## Chapter Four: POWER

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4.0. INTRODUCTION

In the previous two chapters I have made an effort to reconstruct the notion of the emancipatory subject and of everyday life. Everyday life is, of course, not a concept explicitly mentioned or developed in Historical Materialism. Yet, there is an assumption that everyday life experiences can be reduced to the relational dynamics of class practices. I have tried to argue against this by claiming that what goes on to bring forth everyday life experiences is actually a much more complex set of structures and structural relationships and this has been developed to some extent.

Now what needs to be done to sustain a place for non-class practices is a reconceptualisation notion of power. The creation of a dialogical, deliberative democratic future is an important consideration and there must be a way of approaching this future. I believe that what will 'push' us in that direction is power. But to conceive of this power I have to reconstruct the traditional notion of power which is too restrictive and blind to socio-cultural reality.

In order to attempt this I shall explore the notion of power in Marx and the critical problems faced by this notion. Having examined this, I shall proceed to explore the
resources that will help me to reconstruct the notion of power.

4.1. MARX'S NOTION OF POWER

Let me reconstruct from Marx's various writings a theory of politics. Such a theory is not explicit in his writings.

(i) The notion of power is constantly associated with the notion of the political. Thus in Marx, power, though often qualified as political, is used synonymously with it. Power and the political are one and the same for all theoretical and practical purposes.\(^1\)

(ii) The political emerges as a result of the struggle between classes. Thus Marx writes that the 'working class, in the course of its development, substitute

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1. Marx has used the notion of power to bear other shades of meaning. For instance he has used the notion of 'negative power' (i.e. to avoid this or that) and 'positive power' (to assert one's individuality). This is a notion of 'non-relational power'(not used here to mean institutionally based power) for it implies power 'internal' to the Self or the Other. See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), p.176. Elsewhere Marx has also used the notion of 'social power' as distinct from 'political power', though without much explanation of this distinction. See Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works, vol. 11: 1851-1853*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979), p.143.
for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so called, since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society.‘2 (Underscoring mine.) As this passage shows, the ‘political terrain’ is internal to class relations. There are three important aspects to this part of Marx’s theory of politics:

(a) The same relations of production can generate multiple political forms. ‘The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows up out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form. It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of

production to the direct producers -- a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labour and thereby its social productivity -- which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state.'³

(b) The focal point of political activity is the state. The state is a class apparatus. And Marx claims that the 'executive of the Modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.'⁴

(c) There is another subsidiary but important aspect. The political terrain is part of the superstructure.⁵ It thus operates within what the

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base opens up as possibility and what it forecloses. Thus, Marx's treatment of the political is very different in both 'time scales and rhythms' from his treatment of the economic. Thus 'Capital seeks to explain the movement of capitalism from epoch to epoch -- the Class Struggle in France follows the fortunes of French politicians literally from day to day'.6 In keeping with this portrayal of the political, Marx also presents the actors who play 'roles' and wear 'masks'.7 For Marx, the political was 'directed' by the economic in the final analysis.

(iii) The political terrain is perceived as both a 'real' achievement and an 'illusory' one. In this, one can

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see two conceptions of the political terrain. At one level, it was a terrain in which all human beings were equal and free. It thus maintained a certain notion of community. At another level, it was of course the official expression of class struggle. I shall develop these two conceptions and their implications more elaborately in the last subsection i.e. 4.3.4.

(iv) Let me dwell on the conception of the political terrain as 'illusory'. This Marx traces back to the nature of the political revolution which 'raised state affairs to become affairs of the people, which constituted the political state as a matter of general concern.... The political revolution thereby abolished the political character of civil society. It broke up civil society into its simple component parts; on the one hand, the individuals; on the other hand, the material and spiritual elements constituting the content of the life and social position of these individuals. It set free the political spirit, which had been, as it were, split up, partitioned and dispersed in the various blind alleys of feudal society. It gathered the dispersed parts of the political spirit, freed it from its intermixture with civil life, and established it as
the sphere of the community, the general concern of the nation, ideally independent of those particular elements of civil life.'8 Thus, in a well-developed political states 'man -- not only in thought, in consciousness, but in reality, in life -- leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the political community, in which he considers himself a community being, and life in civil society, in which he acts as a private individual, regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means and becomes the plaything of alien powers'.9 In this, what the state 'pretends' to abolish are the 'distinctions' of 'birth, social rank, education, occupation, when it declares that birth, social rank, education, occupation, are non-political distinctions, when it proclaims, without regard to these distinctions, that every member of the nation is an equal participant in national sovereignty, when it treats all elements of the real life of the nation from the standpoint of the state.'10

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10. Ibid.
For Marx, the equality and community created by the political revolution are illusory. Even as he argued on these lines, Marx also saw that the political terrain presented the possibility for the classes to be engaged in overt struggle. In effect, the political can cut two ways -- on the one hand, it can hide class distinctions by 'organising' an illusory community and, on the other hand, it contributes to the 'official expression' of the struggle between classes.

(vi) The political terrain is the 'child' of the relations of production, of the relations between classes and, takes a structural differentiation in the capitalist mode of production. Thus, as the argument proceeds, the logical conclusion is that with the deconstitution of the social basis of classes, the political terrain 'properly so-called' disappears. It is only in an order in which class has disappeared that 'social evolutions will cease to be political revolutions.' Elsewhere, Marx writes that 'Revolution is general -- the overthrow of the existing ruling power and the dissolution of the

existing social relationships -- is a political act. Without revolution, socialism cannot develop. It requires this political act as it needs the overthrow and the dissolution. But as soon as its organising activity begins, as soon as its own purpose and spirit come to the fore, socialism sheds this political covering.\textsuperscript{12}

The above four aspects comprise the germ of Marx's theory of politics. Before I conclude this section and look at the conception more critically, let me recapitulate. Society is broken into two antagonistic classes. The 'arrival' of the capitalistic mode of production separates the economic from the political. The political is internal to class relations, to the relations of production. The separation of the political presents two situations. One holds the 'image' of a society in which distinctions have been destroyed and where equality and freedom reign. It promotes the image of a universality, a character of our specie-nature, the nature which is missing in warring egoistical individuals in the (Marx's) civil society. So we have a situation where the experience of universality is absent in our everyday life but is present in the realm of the political. The other

situation presents the political as the 'official expression' of the struggle between classes. These political struggles continue till the revolutionary stage when the basis of classes is 'destroyed'. Since the political is internal to class, the 'destruction' of class also means the 'destruction' of the political. However, the experience of universality and community in the political terrain is now generalized and the political ceases to exist as a separate domain. Along with the political, the economic is also destroyed. Social evolution and human emancipation stop being political. The experience of universality is absorbed into civil society and becomes a part of everyday life experience.

Let me now make some general critical observations of what has come to be called the Marxist Theory of Politics.

4.2. THE NOTION OF POWER IN 'TRADITIONAL' MARXISM: SOME CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

4.2.1. State-Centric Politics

With the arrival of Lenin's The State and Revolution, the focal point in the theory of politics has been the state. Lenin's interpretation of Marx's notion of the state as 'an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another [as an organ that creates] "order", which
legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes'13 and the definition of a Marxist as one 'who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat',14 i.e., a dictatorship born out of the class that organizes the seizure of state power, a dictatorship that directs the abolition of all classes and that lays the ground for the constitution of a classless society have formed the main outline of a Marxist theory of politics since the Bolsheviks took hold of state power in Russia in 1917.

State and politics became coterminous. State was, of course, placed within a complex of concepts. The political is born out of the antagonistic relation between classes. The focal point of this political terrain is the state. The state is an organ through which the dominant class oppresses the dominated, the proletariat to be specific. The state helps maintain this oppressive relationship. The relationship is maintained to extract surplus labour. As long as surplus labour is extracted and profit is made, capital expands. The capitalist social formation is reproduced. But because of inherent problems in the system, the creation of surplus is


14. Ibid., p.35.
affected and the reproduction of the formation undergoes a problem which turns into a crisis. This crisis at the economic level soon extends to the socio-cultural and political levels. The crisis in the system turns the state more and more into an oppressive organ. Its class character is now a visible fact. The crisis also opens up the situation for consolidation of proletarian power, organized by a party. The state becomes the terrain of struggle. A revolution by the oppressed results in the capturing of the state organ. The dictatorship of the proletariat undermines the basis of classes and lays the basis for the creation of a communist society.

A conception of the state as outlined above has implications for proletariat practice. At the level of practice, the (structural) 'enemy' is identified as the class or an alliance of class fractions\(^{15}\) holding state power or indirectly influencing state power. Thus, the 'characterization' of the state is an important theoretical and practical activity of proletarian political organizations, including the party. The characterization of the state pins down the class or an alliance of class fractions that is managing state power and oppressing the

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proletariat. Such identification helps in strategic moves made by proletariat political organizations. Thus, the working class' political activity centres around the state, its 'capture' and deconstitution.

A state-centered politics presumes the need for a theory and a highly developed revolutionary consciousness, before political action could be directed at the state. It presumed a consciousness of short term and long term interests of the proletariat. Other forms of (unconscious or 'non-spectacular') resistance did not constitute by definition class action or might actually indicate an action directed by false consciousness. The state-centered politics meant that all efforts to transform social relations and society in order to remove all forms of antagonism simply required the seizure of state power and its deconstitution. This trajectory remained quite well entrenched in Marxist political theory until Antonio Gramsci, who presented a different perspective of understanding power. (We will develop this notion in the last subsection.)

4.2.2. Absence (or Marginalization) of Culture

Class action directed at transforming social relations hardly took the socio-cultural realm into consideration. Cultural practices, to be precise, are absent or
marginalized in the consideration of power relations in
general and in the proletarian action to transform society
in particular. This tendency figures both in the theory and
analysis of Marx.

Though it would be a gross mistake to say that Marx was
insensitive to the fact of culture, it would surely be an
unsustainable defence of him to say that ‘Marx’s original
contribution consists not in having shown the impact of the
socio-economic sphere upon all others, but in having shown
this impact to be a mutual one. Ideas and the works of art
exercise as direct an influence upon production and
consumption as changes in the production affect all other
facets of culture’.16 (underscoring mine.) An argument of
‘mutual influence’ is an argument for a non-Marxian
functionalist whole17 in spite of the fact that Louis Dupre
correctly argues that ‘Marx perceptively criticized the
fragmented character of modern culture and forcefully argued
for reintegrating of all facets of human activity
(theoretical as well as practical) on the basis of man’s
productive relation to nature. To this end he shifted the
centre of meaning from the thinking subject to social

16. Louis Dupre, Marx’s Social Critique of Culture (New

17. See Chapters 9 and 10 in G.A. Cohen, Karl Marx’s Theory

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praxis'. In Marx's work there is a strong presence of the notion of primacy particularly in his mature writings. This of course can be traced to the economic structure or the base. To suggest as Dupre does i.e., that the base and superstructure are mutually influencing, is to withdraw the primacy of the base as understood by Marx. Primacy can be introduced only if we hold on to some form of determination between the base and the elements of the superstructure. Otherwise Marx's notion of primacy will crumble.

Inspite of Dupre's defence of Marx, Marx has hardly made a serious analysis of culture in his economic or political studies. Such an analysis would have been possible even during his time. For instance, in a recent study on the French Revolution, Lynn Hunt writes,

The Festival of Reason, as it soon came to be called, showed the complexities at work in the field of symbolic power. The convention, the Paris

city government, local militants, and the general Parisian population all had their own interests and aspirations. The convention had introduced the Roman goddess of liberty as an appropriate French replacement for the king as the central symbol of the government and its legitimacy. The deputies wanted an abstract symbol that had little or no resonance with the French monarchical past. At the time of the Festival, the Paris city government was looking for ways to challenge the hold of Catholicism; Liberty was secular, easily associated with reason (both were represented iconographically as female figures), and opposable to the central female figure of Catholicism, the Virgin Mary.20

Though I shall take up more extensively the fact of cultural intervention, here my argument is to place on record that though the expression of power is possible at the level of culture, it was never found in Marx’s writing or that of subsequent Marxist theoretician-revolutionaries. For Lenin, the dictatorship of the proletariat had to be achieved through a distinctly political struggle and only within the context of ‘the practical experience of the proletarian dictatorship as a final stage in the struggle against every form of exploitation, [could] be recognised...the development of a genuine proletarian culture’.21


4.2.3. No Conception of Post-Revolutionary Politics

I am using 'post-revolutionary' to mean communist society.  

As I have explained above, the political terrain is 'reabsorbed' by civil society. Both the economic and the political disappear and we have a humane society, one defined 'almost' without mediation. Thus, without class there is no politics.

This conception of the political cannot define political activity in the post-revolutionary era as it unfolded in a number of 'living' (or erstwhile) socialist societies in Eastern Europe. This inability has led to the transformation of dictatorship of the proletariat not in the direction of deliberative democracy but towards totalitarianism. It had led to the subversion of the emancipatory project. In fact, the way in which Self and the Other is defined in Marxism, the totalitarian tendency is one definite trajectory. This tendency is thus inbuilt and there is no institutional safeguard against it.

22. Of course, the 'real' movement would involve the creation of the dictatorship of the proletariat which will hold on to proletarian state power and promote proletarian democracy. This will consequently lead to the birth of the communist society.

23. The first order mediation is hardly an adequately developed notion in Marxist theory. The tendency of the theory would have led to a conception of even this level of mediation in the direction of Self and the Other as distinction. This allows the total interiorization of the Other in the Self.
Post-revolutionary politics as was seen in some of the living socialist societies is worth considering. For this did not emerge out of class struggles as Mao understood the existence of class in socialist societies unless, of course, Mao meant that the bureaucracy had become a class. In Russia, for instance, an illegal civil society coexisted along with a legal one. This illegal civil society comprised 'all unofficial individual activities in the economic, cultural, educational, political, entertainment, and other spheres. This illegal civil society is the most dynamic part of the larger society, especially in a Soviet-type society with its hostility toward any activity not controlled by the state...'.

The 'class' that had emerged was a new one. According to Bruno Rizzi:

The Soviet state, rather than becoming socialised is becoming bureaucratized; instead of gradually dissolving into a society without classes, it is growing immeasurably. Fifteen million individuals are already attached to the trunk of the state and drink its sap. They exploit the working class


26. Ibid.
en bloc, in a manner corresponding to the transformation of property. The bureaucratic class exploits the working class and fixes its standard of living by means of wages and by the prices set for goods in the state shops. The new ruling class has purchased, en bloc, the proletariat. The workers have not even been left the freedom to offer their 'labour power' to different entrepreneurs; the bureaucracy has given itself a monopoly position, thus perfecting the system of exploitation.27

The tension was between the 'bureaucratic class' and others who contributed to the creation of an illegal civil society. In this illegal civil society, three types of political activity have been identified. These are the 'use of legal organization against officials and ideology', 'movements totally outside official control', and 'organised action that directly challenges the Soviet political order'. This political activity can be seen as an expression of (Mao's) non-antagonistic contradiction.28 Given the experience of


This notion actually allows us to conceive of a 'generative theory of class' and therefore a theory of cultural revolution. If a generative theory of class is accepted then it is possible to argue that for Mao the bureaucracy was a class. In fact his practical action in calling upon the people to criticize and take to task the party bosses is indicative of this.

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over seventy years of socialism, of the continued presence of some form of juridico-administrative institutions to organize and manage societies, a definition of the political must be held on to guard society from both anarchy on the one hand and totalitarianism on the other and to promote one that sustains a dialogical, deliberative democracy.

I have in the above section pointed out some problems with the Marxist notion of power and politics. These problems demand a reconsideration and reformulation of the notion of power. My aim is to develop a notion of power consistent with the way in which we have reformulated the Self-Other relationship through the introduction of the two 'crude' social relational spheres of self-and-the-other-as-distinction and self-and-the-other-as-difference.

4.3. THE NEED TO RECONSIDER THE MARXIST NOTION OF POWER

In this section, I shall attempt a reformulation of power in keeping with changes made in the preceding chapters. The sphere of class practices has spread into nearly every aspect of social life. The influence of these practices in shaping societies, national and global, has been tremendous. Presenting this with a different conceptual apparatus, Habermas proposes the thesis of internal colonization which 'states that the subsystems of the economy and state
become more and more complex as a consequence of capitalist growth and penetrate ever deeper into the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld'.29 The lifeworld is more and more monetarized and bureaucratized ('juridified').

This aggressive process, in spite of resistance put up against it, cannot be overcome until the antagonism of class is undone/deconstituted. If we keep in mind the notion of open self-mediation, then it can be quickly realized that multiple totalities would emerge as social segments(groups) nurtured in the womb of a structure of universality. This growth must be seen at the level of the first and second structural relationships/ 'movement' (see chapter three) i.e., the historical-universalist and the historical-segmentary/transformational 'movements'. Let us first return to Marx's Historical Materialism and the notion of closed self-mediation. Let us see how Self-Other is constructed at the level of politics, which is equated with power.

The Self-Other relationship in the capitalist society is the relationship between the two classes, i.e., the bourgeoisie B and the proletariat P:


See Part VIII, Section 2, pp.332-374.
There is a struggle that is inherent in this relationship.

This struggle gives birth to the political terrain. This terrain becomes the 'official expression' of the struggle. Thus:

Let us take a diversion here. In the last chapter, I presented a notion of structure and agency as follows:

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To recapitulate, there is an ontological hiatus between structure and agency. The point-of-contact between structure and agency is position-practice. Thus, all individual agents occupy positions by virtue of which they perform certain activities.

Thus, the following relationship

\[ \text{Class}_B \rightarrow (\text{STRUGGLE}) \leftarrow \text{Class}_p \]

POLITICS

can be written as

SELF

\[ \text{Position}_B \rightarrow \text{Politics} \leftarrow \text{Position}_p \]

\[ \text{Practice}_B \rightarrow \text{Class Struggle} \leftarrow \text{Practice}_p \]

OTHER
The bourgeoisie and the proletariat are dialectically related. That is, one group cannot be formed without the other. Actually capital 'splits' into these two warring groups. Thus, these two groups are really distinctions of the same (capital). In the context of revolutionary overthrow, we will have the following as a transitory phase in which the proletariat assumes the position of dominance.

This may be seen as the period in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is established. The proletariat, in the process of becoming 'world-historical, empirically universal individuals', appropriate the world and through the universalization of (instrumental) rationality overcome all local identities, thus all forms of position-practice. The
ETHNO-COMMUNAL / NATIONAL DIFFERENCE

NATURE AS DIFFERENCE [AS 'VOICED' BY HUMAN GROUPS]

POSITION PRACTICE

PROLETARIAT [UNIVERSAL CLASS]

CLOSED SELF-MEDIATION

POSITION PRACTICE

BOURGEOISIE

GENDER DIFFERENCE

GENERIC POSITION-PRACTICE (WORLD HISTORICAL, EMPIRICALLY UNIVERSAL INDIVIDUALS)

FIG. 17 THE CREATION OF A GENERIC POSITION-PRACTICE
sociology of knowledge is undone with the creation of a
generic position-practice. I have tried to show this in
figure 17.

We arrive at one generic position-practice. At this stage,
the political terrain has also been deconstituted. Power
thus disappears. All forms of domination, as it were,
disappear.

Now let me elaborate an understanding of the generic
position-practice. The position-practice complex was
presented as the point-of-contact between structure and
agency. It was also claimed that there is an ontological
hiatus between structure and agency. In Marx's communism,
this hiatus cannot be held. Only if this hiatus is broken
can one conceive of position-practice in which a person can
'hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in
the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind,
without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or
critic'. The idea of not becoming this or that destroys any
notion of structure presented in chapter three. For only if
it is conceived in this way can the position-practice in
Marx's communism be seen as 'not a state of affairs' but
'real movement'.
4.3.1 Towards a Reconstruction of the Notion of Power

From the brief discussion of position-practice in closed self-mediation, I would like to propose the following arguments for they would help us understand power. Let me return to the political terrain.

4.3.1.1. Sociality

I shall propose here that class struggle is a specific concrete form of interaction between Self and the Other. At an interactional level, Self and Other are, to begin with, held together through a complex character of sociality.30 This can be thought of as a 'capacity for complex social behaviour'.31 There are a number of characteristics

31. Ibid., p.189.
sociality exhibits. These are higher order intentionality, aesthetic standard, narrativity, pedagogy, creativity, intersubjectivity and speech.\textsuperscript{32} These basic features underlying the Self-Other interaction work together to produce a unitary effect, sociality, i.e., the power to create, maintain and change forms of social life.\textsuperscript{33}

Class struggle is a certain structuring of the features of sociality. This form of interaction is really a composite of domination, negotiation, contestation and revolution but with the predominance of domination. All these interactional forms structure the basic features of sociality in particular ways to sustain the relationship between the Self and Other. With this brief diversion, let me proceed with the political terrain.

4.3.1.2. Politics as the Mediating Capacity Between Position and Practice

The political terrain is here constructed as internal to class relations. Political institutions, or rules of organizing this form of interaction between the Self and the Other, mediate this struggle. But this obviously, in turn, really affects position-practice. I would like to make the claim that the transformation of a position into practice is

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., pp.196-202.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p.20.
mediated by the political terrain which is really an expression of the struggle between two positions. The nature of the practice is very much governed by the political terrain, diagrammatically represented below:

Let me explain this diagram. The specific form of interaction i.e., class struggle, gives rise to the political. This mediates between position and practice of the Self and the Other. This mediation effects changes in the position-practice of the agents involved. These changes feed back to the form of interaction between the Self and the Other.

4.3.1.3. Power as 'the Political' and 'the Cultural' and as the Mediating Capacity Between Position and Practice

A third important claim that I would like to make is that position-practice is more generally mediated by power, an
expression of which is the political. I want to use the notion of power as a mediating capacity between position and practice i.e., mutually transforming position and practice. I use power in this way for three reasons. Power can be thought of as relational or non-relational\(^{34}\) i.e., power operating in specific forms of interaction (like class struggle) between Self and the Other and power operating in self-representation and self-organization. Both aspects influence each other. Understood this way, power is not merely political but also cultural. (Section 4.4.4. elaborates this notion a bit further.) Thirdly, by placing power as a mediating capacity between position and practice,

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34. Some clarification of the various ways of understanding the nature of power has been dealt with by Paul Patton. See Paul Patton, 'Taylor and Foucault on Power and Freedom' Political Studies, vol.37, 1989, pp.260-276. I must add a word of caution here. I have not used non-relational power in the sense of power objectified in some institutional set-up. There are thus two senses of non-relational power. One pertains to state-centredness of (political) power. The other sense relates to self-representation and self-organization. I use non-relational power in the second sense.

I use the term non-relational power to bring out a form of power consistent with my introduction of the body into the understanding of the relationship between Self and Other. This form of power is rooted in our essential directedness, or motility. I must quickly add here the fact that non-relational power 'coexists' with relational power. They mutually influence each other. These forms of power i.e. relational and non-relational, can be understood as power over and power to. Power over does merely include domination. It could articulate in other forms. For instance it could articulate as 'deference'.
Fig. 18 The Culture Component of Class Struggle
I place power at the heart of the mode of connection between structure and agency, i.e., reproduction and transformation. These are achievements resulting from specific forms of interaction.

Let us return to culture. In the original construction, culture is quite marginal, or, to use a stronger term, epiphenomenal. Theoretically, the political terrain played a more important role and (at least formally) had the capacity to 'extinguish' social distinctions. Historically, certain 'universal institutions' emerged only through class struggles that found expression on the political terrain. Thus, the workers movement was born with a political programme and the culture of the working class was hardly an aspect that needed careful consideration. In this work, I want to argue that class struggle had a cultural component. This I have shown in figure 18.

4.3.1.4. Culture

Given the construction of the relations of production as total social space (see Chapter one, section 1.2.2.), culture must itself figure as a secretion of the struggle between classes.35 Historically, with the coming of free

labour, freedom and equality are formally established at the political and exchange levels. This is not achieved at the level of production. There is here no consideration of culture or it is only marginally important. The fight against unfreedom at the level of production was organized only at the level of the political.

In the article 'On the Jewish Question', Marx argues that the political separates from the economic with the evolving nature of class struggle. The present era is seeing another differentiation i.e., the cultural from the political. This separation cannot be properly understood within the concept of closed self-mediation. As class struggle is 'resolved', there is an absorption of this into an institutional matrix that has a universalist tendency both of 'accessibility' and 'participability' at the experiential level. This universalization of rationality occurring through the political terrain through politically motivated movements directed at the state is not realized in practice as it is merely the history of the self-and-the-other-as distinction, that is, the movement of labour in its universalist tendency. The universal matrix does not, however, transform all positions into generic ones. This situation actually acts as a historical condition in which differences emerge sharply. It is, in fact, the situation in which there is the liberation of a number of self-defining totalities, a self-
FIG. 19 THE PLACE OF POLITICS AND CULTURE IN SELF-OTHER RELATIONSHIP.
FIG. 20 COMPONENTS OF THE FORMS OF SELF-OTHER INTERACTION
definition arrived at basically by existentially contingent difference. We, therefore, need a concept that puts an end to aggressive self-biased universalization. This has been presented as open self-mediation. This mediation demands a conception of a recalcitrant Other. The recalcitrant Other is thus an agency capable of its own socio-cultural organization. It has a voice of its own. This voice must be part of practice which comes about by virtue of being in a position. This achievement of selfness by the Other (either class or non-class) cannot just be the role of politics. It must also be the role of culture for culture allows 'signification and communication'. I have tried to present an 'image' of this in figure 19.

4.3.1.5. **Power and Forms of Self-Other Interaction**

Forms of Self-Other interaction in a class -- non-class formation include domination, negotiation, contestation and revolution (see figure 20). These interactional forms generate culture and politics. These forms are linked to the three broad structural relationships (see chapter 3) that shape everyday experience. These are (a) historical-universalist, (b) historical-segmentary/transformational and (c) historical-dialogical. Domination and revolution will be seen widespread in structural forms (a) and (b). The
structural form (c) will see the articulation of contestation and negotiation. In domination, the structural sources of motivation may be hidden. However, in the other three forms of interaction, an active consciousness is present.

The forms of interaction of negotiation and contestation allow for the durability of structure and an active agency. The negotiated and contested forms of interaction present an image of metaxologically intermediated Self-Other relationships. Of course, there will be a transitional phase. Thus, for instance, (b) will see the emergence of negotiated or contested forms even as other forms exist. In fact, the transitional phase is important to place the multi-self, multi-identity emancipatory subject.

The revolutionary form exists as a result of class relations. It is a form of interaction which attempts the deconstitution of the basis of the Self and the Other and overcomes it by eventually overcoming otherness. This can therefore be achieved in the relational sphere of self-and-the-other-as-distinction, for here the basis of the Self and the Other can be 'undone'. This undoing is important for self-and-the-other-as-difference to take greater definition. There is a stake therefore in revolutionary activity directed at deconstituting class relations which will be
absorbed at the level of the 'social structure of universality'. This, however, is not inevitable.

Domination is important to consider since 'false consciousness' cannot be located without this form. In order to understand this, let me propose three situations in which an agent may not be totally conscious of her/his nature of action:

(i) when what has been done in similar situation seems reasonable and therefore needs no further reconsideration;
(ii) when the practice, or arguments, of 'an-Other' self seem reasonable;
(iii) when intentional experience at the same time also produces unintentional consequences; and
(iv) when interests, intentions and actions are completely governed by an-Other (Self).

In situation (i) and (ii) we may not find people exercising their conscious faculty completely for they accept quite consciously in principle the way a social situation has to be responded to. These situations do not constitute false consciousness. They are a particular way of responding to structured behaviour/action. Not all structures contribute to the generation of false consciousness. Let us look at
(iii) and (iv). I work in a factory as a manager to support my sister at school or to buy a house. These are my conscious intentions. However, at another level the result of this activity is the reproduction of a system in which one class appropriates the labour of another class. This is situation (iii). It is a situation that can be understood as 'unintended consequences'. This situation can be, in some instances, seen as capable of generating false consciousness or a sense of false freedom and at another instance a sense of limited freedom.

There are, of course, various kinds of structures in society. For instance, one may argue that the purchase of a radio or other consumer durables is actually helping the reproduction of capitalist social relations. This is, however, to overlook the fact that the purchase of a radio can lead to its subversive use and consequently it can lead to the subversion of capitalist social relations. So, I think, one cannot consistently sustain an argument of unintended consequences as a situation sustaining false consciousness. The invisible structural motivation, resulting in everyday activity, can actually subvert these structures. Needless to say, it too has the capability of creating an illusion of freedom. Thus, the third condition mentioned above has two possibilities. One leading to uncovering the structure progressively and the other further
FIG. 21 POWER, SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF UNIVERSALITY AND NON-CLASS AGENTS (OR SUBJECTS).

* A, B & C are non-class subjects 'thrown up' by the feminist, ethno-communal and ecological movements. They are the dominated other.
distancing it. This second option creates a condition for false consciousness to be sustained. The fourth condition is one in which there is a basis for false consciousness to be sustained completely. It is a situation in which the Other is completely objectified.

4.3.1.6. Reintroducing Strife

Let us return to figure 19 which was a departure point for the discussion on the forms of interaction. I would like to add that the Self-Other relationship that I am proposing alters not only because of open self-mediation but also because it is supported by another form of mediation called metaxological intermediation which provides for the recognition of a recalcitrant Other. Self-Other is not the transformation of the bourgeoisie-proletariat to 'universal class-others (ethno-community, gender, eco-community)' in which all differences are extinguished. The Self-Other formations that become increasingly present in the social space universalized by class relation which is the relation between groups which are distinctions of the Same (i.e., capital), are the following: (a) gender, (b) ethno-community, and (c) eco-community. These groups emerge in addition to class. See figure 21 (this figure must be seen along with figure 17). P/UC in the figure represents the proletariat (universal class).
This is the kind of formation that one would find in the second structural relationship, i.e. historical -- segmentary/tra... This situation gives rise to the emergence of culture in a very active sense now playing an important role in the emergence of the third structural relation i.e historical-dialogical. The universalizing matrix actually promotes segmentation. Identity construction and assuming a voice become a central activity. Non-relational power assumes a stronger presence in this activity.

This relation between classes and the consequence of a struggle between them and the emergence of an institutional matrix in a situation of open self-mediation opens up a dialogical dimension which is chiefly characterized by the emergence of new social movements. Historically, as Marx wrote in his article 'On the Jewish Question', the political terrain separates from the economic as free labour comes into being by the formation of a political community, a community in which the members experience equality by being assigned rights. The construction of equality takes place on the terrain of the political. This construction is the most important contribution of class struggle. However, analytically this had meant that all differences are extinguished. This means that signification of the world
will be universalized. That is, when the social world is reconstituted as classless and the alienating structures are undone so that there is no contradiction between essence and existence, the social world 'out there' would be signified, even if in different languages, in a way that would make translation\textsuperscript{36} a superfluous activity since the same social world figures in consciousness but is articulated in different languages. Thus, the level of signification is hardly a problem in the way Marxism is conceived. Thus, the workers' movement had necessarily to be political.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{36} This may be understood as 'inter-translability postulate'. It is built on the assumption that all languages are mappings of a common world and that anything that can be said in any language ultimately refers back to this common world.


\textsuperscript{37} This is understandable as it is the political that captured the universalist imagination. Since one of Marxism's major claims is that the future will be inhabited by world-historical, empirically universal beings, it is the political terrain that is of great importance to the achievement of that future. Culture may create different systems of signification. However, these differences are hardly resistant to changes demanded of them by the universalist tendency of labour. Differences will be extinguished. A common world will be created. And it will have a common system of signification. There will be a universal culture. Culture (or socio-cultural organization) inhabited the idea of difference. This was not taken seriously. It was sought to be overcome by a certain conception of the political.
I must add here immediately that a universalist culture is also a part of the universalist tendency of labour. There is, of course, a system of signification that is universalist. Its meaning structure is transparently translatable in different languages. The media today, for instance, has transformed the world into a global village.

This, of course, did not merely mean the notion of space and time transformed. It also meant the growth of a universalist culture. Historically, in the earlier phase of colonialism, the production of a universalist culture, was already in the making. Take for instance the 'bungalow'. The bungalow was a peasant's hut of rural Bengal. It was appropriated by the Europeans and the English. It was then developed, refined, adapted and spread all over the empire. From the empire it spread into the U.S. Now the bungalow is a part of the global culture.38

The growth of formal political equality was built on the notion that rationality will be universalized and so will needs. The concept of equality had a built-in problem. This is finally related to the nature of labour. Labour power is equatable and thus exchangeable. It is in effect possible to

FIG. 22 POWER AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF DIALOGICAL PLURALISM
equate labour power that went into the making of a chair and that which went into the making of a book rack since what we are equating is abstract labour power. However, it is not possible for us to equate the labour that actually went into making the chair and book rack. These embodiments of labour entail very specific form of labour demanding a particular use of the human body and consciousness. They are, therefore, inherently different and cannot be equated. This problem shows up again at a certain phase of development of the class struggle and its resolution in institutional practices at the level of the social structure of universality. If the separation of the political from the economic marked the coming-into-being of free labour and therefore, unfrequently, the coming-into-being a political community that is constituted by free and equal citizens, the coming-into-being of the cultural terrain shows the essentially unequal nature of equality. This reintroduces strife and provides the ground for the opening up of a dialogic space between the unequal formations of equality, between formations that are by their contingent existence different. See figure 22. UC/P in the figure indicates the universal class.

The coming-into-being of segmentary formations reintroduces strife and I like to understand this as essentially non-antagonistic in nature. The strife is between unequal
formations of equal entities. This sets segmentation and
dialogical pluralism into motion as broad structural
movements. Both of these tendencies require dialogic space.
The primary non-antagonistic groups now organize social
life. The differentiation on the cultural plane gives rise
to what has now come to be called the new social movements.
The attempt to harmonize conflict between non-antagonistic
groups demands a notion of permanent revolution or what Mao
has termed as cultural revolution. This tendency draws
politics and redefines its orientation towards acephalous
forms of governance, to establish a 'community of
difference' in a dialogical reality.

4.3.1.7. Power and Communism

Before I move on to the next section to present some
specific aspects of power, I would like to make the
following observations to conclude this section. First,
about the notion of power. We have to reconsider this notion
because history does not terminate with the emergence of
social universality but results in sharper illumination of
difference. Power, defined as politics, therefore does not
disappear with the deconstitution of class. In fact, the
dialogic and segmentary tendencies that emerge from the
social universality viewed from the perspective of open
self-mediation and metaxological intermediation demand a reconceptualization of power. The notion of communism as the 'riddle of history solved and (as a society that) knows itself to be this solution' is important to keep in mind in this reconstruction. The 'knows itself to be the solution' is a self-conscious reality. But the movement of this self-consciousness gives voice to a difference that can be sustained only in a space that allows coexistence i.e. a dialogic space. Communism must be thus essentially a dialogic space. In this, power becomes the mediating capacity for self-definition, for negotiation and contestation. Without this active presence of power, a totalitarian polity would take root.

My second observation, related to the first, is on the notion of negotiation and contestation. These forms of interaction of the Self and the Other essentially recognize an active Self and an active Other. It is not a relationship between an aggressive Self and a passive Other. It therefore recognizes a recalcitrant Other. Negotiation allows dialogue while contestation allows segmentation. Thus negotiation and contestation have been identified with the historical-dialogical structural movement. Though the structures established by this broad historical sweep are universalizing these forms of interaction, they are by no means confined to this level only. They have a history from
the earlier stages. It is this history that questions the whole thesis of false consciousness. It is a history of participation, resistance and intervention in history. Because each position-practice is a complex set of position-practices operating at the interaction level, mediated by power, participation, resistance and intervention take place at the mundane everyday level. It is these forms of interaction that take a more central place in the historical-dialogical movement. A well-developed institutional matrix that sustains and promotes these forms of interaction promotes the concretization of a dialogical, deliberative democracy.

I will conclude this section here and take up some concrete and specific aspects of power below.

4.4. POWER, SOCIAL UNIVERSALITY AND DIALOGICAL REALITY

4.4.1. Power and Organization

The development of class society and its final dissolution results in the creation of a community whose members are 'world-historical, empirically universal individuals'. Such a society also organizes itself on the principle of (instrumental) rationality, that is universality. Anarchic economic production in capitalism is replaced by centralized
planning. Central planning is, of course, a device to consciously direct production. The technology that takes shape under these circumstances is large-scale technology requiring large-scale social organization. In effect, the social universality achieved through the coming of communist society is a large-scale human organization in which central decision-making becomes a natural course of organizing the society. Centralized decision-making 'regulates all aspects of social activities either directly or indirectly. The scope of power, the functions of the state apparatus and the party bureaucracy and their impact on social life manifest themselves in all spheres of social existence. This is an order that incorporates a total organization of society and a total bureaucracy as its correlate. Such societies are not just ruled by the bureaucratic apparatus; bureaucracy has somehow become for them the integration and the driving force without which the social whole would be unable to function'.39

The management of large-scale society can be organized in either of two ways:

(i) the whole population is involved; or

(ii) a section of the population manages the society.

Both these ways have the capacity of developing a monoorganizational society. The capacity is a strong presence in (ii). The management in which the whole society is involved is a logical conclusion of Marx's notion of communism which is a self-conscious reality in which universal beings (who have overcome differences) are members. Marx's proletariat, the historical subject, destroys the possibility of bureaucratic organization since everyone is involved in the production and reproduction of society.\textsuperscript{40} But are large-scale society and non-bureaucratic organisation of society compatible characteristics of future society? Can large-scale society organized bureaucratically be organised in a democratic manner?

Large-scale society seems to lead to formalization and instrumental rationalization for only in this manner can a transparent social totality spreading over space and time be managed by humanity. Such formalization and rationalization

\textsuperscript{40} Engels argues that neither the peasants nor the petty bourgeoisie can govern a large state. This is because they have neither the breadth of vision nor the knowledge to balance the different conflicting interests. By implication the proletariat must have both to produce and reproduce society.

lead to bureaucratization. This objective requirement introduces a hierarchical organization and creates a stratum to run the organization. Thus the inherent tendency of bureaucracy is anti-democratic. But a large-scale organization is invariably afflicted by this problem. Putting it in Robert Michels' words, 'The objective immaturity of the mass is not a mere transitory phenomenon which will disappear with the progress of democratization au lendemain du socialisme. On the contrary, it derives from the very nature of the mass as mass, from this, even when organized, suffers from an incurable incompetence for the solution of the diverse problems which present themselves for solution — because the mass per se is amorphous and therefore needs division of labour, specialization and guidance'.

This kind of development i.e. a 'rigidly hierarchized form of governance', gives rise, according to Bruno Rizzi, to 'a clique and then by a social stratum which may later assert itself as a class'. This kind of development to attain a social totality, of course, is one of which I have been critical. With the introduction of open self-mediation and


metaxological intermediation, we need to reconsider the nature of organization to attain a dialogical, deliberative democracy. On a practical level, how do we deal with the problem of bureaucratic organization which is mono-organization of society, highly centralized in every aspect? The ‘destruction’ of such an organization is possible in the following situations:

(i) When the skills and knowledge found in bureaucracy are generalized, the whole population participates in the production and reproduction of society. In this case, society has a tendency to achieve a mono-organizational form. There would be greater integration since everyone will be educated and conscious. The problem of reification, in which objectified social structures assume a life of their own, will be overcome. The non-distantiation between thought, action and the objectified social reality really means that the whole society is consciously directing society.

(ii) When small organizations replace large-scale social organizations.

We have shown in chapter 1 that (i) is difficult to maintain. In chapter 3, our notion of structure and agency also makes it difficult for (i) to be sustained. (ii) is a possible trajectory of future organizations or movements.
whose goals include, in the main, building a dialogic deliberative democracy. Evidence supports the contention that democracy functions best in small organizations.43 This indicates that 'size, technology and the division of labour affect an organization's ability to maintain participation and democracy'.44 Joyce Rothschild and Raymond Russell cite T. Kowalak's study which 'examined 30 years of post-war experience with workers cooperatives in Poland and concluded that "democracy is inversely proportional to the size of the cooperative, and it seems to be a rule in spite of several experiments being made to avoid the consequences of that rule" [and which] urges that cooperatives not exceed a size compatible with a general meeting of all the members, not simply their representatives'.45

This is supported by a number of trends in the social reality that we have tried to capture in chapters 3 and

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43. See, for example, J.J. Mansbridge, Beyond Adversary Democracy (New York: Basic, 1980).


45. Ibid., p.314.

above (in this chapter). Large scale technology is no more a necessary development of technology. In fact, the whole production process is broken into a number of parts and distributed across the globe. The production of the units takes place in productive units that need no large-scale organized factories. In fact, the multinational corporation is an organizational form that combines central planning and autonomy and achieves high productivity by actually breaking up its production process.\textsuperscript{46} At the level of production such big corporations can maintain small groups. Of course, in capitalist production such organization does not lead to democracy. But this form of organization is a part of the resource that is available to supra-national forms of production which are a ground reality of the social structure of universality. I would like to add the fact that the division of labour is also segmented, allowing the possibility of small work groups to be organized. This is also made possible by the development of a more ecologically- and socially-sensitive technology that has come under the name of appropriate technology.

\textsuperscript{46} For related themes under 'Spontaneity' and 'Planning' see Ulf Himmelstrand, \textit{Spontaneity and Planning in Social Development} (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981).

At another level, it is important for us to remember that we have been claiming that there is a process of segmentation. The above process in which labour is segmented must be tied up to the general process of segmentation. Both these processes counter Marx's claim of a social universality of generic beings or individuals with a universal identity. As I have argued, the separation of the cultural terrain allows looking at interests at very local levels.

At one level there is interest fragmentation since issues are now more specific and not global ones. At another level it is possible to conceive of a universal matrix in which not only plural ethno-communities dialogically coexist but also a large number of small productive units coexist. There are indications of a possible trajectory of social development in which small-scale societies dialogically coexist. This makes the achievement of democracy more realistic.

The new social movements, which need a reconceptualization of power to sustain them, take up very specific local issues. As I have stated, there is, to some extent, interest fragmentation. Though I shall take up the new social movements later, here I would like to state that these movements have reconsidered organization. These movements are invariably critical of the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures of the states and the old political
parties. It proposes radical democratic internal structures and processes, including rotation of offices, open meetings, positive discrimination and limitation of rewards'.

These developments have also contributed to a networking of organizations to deal with specific and long-term issues. These networks are acephalous units. Networks seem to be


48. Over the years there have grown a number of networks like the Infant Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), Health Action International (HAI), Pesticide Action Network (PAN), etc. These are networks of organizations involved with an issue at various levels i.e. international, national, regional and local.

In the 'third wave', organizational formations seem to assume some features that I have been describing. See Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave (Madras: MacMillan Press, 1980), p.276. See also an important article by Monica Wemegah on Alternative Ways of Life Movement that principally discusses networks as alternative to dominant forms of organization of social life. Monica Wemegah, 'Alternative Networks' in Andrzej Sicinski and Monica Wemegah (eds.), Alternative Ways of Life in Contemporary Europe (Tokyo: The United Nations University, 1983), pp.172-186.

A word of caution is required here. There is a growing literature on 'social network' studies. However, I am not directly interested in looking at themes these studies have explored. Basically, my concern is about the acephalous nature of networks such as those I have mentioned above. This aspect has not been sufficiently explored in the literature on networks.

the kind of social organizational form in which planning and spontaneity coexist and which seem suited for sustaining small-size organizations that can dialogically coexist. These are the resources available to concretely bring forth a dialogical, deliberative democracy.

4.4.2 Domination and the Objectification of the Other

I have discussed above the question of domination and false consciousness. Let me elaborate on these a little bit more. There are situations where the Self-Other relationship is transformed into a subject-object relationship in which the Other is transformed into a total object and denied any agency. The Other in such a situation is said to act not in her/his interest, an interest linked to the experience of a particular or a set of position practices.

Let us explore this by looking at the situation of women in patriarchy. The transformation of woman (as an individual and as a collectivity) into an object is robbing her of her own subject-ivity. 'The systematic representation of woman-objects is not a question of a single subject representing to himself another subject, who happens to be a pretty woman, as an object. In cultural terms, it is the male gender, unified by a common sense, who assumes the subject position: as the authors of culture, men assume the voice,
compose the picture, write the story, for themselves and other men, and about women'.

The relation between Self and the Other is transformed into a relationship between subject and object. This takes place in the sphere of domination. In effect, 'the object class of women, or of black people in Namibia and South Africa, has no voice, no subject position in the society'. Suzanne Kappeler goes on to add that the

...male gender's project of constituting male subjectivity is a serious business that has nothing to do with fictional and playful fantasy. It is the means by which the male subject convinces himself that he is real, his necessary production of a feeling of life. He feels the more real, the less real the Other, the less of a subject the Other, the less alive the Other. And the reality he creates for himself through his cultural self-representation is the Authorized Version of Reality, the dominant reality for all of us, the common sense which determines what pleases and what displeases.

This objectification process destroys the non-relational source of power of the Other. In this there is a striking similarity between male fantasy (idealized in pornography), racism and totalitarianism. In all these cases, there is the

50. Ibid., p.50.
51. Ibid., p.62.
creation of a false notion of a total subject capable of complete, total control of the passive Other that is transformed into an object, a thing-like entity. The false experience affects both the Self and the Other. The 'false experience' operates at the cultural and political levels. Male fantasy is best sustained by pornography. Kappeler observes that

the fingering and tonguing in the peep show are part of the peeping, aids of the medium, like cinema-scope and stereo sound, improved 'reality effects' the better to stimulate the imagination. The goal, under this perspective, is not 'live sex', with real women; the goal is the feeling of life, the pleasure of the subject. The pleasure is more fully realizable under the sole control of the subject, through total objectification of the 'object'. Real life women, as we know, have a nasty tendency to assert their own subjectivity at the most inappropriate moments, disturbing and interrupting the pleasure of the subject.52 (underscoring mine.)

The best example of racism is apartheid, and of totalitarianism, 'Stalinist Russia'.

Let me explore the subject-object relationship. The subject-object relationship shifts from bourgeoisie-proletariat to universal class as the subject-object of history. This dichotomy is actually overcome by the universal class. Again all differences are extinguished in the object and a

52. Ibid., p.59.
universalist Self is constituted which overcomes the subject-object dichotomy. This overcoming is posited by dangerously assuming that the first order mediation will also disappear. This is really built on the claim that 'woman', 'ethno-community' and 'nature'/future generations' as long as they are part of this object are unable to signify the world or organize it. And this robs them of agency. Eventually all these differences in society are extinguished. As we have argued, this is an unlikely trajectory of history. In fact, this undermines the basis for a dialogical, deliberative democracy, a democracy in which relationships take place between subjects or agents of action, or subjects of speech.

Let me add here that I am elaborating on the notions of open self-mediation and metaxological intermediation which were developed in chapter two. The closed self mediation of the Marxian dialectic transforms the Self-Other relationship into subject-object relationship and opens up totalitarianism as a political possibility of the social totality. This closure is a characteristic of domination as a form of interaction. The closure occurs both at the level of culture and politics. It is this closure that

53. In his discussion on the One Dimensional Man, Marcuse points out that the transformation of language into the
transforms recalcitrance into manipulatable objectification. At certain points of history, this closure presents domination and revolution as the only forms of Self-Other relationship. But let me maintain that closure achieved through class relations in which the proletariat is brutalised and objectified is the only instance of domination that can be overcome by a form of interaction called revolution. The other forms of objectification and its overcoming can be violent but need not be revolutionary. Class relations can be completely undone by revolutionary activity since classes are distinctions of the Same. This cannot be done for the other Self-Other forms of relation.

The proposal of open self-mediation and metaxological intermediation disallows the complete collapse of all forms of the Other into the Self. By doing so, we actually open up analytical form robs it of metaphoric content and destroys creativity. Human beings become progressively entrapped in a technological-synthetic whole that arrests the possibility of transcendence. See Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

Also there is a growing literature on the process of closure that takes place largely in the socio-cultural sphere. Domination is managed by exclusionary barriers and closure mechanisms. See Raymond Murphy, *Social Closure: The Theory of Monopolization and Exclusion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).
other forms of interaction which are the formal spheres of the 'social net' of everyday interactions, between the Self and the Other. These other forms are negotiation and contestation. In the conceptualization of a passive Other, these forms of interaction are actually submerged.

4.4.3. Cultural Power

4.4.3.1. Culture as Contested Terrain

Resistance and struggle have long been associated with the state and politics. The state was the arena of legitimate political activity, of the play of power. The cultural terrain did not constitute a contested terrain. This is of course, quite evident from the way Marxist theory has been conceptualized. I presented a glimpse of this contestation that occurred in the French revolution of 1789-1799. Let me pursue this a little further. Hunt makes an important observation when he writes that 'legitimacy is the general agreement on signs and symbols. When a revolutionary movement challenges the legitimacy of traditional government, it must necessarily challenge the traditional trappings of rules as well'.

54. Lynn Hunt, Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution, p.54.
the Revolution, even the most ordinary objects and customs became political emblems and potential sources of political and social conflict. Colours, adornments, clothings, plateware, money, calendars, and playing cards became "signs of rallying", to one side or another'.

Any cultural artifact/practice can become a contested terrain. This fact contributes to the reality of cultural power i.e. 'the capacity of social groups to convey notions of actual, possible and preferable social beliefs and practices to their own groups and throughout society as a whole'.

The representation of the brother-sister bond and a more democratized bond between the male and the female is prominently enacted in 'calendar art' against a more widespread representation of female as powerless, subordinated and marginal. Calendar art becomes a site of contestation.

55. Ibid., p.53.


'Noise' has been argued to be a site of cultural struggle. Drumming-cum-music has been a part of many eastern religions like Hinduism or Buddhism. Noise is an expression of self-identity. This is quite unlike religions like Islam or Christianity, where there is 'valorization of silence in the context of worship'. The British Raj introduced the Police ordinance of 1865 to control noise. Section 90 of this ordinance read: 'All persons who shall at any time, within any town or limits, either within any house or building, beat drums or tom toms, or have or use any other music calculated to frighten horses, or who shall make any noise in the night so as to disturb the repose of the inhabitants, or shall at any time, discharge fire arms, crackers of fireworks except under Military regulation, or unless they shall have obtained a license from the Police Magistrate of the district, or from the Chief Superintendent of Police... shall be guilty of an offence, and be liable to any fine not exceeding Five pounds, or to imprisonment... not exceeding Three months'. Such enforcement, though it seemingly tries


59. Ibid., p.243.

60. Ibid., pp.241-242.
to achieve equality and uniformity in principle, actually 'created inequality because of the fundamentally different relation between drumming-cum-music and worship in Buddhist (and Hindu) culture on the one hand and Western Christian (and Islamic) civilization on the other'.61

In Trinidad, the Carnival, originally celebrated by the British colonizers from 'Christmas until Ash Wednesday with genteel house-to-house visiting en masque, street promenading, dancing, and playing practical jokes' was appropriated by ex-slaves and transformed into their celebration. With that it 'provided the main point of focus for class tensions, whether turned outward against the ruling class or, more often, inward in various forms of intra-class violence'.62 In yet another study, football fanzines (football fan magazines) are seen as a site of cultural contestation.63

61. Ibid., p.277.


4.4.3.2. **Culture as 'Signification and Communication'**

I have briefly presented above some instances/moments in human history where cultural resources were sites of contestation. But to further an understanding of this, we need to look at culture a little more closely to identify its properties of 'signification and communication'. In fact, 'the whole of culture is signification and communication and humanity and society exist only when communicative and significative relationships are established'. Umberto Eco observes that a 'signification

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64. I find this conception of semiotics a more fruitful trajectory for my purposes for two important reasons. One relates to the way in which I have, drawing upon the insights of others, reconceptualized the relationship between the Self and the Other. The other relates to the fact that the Self-Other relationship is an 'event' occurring at the intersection of relational and non-relational power. Both these reasons contribute to a conception of semiotics that is sensitive to not only signification (as in the case of Saussurean semiology) but also communication (a well-developed aspect of Piercean semiotics). I have shown this in the figure below.

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Eco has made a synthesis of the tendencies in French semiology and American semiotics by proposing the notion of semiotics as consisting of signification and communication.
system is an autonomous semiotic construct that has an abstract mode of existence independent of any possible communicative act it makes possible. On the contrary... every act of communication to or between human beings -- or any other intelligent biological or mechanical apparatus -- presupposes a signification system as its necessary condition'.66 The cultural sign is thus endowed with the properties of both signification and communication. Both these processes are important for self-construction and the construction of the Self-Other relationship in the context of the four modes/forms of interaction (which are ultimately a part of either reproduction or transformation).

4.4.3.3. The 'Refraction' of Culture by Positions

In Marx, there are two ways of conceiving the relation between the material and the cultural. He suggests in some works (identified as that of the early Marx) that social being conditions consciousness.67 In other texts (identified with the older/mature Marx) he presents the base-superstructure model in which he employs the notion of ruling/governing ideas.68 Here we will closely follow the

66. Ibid., p.9.
68. See 'Preface' in Karl Marx, Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, p.21.

Also see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology, p.67.
former conception, though we will not be merely interested in consciousness but in practice in general (including consciousness). The expression of social being/social existence in terms of actual practice is mediated by power whose moments are political and cultural and these species of power operate within the context of the four modes/forms of interaction empirically derived from the social net of Self-Other interactions.

Because I present an image of society in this way, i.e. that social existence conditions social consciousness, I not only limit the use of false consciousness but also maintain that the cultural sign may be common and yet the appropriation of it may not be.

Existence reflected in sign is not merely reflected but refracted. How is this refraction of existence in the ideological sign determined? By an intersecting of differently oriented social interests within one and the same sign community, i.e., by the class struggle. Class does not coincide with the sign community, i.e., with the community, which is the totality of users of the same set of signs for ideological communication. Thus various different classes will use one and the same language. As a result, differently oriented accents intersect in every ideological sign. Sign becomes an arena of the class struggle.69


See part 1, Chapter 2: 'Concerning the Relation of the Basis and Superstructure'.
V.N. Volosinov goes on to add that

This social multiaccentuality of the ideological sign is a very crucial aspect. By and large, it is thanks to this intersecting of accents that a sign maintains its vitality and dynamism and the capacity for further development. A sign that has been withdrawn from the pressures of the social struggle -- which, so to speak, crosses beyond the pale of the class struggle -- inevitably loses force, degenerating into allegory and becoming the object not of live social intelligibility but of philological comprehension.70

We need to make only one addition to the notion of social struggle. For Volosinov reduces this to class struggle. Though this is a very important social struggle occurring in one of the relational spheres [self-and-the-other-as-distinction] there is in our construction another set of social struggle which results from the movement of labour in its contingent nature. Besides class struggle, there is non-class struggle. Thus, along with class struggle there are other sites of potential struggles that transform the into a site of contestation. The spread of this contestation can span from everyday situations to spectacular moments.

As is obvious, there is a process of self-representation. As a self, the other too has a voice and is involved in the process of self-representation/naming. This is a complex process and occurs at almost every level. Writing on

70. Ibid.
subcultures and style, Dick Hebdige observes that

By repositioning and recontextualizing commodities, by subverting their conventional uses and inventing new ones, the subcultural stylist .... opens up the world of objects to new and covertly oppositional readings. The communication of a significant difference, then (and the parallel communication of a group identity), is the 'point' behind the style of all spectacular subcultures. It is the superordinate term under which all the other significations are marshalled, the message through which all the other messages speak. 71

Self-representation involves, therefore, communication of a significant difference and, consequently, an identity. This also points to a fact that the Other cannot be conceived as object in every aspect of social life. Maintaining this position presents a certain way of looking at the mediating role of power articulated at the level of culture. Position allows a certain refraction of culture. This refraction is basically the proposition that the Other is an interpretive agent (or, an interpretive community). 72 This has a number of implications. Thus, a commodity's use can be subverted for self-representation, identity-construction and community-building. Let me elaborate this point. The sphere of production in Marx is composed of four moments, i.e.


production, exchange, distribution and consumption. Of these four moments, of course, the moment of production is of the utmost importance for Marx. Marx throughout his work did not see exchange as a site of human self-creation. As Daniel Miller observes that 'the place of work and utilitarian practices were seen as the "proper" sites of human self-creation and there was a concomitant failure to examine cultural and consumption activities as creative of social relations'. Daniel Miller goes on to add that if a commodity is defined as the product and symbol of abstract and oppressive structures then the object of consumption is the negation of the commodity. Although the object's material form remains constant as it undergoes the work of consumption, its social nature is radically altered. This is not, of course, a description of all consumption or a realizable aim of all the participants in the modern economy, but what must be recognized is that it is immanent in consumption itself. That is to say, we must know that the work we do on the goods we purchase, or obtain, and the cultural networks with which we associate ourselves, can be understood in a similar vein to the work we do on the natural world.

Extending the above line of argument, it is therefore possible to recapture the 'social life of things'. The


74. Ibid., p.192.

presence of things/commodities cannot be merely be looked at in terms of the level of production. The commodity must be seen within a cultural context. For instance, in preindustrial Indian society there were three basic uses of cloth: 'first, its use in symbolizing status or in recording changes of status; second, its magical or "transformative" use, in which the moral and physical being of the weaver/recipient was perceived to be actually changed by the innate qualities of the cloth or the spirit and substance it conveyed; third, its use as a pledge of future protection'.76 In the four-tiered caste system, the cloth and colour of the cloth were marked. 'According to Ganga Smriti, a Brahman should wear white, Kshatriya (warrior) red, a Vaishya (mercantile person or cultivator) yellow (a color that implies an easy, natural fecundity), and a Shudra (menial) "dark and dirty clothes". Insofar as it is possible to recapture the meaning of these injunctions, it seems that cloth of different colours was considered to have a magical and not merely a symbolic function; it enhanced or destroyed the innate qualities in individuals'.77


77. Ibid., p.291.
The 'cultural biography of things' is important not only because the idea of things/commodities have to be reviewed in traditional Marxist theory, but also a review is required of the nature of consumption which this cultural biography implies. It is only in this way that we can bring such a terrain on to the level of conscious contestation by proposing that the nature of consumption and the cultural biography of things contribute to creating differences, distinctions, and consequently, identities. Dress, for instance, does not only contribute to a rich cultural history in terms of creating differences but also a history of a site of struggle.78

Another implication of refraction is also important for our consideration here. Only by considering the complexity of class position-practice can we arrive at multiple class culture theories. Frank Parkin, for instance, presents this refractive process as a 'different moral interpretation of class inequality'.79 He presents three value systems:


Another famous example is Gandhi's use of Khadi as a site for contesting British colonialism.

(i) The dominant value system, the social source of which is the major institutional order. This is a moral framework which promotes the endorsement of existing inequality; among the subordinate class this leads to a definition of the reward structure in either deferential or aspirational terms.

(ii) The subordinate value system, the social source or generating milieu of which is the local working-class community. This is a moral framework which promotes accommodative responses to the facts of inequality and low status.

(iii) The radical value system, the source of which is the mass political party based on the working class. This is a moral framework which promotes an oppositional interpretation of class inequalities.  

Raymond Williams has also presented multiple refractions within a society. He has presented this as three cultural forms i.e. the dominant, the residual and the emergent forms. The dominant form is that of the ruling class and normally useful in making epochal analysis. "Thus "bourgeois culture" is a significant generalizing description and hypothesis, expressed within epochal analysis by

80. Ibid., pp.81-82.
fundamental comparisons with "feudal culture" or "socialist culture". However, as a description of cultural process, over four or five centuries in scores of different societies, it requires immediate historical and internally comparative differentiation.81

Such differentiation requires us to recognise the existence of the residual and emergent cultural forms:

The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present. Thus certain experiences, meanings, and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of dominant culture are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue -- cultural as well as social -- of some previous social and cultural institution or formation. It is crucial to distinguish this aspect of the residual, which may have an alternative or even oppositional relation to the dominant culture, from that active manifestation of the residual (this being its distinction from the archaic) which has been wholly or largely incorporated into the dominant culture.82

For Raymond Williams, in the emergent culture 'new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created'.83

82. Ibid., p.122.
83. Ibid., p.123.
In yet another work, the complexity of refraction is presented as first culture and second culture. The former is that of the ruling class. 'The second culture is always articulated or "formulated" vis-a-vis a dominating first culture (i.e. a culture of a ruling class). Second culture is always a culture formulated from below, first culture, a culture formulated from above'. Thomas Metscher goes on to add:

Second culture is a culture of resistance. Basically second culture is, like all culture, an articulation of human self-assertion and self-formation, but self-assertion and self-formation in confrontation with a powerful enemy... Consequently, every form of a second culture will organically develop specific ideological qualities and positions: qualities and positions of conscious resistance to the power of oppression. It will develop subversive, radical, democratic or socialist ideologies as historic forms of resistance and strategies to carry this resistance through... Second culture is internationalist in its essential content. It possesses the characteristics of universal significance. (underscoring mine.)

What we have sketched above is the complex character of the process of refraction influenced by position-practice. The complexity of refraction is well captured by Williams when he observes that 'no mode of production and therefore no


85. Ibid., p.52,53.
dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention'. 86 To make use of the resources we have explored, it is possible to conceive of the Self's cultural form as the first culture, and therefore of a dominant form, and the Other's cultural form as second culture which may be reflected as residual and/or emergent. It is possible to think of the residual as a tendency of the subordinated Other to construct the past, 'reinvent tradition' 87 as it were, and present it an oppositional or alternative mode of being. It is important to keep in mind that a characteristic of the second culture is its universal significance; it is not a movement to dominate the self. In fact, it is the universal significance of dialogical coexistence.

4.4.4. Power and Social Movements

4.4.4.1. The Inherent Political Nature of the Working Class Movement

In this concluding section of a long journey from the critique of Marx's notion of communism, I would like to

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86. Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature, p.125.
87. See, for example, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
touch upon a number of dimensions. Specifically, I’ll take up for discussion the political nature of the workers’ movement, everyday forms of resistance, the cultural (and political) nature of the present new social movements, and the cultural revolution. I shall begin by making some observations on the ‘two’ distinct, though interlinked, conceptions of the political in Marx:

(i) the political as the official expression of antagonism in civil society i.e., class struggle; and

(ii) the political as a terrain emerging with the creation of free labour assigned with equal human rights.

How do we rationalize these two conceptualization and arrive at the political nature of the workers’ movement? The second conceptualization needs to be looked at closely. The coming of the capitalist social relations brings along the institution of ‘free labour’ and the institution of human

The dialogue between past and present is universal. The dramatic form this took in the liberation of Zimbabwe brought the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) guerrillas in association with spirit mediums. For an excellent ethnography of this dialogue between the past and the present see David Lan, Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe (London: John Currey, 1985).


rights. 'But the right of man to liberty is based not on the association of man with man, but on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the restricted individual withdrawn into himself'. 90 This right was ultimately 'the right to enjoy one's property and to dispose of it at one's discretion without regard to other men, independently of society, the right of self interest. This individual liberty and its application form the basis of civil society. It makes every man see in other men not the realization of his freedom but the barrier to it'. 91 However, inherent in this conception of the right was also the fact that 'every member of the nation is an equal participant'. 92 This became the basis for the formation of the political terrain. And consequently, the political state. 'The state abolishes, in its own way, distinctions of birth, social rank, education, occupation when it declares that birth, social rank educations occupation are non-political distinctions.' 93 This development provides man 'a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: life in the political community, in which he

90. Ibid., pp.160-161.
91. Ibid., p.163.
92. Ibid., p.153.
93. Ibid.
considers himself a communal being, and life in civil society, in which he acts as a private individual..."94 Thus 'Far from abolishing these real distinctions [i.e. of birth, social rank etc. of the private individual], the state only exists on the presupposition of their existence; it feels itself to be a political state and asserts its universality only in opposition to these elements of its being'.95 By asserting its universality the perfect political state is, 'by its nature, man's species-life, as opposed to his material life' [which is egoistical].96 This whole movement of 'political emancipation' is therefore a 'big step forward. 'True, it is not the final form of human emancipation in general, but it is the final form of human emancipation within the hitherto existing world order. It goes without saying that we are speaking here of real, practical emancipation'.97 (underscoring mine.)

Freedom and equality in the institutional practice of human rights presents a political community of equals. A certain pre-figuration of social universality therefore emerges in

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94. Ibid., p.154.
95. Ibid. p.153.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid., p.155.
the political sphere. However, there is a disjunction in terms of the condition of human existence and experience in another sphere, that of civil society. In this sphere, production proceeds as a result of class relations i.e. one class exploiting the other. There is tension between the classes. There is inequality and unfreedom and unfreedom at this level, in this life activity of human beings. This unfreedom and inequality must be overcome. This 'theatre of history' has to be transformed. The 'political revolution' which is a 'step forward' and a 'real practical emancipation' offers the terrain from which to mount a struggle against the condition in civil society, a struggle to achieve radical equality, in the life activity of human beings. Thus class struggle assumes a political character. The struggle between classes resolves into revolutionary activity, a stage in which the basis of classes is destroyed and equality is achieved in civil society, in the very life activity of human beings. Human beings do not anymore live an earthly and a heavenly life. Human evolution stops being political in nature. The class formations in the relational sphere of self-and-the-other-as-distinction are destroyed and this sphere at the structural level continues as the 'social structure of universality'. The radical equality that is achieved politically is the achievement of
the working class movement. Thus, inherently, the workers' movement has a strong political character.

Here it is important to keep in mind that the struggle to destroy the exploitative nature of civil society is achieved in practical terms by directing the movement at the state. Thus the state-centredness of the political has two tendencies. One, it is a social universality which is a real positive development which the workers can avail themselves of. Two, the state is an instrument in the hands of the class that captures it. The capitalist class that comes to influence it directly and indirectly, maintains the inequality in the civil society. The capitalist class' notion of social universality (and equality) is confined to the political and does not allow it to 'spill' over to the civil society. The proletariat class needs to achieve radical equality in both spheres and overcome inequality in both spheres. Its notion is more radical and universal. The

98. When I say achievement, I mean this in two senses. One, I use in the sense of the ongoing struggle the working class wages across the globe, locally and globally and in varying intensity. Two, I also use achievement, in the sense of a 'settled practice' of the whole society. Take for instance the 8 hours' work a day. This was a result of a tremendous struggle between the working class and the capitalist, a struggle whose history appears in Marx's sensitive portrayal of it in Capital I. That we have forgotten this 'taken-for-granted' practice now is no reason to deny it as the achievement of a struggle of the working class, an achievement that has become universally applicable.

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capitalist class, by maintaining its notion of equality and universality draws the state into the arena/site of contestation and revolutionary activity since the notion of equality is markedly different in the other class i.e. the proletariat.

The working class movement is thus a state-centric movement, a movement directed at the capture of the state which is to set into operation the processes to achieve radical equality and to achieve a universality not confined to the political. Thus, inherently, the workers' movement is not only political in character but is also directed at the state. It is thus this aspect of the emancipatory subject that must give rise to the social structure of universality which is a structure to ground equality and the experience of universality. This is the historical contribution of class struggle.

It has been my aim above to argue that Marx had two conceptions of the political and if we consider these two visions carefully it would be possible for us to establish that the working class movement is inherently political in nature. Now I want to develop further these notions in Marx, to make it compatible with what I have presented above on my use of the notion of power and to draw upon this elaboration an understanding of the everyday forms of
FOUCAULT
[TOTALLY RELATIONAL
AND 'FRAGMENTARY',
NON-INSTITUTIONAL]

GRAMSCI
[STATE + CIVIL SOCIETY
— INSTITUTIONAL]

SELF

POWER

OTHER

MARX
[STATE-CENTRIC — INSTITUTIONAL]

FIG. 23 THREE 'TRADITIONS' OF CONCEPTUALIZING POWER
contestation/resistance and the new social movements. This will complete the power aspects of the notion of the emancipatory subject and make room for me to revitalize the notion of permanent (cultural) revolution.

4.4.4.2. Relational and Non-Relational Forms of Power and Everyday Forms of Contestation/Resistance

Let me state here what Marx observed in 'On the Jewish Question': 'It [the political revolution] set free the political spirit, which had been, as it were, split up, partitioned and dispersed in the various blind alleys of feudal society. It gathered the dispersed parts of the political spirit...'.\textsuperscript{99} We have to consider this insight carefully. I shall henceforth use the concept power instead of the political.

There are now three established traditions of looking at power useful to our efforts (see figure 23). Let us refer to Marx's observation and insight. First of all, his perspective is that of state-centric universality. From this point of view, he sees the dispersed parts of the political spirit. In the political revolution, these dispersed parts are concentrated again. Thus, with the arrival of free

\textsuperscript{99}. Karl Marx, 'On the Jewish Question', p.166.
labour, Marx performs a sweeping theoretical act from the perspective of the universality of conceiving the 'reformation' of the political spirit which has been split up, partitioned and dispersed, into state-centric power. In Europe this was emerging from the sixteenth century.

Foucault takes up the same problem of power but looks at it from the opposite end. What does his perspective offer? First he says that 'the state is envisioned as a kind of political power which ignores individuals, looking only at the interests of the totality or, I should say, of a class or a group among the citizens'. To this observation, let us add another. Foucault believed that power that was 'split up', 'partitioned' and 'dispersed' (in Marx's language) was actually parts of the mechanism of subjugation that had existed, or that was brought into being, for some (localized) practical reason or other. Thus, for instance, the mechanisms of the exclusion of madness, and of surveillance of infantile sexuality, began from a particular point in time, and for reasons which need to be studied, [revealed] their political usefulness... to lend themselves to economic profit, and that as a natural consequence, all of a sudden, they came to be colonised and maintained by global mechanisms and the entire State system.

It is only if we grasp these techniques of power

100. Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power' in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1982), p.213.
and demonstrate the economic advantage or political utility that derives from them in a given context for specific reasons, that we understand how these mechanisms come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole'.

Gramsci saw a different display of power. He reconceptualized the state as composed of the political society and the civil society. This 'general notion of the state' is expanded in a way that is sensitive to both Marx's and Foucault's notions of power. 'The set of apparatuses which make up the state, with its monopoly of coercion, is the principle embodiment (condensation) of these complex relations of forces. But there are other forms of oppression in civil society which are different from the exploitation of labour by capital. There are local, regional, racial, bureaucratic and other forms of domination in which a certain power is exercised and is given a material form in organizations and institutions of one kind or another'.


'...State = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion'.

In the three presentations above, firstly, a range of power is visible stretching from the state at one end to the other extreme end i.e. social interactions at the mundane level i.e. 'the extreme points of its [power] exercise where it is always less legal in character'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instances of Social Interaction at the Mundane Level</th>
<th>Socio-cultural Institutions</th>
<th>State Institutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
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<td>high</td>
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**INSTITUTIONAL DENSITY**

Fig. 24: THE RANGE OF POWER

Secondly, power in Gramsci and Foucault is not merely political. It has also a cultural dimension. In fact in Foucault, the cultural aspect is almost total in his conception of the subject as a product of the relation between power and knowledge. Therefore, I believe that


Self or the Other is a 'subject' (not in the 'subjected' sense) of a socio-cultural system of knowledge. It is impossible to otherwise talk of a Punjabi or Tamil or English.
it is more fruitful to think of power in terms of the political and cultural dimensions as I have done in the section 4.3.1.

Thirdly, I want to maintain that in all these presentations, there is a relational notion of power used in a cautious or radical manner. Marx's notion of power (or the political) is inconceivable in its full shape without perceiving it as a product of class relations. Foucault's criticism that it looks at a collectivity rather than the individual is correct but that does not mean that the notion of power in Marx is transformed into a non-relational form, in the sense of being centered in the State. This is a particular trajectory of the notion of power. Even the 'economic functionality of power' argument does not reduce Marx's notion of power to a non-relational one. The relational notion of power in Marx is centered on the fact that the relations of production is taken to be total social space. It is possible to visualize a notion of relational power that inheres in the social net of everyday interaction of all kinds of Self-Other relations but that becomes concentrated in and around certain relations because of institutional density i.e. the increase in the socio-cultural and state institutional mediation of relations. This visualization captures the three points in the range of power not in a linear sense but in a spherical sense.

105. Foucault, Power/Knowledge, p.88.
Fourthly, I would like to maintain a certain stronger sense of relational power because contestation at these levels leads to a stronger presence of democracy. This I believe is evident in Foucault’s observation that 'one of the first things that has to be understood is that power isn’t localised in the State apparatus and that nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatus, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed'.

(underscoring mine.) This means that it is important to know 'how things work at the level of ongoing subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc'.

Lastly, not only is power to be conceived as having both political and cultural dimensions but also a positive and negative impact on Self-Other relations. Power, too, can 'discipline' productively. A whole set of cultural practices that finally produces a Tamil or an English or a Punjabi is itself a form of disciplining. Thus, disciplining by itself cannot be made to look solely negative. Disciplining the body can be both productive and oppressive. It can both give a voice or arrest one. In the notion of power that I have employed I have therefore employed both these aspects. Power

106. Ibid., p.60.
107. Ibid., p.97.
is relational. We have two relational spheres i.e. the self-and-the-other-as-distinction and self-and-the-other-as-difference. These relations are two ways of being-in-the-world which in a more sociological sense is individual-in-relations. Being-in-the-world, or individual-in-relations, cannot be discussed without maintaining the notion of the body. The body’s distinctive quality of motility, in which it is directed, presents a ground for a non-relational form of power, a condition necessary for Self or identity-construction. This is, of course, intimately linked to the relational notion of power since power that mediates between position and practice is fed with both relational and non-relational forms of power. This non-relational form of power and the positive aspect of power is not one of direct concern here. It is only taken up in passing. It is power as distinctively oppressive of the Other that is my concern. This oppression figures between classes, between the male and the female, between ethno-Communities and between human beings and Nature.

I have given, I hope, an adequate reconstruction of power appearing as political and cultural in terms of relational and non-relational forms. The conceptualization of power as inherent in all social relations, since all are either contributing to reproductive or transformative processes (processes achieved by the agency), is visualized with nodal points of institutional density that have developed around relations between Self-Other. Thus, the 'oppositional
imagination' is fairly widespread in society. In effect, this conception of power produces an understanding that implies that 'the social relations of daily existence are enmeshed in and transfigured by, resistance, both extraordinary and "everyday"'. More elaborately, this understanding means that 'the criticism and resistance that are closeted as secret thoughts and perhaps as small secret actions in normal times can burst forth as public speech and 


Also see James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1990). Scott describes the everyday forms of peasant resistance -- 'the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, tents, and interest from them. Most of the forms this struggle takes stop well short of collective outright defiance... foot-dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so froth'. (p.29.) Scott further adds that 'Where everyday resistance most strikingly departs from other forms of resistance is in its implicit disavowal of public and symbolic goals'. (p.33).

I would like to make two clarifications. First, I use 'everyday forms of contestation' in the way Haynes and Prakash have described it. I think it is attractive, though very problematic, to place 'all forms of resistance [contestation] within the ordinary life of power'. (p.2.) Everydayness is not contrasted with the spectacular as Scott has done. Second, I use contestation at one level to counter the notion of false consciousness (like Scott does) and at another level to indicate a form of Self-Other interaction that will sustain the 'social structure of dialogical pluralism' and a communist future in which self-conscious, active beings inhabit and participate in the running of their society.
great actions in unusual times, so that at all times one must suspect the appearances of conformity, contentment, and complacency inside a hegemonic whole.\textsuperscript{109}

I began this section by wanting to develop a sensitivity to everyday forms of contestation/resistance. I hope that I have, to some extent, achieved this.

4.4.4.3. \textit{New Social Movements}

Let me now move on to my next aim of placing the \textit{new social movements}. The formal space for the historical appearance of these movements goes back to the conception of labour. Abstract labour expressed in terms of labour power was introduced to equate labour that went into making different commodities. In effect, unequal labour was equated through labour power and the capitalist exchange sphere was made possible. This is also seen as the 'transcendental' basis of the capitalist economy.\textsuperscript{110} If this terrain of commodity exchange is destroyed by destroying the capitalist social relations then what we will be confronted with is unequal labour. At one level, the social universality initially


conceived at the time of the political revolution is now extended and a radical equality is achieved through class struggle between people and groups. This equality, however, produces a difficulty. As Marx puts it, 'This equal right is an unequal right for unequal labour...It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right'.

Let me elaborate this point. The destruction of capitalist social relations would also mean that a terrain to sustain this radical equality in terms of the social structure of universality would have to be constituted in practice. But this equality introduces a very strong presence of inequality. Different forms of labour are inherently inequatable. This is the point of radical difference. But, collectively, we find the emergence of the self-and-the-other-as-difference. This becomes more and more strongly present in historical development as the agencies of radical difference attempt greater articulation. Thus, a radical equality is confronted by a radical difference and this difference not only occurs at the level of individual labour but also at the three Self-Other relationships consisting of the self-and-the-other-as-difference. This coming-into-being of radically different labour, like the coming-into-being of

free labour, which led to the emergence of the social universality, results in the formal historical appearance of a dialogical space. Strife now assumes a different character.

To begin with, the social construction of radical difference begins with identity-construction which involves the more thorough development of cultural power which is, as I have presented above, 'the capacity of social groups to convey notions of actual, possible and preferable social beliefs and practices to their own groups and throughout society as a whole'. This identity-construction also involves the construction of a past i.e. reinvention of tradition.

This process, of course, must be historically located in the broader structural relationship/‘movement’ i.e. the historical-segmentary/transformational ‘movement’. As a historical process, a different construction or articulation of a voice by the Other and the forceful reinsertion of itself into history begins as segmentation. This situation brings forth the social need for dialogue. The radical difference resurrects cultural power in the non-relational sense and 'obtains' for itself a powerful role. The political power under these conditions is decentered. There is interest fragmentation and issues are localized. All these present the ground for an acephalous form of
governance. This social context which allows the assertion of difference, identity-construction and localization of issues, produces a new generation of social movements now referred to as the new social movements.\textsuperscript{112} The new social


In the discussion on new social movements, the opening up of a dialogic space is hardly discussed. My main contention in discussing the new social movements is to locate this dialogic space centrally. Literature on new social movements only strongly indicate a self-consciousness of the process of 'segmentation'.

See also an excellent article on the new social movements by Gunnar Olofsson. Gunnar Olofsson, 'After the Working-class Movement? An Essay on What's "New" and What's "Social" in the New Social Movements' \textit{Acta Sociologica}, vol. 31 (1), 1988, pp.15-34. Unlike Olofsson, I have only included the movements from a set of basic relations as possessing the characteristics of the new social movements. Olofsson argues that the only point of coalescence of the multitude of new social movements is the basic relationship, nature-society. In this I agree with him. I have developed the ontological category individual-in-relations to be sensitive to the basic relationship Olofsson is talking about. By proposing this category, I locate a terrain for possible coalescence which is, of course, practically a problematic one.

There is a growing literature of the tendency of movements to coalesce. Ilina Sen, for instance, has described how women are 'forcing' a space within the working class and other movements. See Ilina Sen (ed.), \textit{A Space within the Struggle: Women's Participation in People's Movements} (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1990).
movements, confronting power on basic levels and at various nodal points, seek to insert a voice of the thus far silent, voiceless, dominated Other, to reinsert the recalcitrant Other actively into history. History opens up to accord agency to the other-as différence. History becomes driven by non-antagonistic contradiction.\textsuperscript{113}

4.5. CONCLUSION

The kind of movement of history that allows us to overcome the terminus problem of the Hegelian system needs to be sustained by a concept of the ideal dialogical act. As indicated in the earlier chapter, this act is produced and sustained by both the ideal speech act and an acephalous form of governance, a governance in which the locus of organizing the world is not the sole privilege of either the Self or the Other. Such an act, i.e. the ideal dialogical act, inherently provides for segmentation through contestation and dialogical pluralism through negotiation. Both the processes of contestation and negotiation must be produced and sustained by a critical pedagogic practice and

\textsuperscript{113} The Hegelian dialectic has a triadic structure - there is 'thesis', 'antithesis' and a 'synthesis'. In the hands of Marx, this dialectic was 'taken' to study society. So society moves from primitive communism through different formations of class society to a higher form of communism. If this movement is 'directed' by class struggle, what will 'drive' society in a communist future when classes will not exist anymore? We seem to have reached the 'end'.

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cultural resistance\textsuperscript{114} in order to achieve a more critical mode of connection between structure and agency and to allow humanity to move up in a spiral movement driven by permanent (politically sensitive) cultural revolution.\textsuperscript{115} This spiral movement, having its roots in the historical-universalist movement, opens up the opportunities of constructing a dialogical, deliberative democracy and of dialectically and dialogically reconciling the agencies produced by the four world-historical social movements. These opportunities humanity must seize.


For the notion of cultural resistance see 'National Liberation and Culture' in Amilcar Cabral, Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings, texts selected by the PAIGC, translated by Michael Wolfers (London: Heinemann, 1980), pp.138-154. This is the Eduardo Mondlane Memorial Lecture delivered at Syracuse University, New York on 20 February 1970.

\textsuperscript{115} Genealogically, I think we can 'trace' Habermas' ideal speech act to Mao's notion of non-antagonistic contradiction and the idea of permanent cultural revolution. The fact the deconstitution of classes does not 'end' history needs to be sustained theoretically. It is possible for one to argue of 'cultural modes of production' in which non-antagonistic contradictions (among non-class subjects) are overcome by a (politically sensitive) cultural 'revolution'. One can argue that an important element of this movement would be the need to establish an ideal speech act condition between the Self and Other.