and, on the other, refutes the primacy and the autonomy of the objective domain.

The theory of creative subjectivity, in both Lukács' and Marcuse's sense, as we have seen earlier, implies the concept of critical rationality. In Lukács' Marxism, the paradigm of critical rationality is the antithesis of the paradigm of reified rationality. Paradigm of reification implies the procedure of uncritical acceptance of the 'given', where as, the critical paradigm implies the procedure of 'going beyond' the immediacy of the facts, or of perceiving the given reality as the manifestation of human essence. True theory

involves the paradigm of critical rationality. Ideology is the form of reified rationality; it is the uncritical acceptance of the 'given'. Marcuse argues, in the same vein, that true theory is critical theory. True knowledge is bi-dimensional; it is essentially critical, that, it criticises the 'given' and, thereby, goes beyond the 'givenness'. Ideology is one-dimensional; it consists merely of representing the facts, not of criticising or going beyond them. Precisely, both in Lukács' and Marcuse's Marxism, truth is identified with critical knowledge, and, falsity with uncritical knowledge. The question of the distinction between knowledge and ideology, in both the systems, is to be understood as a methodological question of the distinction between critical and uncritical paradigms of rationality.

To sum up, the epistemological foundation of both Lukács' and Marcuse's systems is provided by the concepts of creative subjectivity and critical rationality. These concepts are rooted in the conceptual scheme of Hegelian Marxism, particularly, in Hegel's critical rationalism on the one hand, and, on the other, in Marx's philosophy of praxis. The framework that emerges from a methodological synthesis of Lukács' and Marcuse's systems is a Hegelian Marxist epistemological framework which offers a strictly non-positivist mode of interpreting the concepts of knowledge and ideology.

In this enquiry, our main thrust was to offer a clear idea of Marxist conception of knowledge which may be alternatively characterised as 'dialectical'. Marx's dialectical scheme, as we have argued, has a strong Hegelian import. To this effect, we may identify two dominant interpretations in Marx. The one is the dialectical interpretation with having a Hegelian foundation and the other is the positivistic interpretation seeking to offer a non-Hegelian model of knowledge. We have argued in detail that any talk on Marx's conception of knowledge cannot ignore its Hegelian roots. The entire justification

of Marx's concept of knowledge as dialectical rests on some of the fundamental ideas of Hegel's thought. To deny this will be to deny the real dialectical basis of Marx's thought and his characterisation of knowledge. In this respect, one of the major areas of our enquiry was concentrated largely on the sociological and positivistic interpretations offered by Mannheim and Althusser respectively on Marx's thought. It has been shown that as interpretations these attempts have failed, because they did not do justice to the real content of Marx's thought. Infact, their interpretations go against the very essence of Marx's thought, namely the dialectical nature of Marx's epistemological scheme.

After showing the basic untenability of the non-Hegelian interpretation of Marx's thought we went into the detailed discussion of the Hegelian foundation of Marx's epistemological concepts. Lukács and Marcuse have become our principal source in the light of which we offer our explanation. Our motive was to show how, basing on the Hegelian foundation of Marx's thought, one could offer a framework for knowledge which was truly Marxist in nature.

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