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

Karl Marx

Chapter - 4

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

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

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

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

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

1. The principle of praxis. This principle clearly implies the rejection of the empiricist conception of passive subjectivity and the notion of autonomy of the objective domain.

2. The principle of historicity which precisely says that a fact is not to be viewed merely in terms of its given form, but in terms of its essence (historical content) which makes it what it is.

To conceive knowledge as the reflection of a pre-existing reality is to assume that thought is dependent on being, that the reflection is determined by what is reflected. This leads, as we had seen, to the view which advocates for the passivity of thought and the autonomy of the object. Such a conception, as Marx points out in 'Theses on Feuerbach', explicitly implies the defect of the materialist approach, i.e., the defect of conceiving reality in the form of an independent object, and of treating man merely as product of the objective circumstances, not as the producer. Human subject, when viewed from a crude materialist perspective, turns to be a passive natural being co-existing with the objective world. He merely 'represents' the world, never controls or transforms it. In other words, the subject ceases to be the being of praxis whose essence is supposed to be consisting in the creative interaction with the nature, in the practical transformation of
the reality. Man loses his creative subjectivity, his self-consciousness, i.e., the consciousness of himself "as a social being, as simultaneously the subject and the object of the socio-historical process". The view that object is a pure datum, an autonomous fact, as Marx explicitly maintains, is an ahistorical view. It is the outcome of a crude materialist perspective which, by its nature, refuses to understand man as the being of praxis, as the creative, transformative being. It refuses to understand objects in relation to man, that is, objects as the properties of human praxis. The object alien to the subject is an abstract category which lies outside the human praxis — the concrete realm of the historical life process of man —, and thus turns out to be an ahistorical fact. Empiricism is an ahistorical mode of thought. The only alternative to it is the dialectical view that substitutes the traditional notion of reality with a historicist one in which the so-called object is considered to be a property of human praxis, not an autonomous fact.

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

1George Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, p. 19.
view that object is essentially a human object. "It is only when objective reality everywhere becomes for man in society the reality of human faculties, human reality, and the reality of his own faculties that all objects become for him objectifications of himself. The objects then confirm and realise his individuality, they are his own objects, ......"²

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

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

²Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, in Karl Marx: Early Writings, Trans & Ed. by T.B. Bottomore pp. 160-161.
³Ibid, p. 189.
of praxis, an element in the historical life process of human beings. In the true sense, as Marx maintains, it does not appear as an objective reality alien to, independent of the subject. On the contrary, it becomes ‘the inorganic body of man’. Ollman derives from this that the category of need as discussed by Marx cannot be just ruled out as merely a fact of human physiology. It is to be viewed as a category which transcends the passive subject-object relation and affirms the ontological relation between them. To put it in Marx’s words, “... the need of a thing is the evident irrefutable proof that the thing belongs to my being, that the existence of this thing for me and its property are the property ... of my being”.

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

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⁴Ibid pp 126-127.
⁵Quoted in Bertell Ollman, Alienation, p. 275.
of theorising which essentially presupposes the subject-object mediation in the real practical process. This process involves, not merely a relation of correspondence between thought and reality, but a dynamic relation in which the former actively contributes in shaping the later.

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

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

⁶See our discussion in the first chapter p. 33.
forms came into being", that, it merely enables them "to reduce them to their unity by means of analysis, because it starts with them as given premises".  

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

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

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7 Karl Marx, Theories of surplus value, in capital, Vol. IV, Part III, Progress, Moscow, 1971, p. 500.
8 Lukács puts the whole idea in clear terms by saying that the Unscientific nature of seemingly so scientific method of all positivist theories consists in its failure to see and take account of the historical character of the facts on which it is based. See George Lukács, History and Class consciousness, p. 6.
9 Marx, Capital 1, in Portable Karl Marx, p. 437.
other words, he creates use-value for others. Marx observes that in such a system the product appears in a different form, i.e., in the form of commodity, and the actual value of the product appears in its exchange-value i.e., the value of commodity.

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

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

10Henri Lefebvre, The sociology of Marx, p. 47.
11Marx says “The best thing in my book is first (and on this depends all understanding of the facts) the two-fold character of labour according to whether it is expressed in use-value or exchange-value, which is brought out at once in the first chapter”, from the letter which Marx wrote to Engles on August 24th 1867 (Marx-Engles Gesamtausgabe Part 3, Vol. 111, p. 410) Quoted in Political theory by Michael Wolfram, Bannew Press, 1933, p. 38.
refer to the twofold character of labour. The labour which produces the thing is twofold in nature: It is the content of the product, i.e., the use-value, and also it is expressed as the social form i.e., the exchangeability of the product. The commodity — the product assuming the exchange-value, is the social ‘form’ of labour; the use-value —the concrete labour, being the content of it. That is, the commodity is not an independent fact, real in itself, but a form whose essence is the actual concrete labour i.e., the use-value of the product. What follows from this is that the unity that constitutes the commodity form is actually the unity of form and content, the social form of labour, i.e., the exchangeability, and this concrete content i.e., usefulness. To understand the commodity in isolation from its historical content, the labour which creates its use-value, is to abstract the form from the content, fact from the underlying necessity, or appearance from the essence.

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

\textsuperscript{12}Marx uses the term ‘fetish’ in a special sense. It refers to an object of worship to which religious people (in the primitive era) attribute supernatural properties. Fetish, in Primitive Society, appears as an independent being endowed with all the properties of its objective characters. In the same way, the commodity appears as an independent thing. Marx says “A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the products of that labour; ...” Marx, \textit{capital} Vol. 1, \textit{Portable Karl Marx}, p. 446).
not reveal the essence which constitutes the content, the actual inner connections of the society or, rather, it veils the actual relations of production by the outer manifestations (money-form, commodity form etc.). The failure of classical political economy, therefore is due to the inadequacy of their method, the method of analysis which is ‘fetishistic’ in character. For resolving the riddles of both money fetish and commodity fetish, therefore, Marx says, “we have to perform a task never even attempted by bourgeois economics. This is, we have to show the origin of this money-form, we have to trace the development of the expression of value contained in the value relation of commodities from its simplest, almost imperceptible outline to the dazzling money-form. When this has been done, the mystery of money will immediately disappear”.

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

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13 Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. 1, Trans Moore and Aveling, Penguin, London 1976, p. 139. Money form can be described as a general equivalent form of exchange value. In a broad sense, money form and commodity form are equivalent. The value (exchange) of the commodity is money. In other words, the form in which the value of commodities appears as exchange value is money.
becoming another. Each fact is only a stage in its own inherent process of becoming. Being is becoming, precisely in the sense that each being has to go beyond its 'given form'. Reality is historical, as everything real is subject to the process of transformation out of conceptual necessity. In the same vein, Marx assumes that commodity-form is a reality, which is necessarily historical; it is the unity of concrete labour, and its social form, the essence and appearance. The essence contradicts with its appearance, use-value with the exchange-value, and for resolving this contradiction it has to transcend its present form. Historicity, therefore, lies in the very nature of the category of 'commodity'. All the categories of Market economy, treated in this perspective, contain historicity in their very nature. This is, by their very nature they have the potentiality to destruct their own existing forms and to go beyond themselves to the new forms. Actually the whole of Marx's enterprise of criticising political economy is methodologically founded upon this historicist thesis, the purpose of which, according to McBride, was to show that "the actual system contained tendencies that were at once potentially destructive of the existing system itself and potentially generative of a new, non-primitive system".

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

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

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

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

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

The concepts of fetishism, reification and alienation are interrelated. They all refer to the crisis of human existence in a particular socio-historical situation where the products of human labour appear to be objective, independent things, whose autonomous laws control and subjugate the human subjects. It is true that these notions have important conceptual differences especially that between 'fetishism' and 'alienation', atleast in the sense that they stand for two different aspects of the capitalist mode of production. Fetishism, precisely is the process of 'commodification', i.e., the creation of 'Pseudo things' which appear to be autonomous — real in themselves. Alienation is the estrangement of man from his products, activity, life and himself; it refers to a total split in human subjectivity. Fetishism is an objective process in a restricted sense in which it refers directly to the process of 'objectification'. Alienation, on the other hand, denotes the subjective side, i.e., the estrangement of the human subject from his products. But the concept of 'objectifications indirectly refers to estrangement of man' from his products. And, similarly, the concept of alienation indirectly refers to commodification of the things. In other words, both of them refer to the objective and subjective aspects of the same 'reality', i.e., the mode of production of the capitalist social system. To put it more explicitly, capitalist system of production results, objectively in the phenomenon of fetishism of commodities, and subjectively in the phenomenon of alienation. Both the
concepts, alienation and commodity fetishism, have been briefly discussed elsewhere in this study, and the further details of which are out of our concern. What is left to be worked out here towards developing a non-positivist theory of knowledge within Marxism is a conceptual framework which concretely integrates concept of objectification with the notion of false consciousness. That is, a framework which theoretically incorporates both the problem of fetishism and the problem of knowledge (or the problem of Ideology in particular). This is to say that the work we need to undertake now is to show, in concrete terms, the relation between fetishism and Ideology. We are concerned with the problem: how the fetishistic mode of production results in the 'false-consciousness' of the people. We shall move in this direction by considering the epistemological aspects of the theories of two major non-positivist interpreters of Marxism namely, (1) the theory of reification of George-Lukács, and (2) The theory of 'one dimensionality' of Herbert Marcuse. In dealing with Lukács’ theory of reification, the method we follow would be to expose the theory first and then to proceed to its epistemological presuppositions which embody a critique of the positivist paradigm of rationality. More clearly, first we would present Lukaács’ problem of reification and then show how the problem of reification is related to the problem of knowledge. In other words, after the exposition, we would come to the point that how Lukács’ critique embodies a critique of positivist concept of knowledge i.e., of the paradigm of formal rationality in general and of the sociologist's epistemological assumptions in particular.

(1) Reification and the critique of formal rationality

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

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

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

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

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

15George Lukács, History and class consciousness, p. 87.
16Ibid p. 89
17Ibid p. 89
be the internal properties of the world of their autonomous existence. They assume a supra historical power and confront man whose activity is actually the source of them. Lukács calls this as the objective aspect of the phenomenon of reification. From the point of view of the subject, the process of commodification is equal to the process of alienation. The more the products ‘objectified’, the more man’s activity becomes estranged from himself. Labour in the market economy, therefore no longer belongs to the subject, it becomes an objective category lies completely outside the realm of subjectivity. As Lukács points out, “It turns into a commodity which, subject to the non-human objectivity of the natural laws of society, must go its own way independently of man just like any consumer article”.18

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

18Ibid, p. 87
one another. We shall discuss these two aspects of reification in detail.\(^\text{19}\)

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

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

\(^{19}\text{Cf. Andrew Arato and Paul Brein's, The Young Lukács and the origins of Western Marxism, p. 117}

\(^{20}\text{George Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, p. 84}

\(^{21}\text{Ibid 84}

\(^{22}\text{Ibid 88.}

\(^{23}\text{Ibid 89.}

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

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

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

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

\(^{25}\)Ibid p. 89.
vacuum, he can only perceive the objective world passively. In other words, his existence as the creator of objects turns to be inauthentic, as the very activity of creation takes an objective (non-human) form and moves away from him. Human subjectivity, thus, gets reduced to the state of contemplative existence, to the state of the mechanical existence of a mere natural being. The deactivised subject, therefore, is a being of contemplation, not a being of Praxis; he can never control the world of objects, but can only have a mechanical passivity towards it. His subjectivity can never be a creative source of the process, but can only be a mechanical element in it.

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

Reification of consciousness and formalism

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

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26 cf Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, The Young Lukács and the origins of Western Marxism, p. 119.
27 cf. George Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, p. 88
28 cf Ibid p. 98
of rationalisation.

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

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

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid p. 93.
their objectified activity and hence deactivised. Deactivisation of the subject, as we saw, presupposes the atomisation of men from another. Capitalism reproduces this scheme of mechanisation and the individualisation of the workers through rationalisation, i.e., by making the mode of consciousness of the people adjusted to its mode of existence.

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

Lukács thus, seeks the roots of reified consciousness in the structure of the capitalist labour process. More concretely, it is the capitalist transformation of the work process, i.e., the reification of labour, Lukács assumes, which is the ground for all forms of reification, reified thought and formal rationality. So Lukács’ critique of reification as exposed mainly in ‘History and Class Consciousness’, evidently involves the critique of the paradigm of capitalist rationality. Marx’s critic of analytic method of classical political economy obviously lie at the heart of Lukács’ critical enterprice; ‘analysis’ i.e, the objective analysis of the given facts, has been considered by him as the methodological expression of the paradigm of formal rationality. We had seen earlier that Marx’s attack on classical political economy is due to the inadequacy of its method to penetrate into the real structure, i.e., the historical substractum of human praxis, of the phenomenal
forms (commodity forms). The phenomenal forms, according to Marx, are forms immediately presented to our senses, empirically real, but the true method — the dialectical historicist method — does not restrict itself to the province of sense data. For, its very goal is transcendence of the ‘immediacy’. So Marx’s is a transcendentalist attack on the empiricist mode of thinking. It can be very well observed here that, Lukács also, in the same vein, adopts a Hegelian anti-empiricist\textsuperscript{30} epistemological position in attacking the paradigm of formal rationality.

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

\textsuperscript{30}See Chapter 1, p.

\textsuperscript{31}Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, \textit{The Young Lukács and the origins of Western Marxism}, p. 120
Lukács’ critique of empiricist mode of analysis consists in regarding the subject essentially as a being of praxis, not of thought. Such a conception, as we had observed earlier, is an outcome of the methodological reconstruction of the traditional abstract concepts of subject and object, which provided a firm ground for a dialectical historicist epistemological approach, in which the ‘historical subjectivity and objectivity are no longer seen as externally related independent domains, but rather as functional elements in systems of social practice’.\textsuperscript{32} Explicitly, the thesis of the dialectical unity of thought and reality discards the possibility for a dualistic conception of knowledge, more concretely, the correspondence theory of truth. Lukács’ treatment of the paradigm of formal rationality, therefore, is to be understood on the basis of his dialectical critique of the empiricist mode of thinking.

Critique of sociologism: Ideology as a form of reified rationality

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

\textsuperscript{32}Andrew Feenberg, \textit{Lukács, Marx and the sources of critical theory}, p. 137
replacement of the category the external, formal relation between (subject and object) with that of the internal, dialectical relation in which former contributes in shaping the later, thus, implies the rejection of the positivist mode of interpretation of Ideology.

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

The conception of Ideology as a concrete aspect of reified social process implies not merely the rejection of empiricism but, more importantly, the objectivist mode of analysis which has been followed both by the conventional sociologist and in the 'neo-positivist' schools of thought. Needless to say that the notion of reified reality explicitly indicates the negativity of reality. Obectivism, as we had explained elsewhere, is a mode of approach where reality is conceived strictly as an objective structure, a positive fact, external to the realm of subjectivity and values and hence value neutral. The thesis of the value neutrality of facts is central to positivist social theories in general as they all depend fundamentally upon the assumption that society is an objective structure which is to be viewed as an independent domain of reality conceptually separated from any ground or source prior to it. Consequently, since, society is an objective fact which can never be reduced to the human relationships and activities, and the activities of human
beings are not prior to the social structure, human activities are determined by the social structure. Conceiving society as a human product therefore, is unsociological, for human beings, are the products, not the producers of the social structure. Althusser has made a concrete exposition of this idea in the course of his neo-positivist interpretation of Marx's social theory, precisely by arguing that social totality is a process without a subject. The concept of society as a structure constituted by human beings according to Althusser, presupposes an Idealist stand point, i.e., the idea that 'subject' is the absolute starting point, and consciousness is the source of reality. In scientific Marxism, he says, subject is an element in the process an effect not the essence.\textsuperscript{33}

Lukács, challenges the positivist conception of the primacy of the social structure, not superficially, but fundamentally by rejecting the epistemological distinction between fact and value and thereby attacking the objective, value neutral status of the society. This is made possible by him through the dialectical historicist redefinition of the traditional philosophical categories of subject and object. The object, according to his redefined scheme of subject-object relation, is not a pure datum, but essentially a product of human praxis. Obviously, when the object ceases to be an independent fact, the whole conception of reality as an objective structure external to the human subject gets replaced by a new conception in which what is real is a constituted category, a human object. To say that reality is a human product, not an external fact is to say that the domains of subjectivity and objectivity, values and facts, are inseparable from each other. The fact-value complimentarity thesis\textsuperscript{34} evidently invalidates the very procedure of conceiving society as an objective, value neutral fact, and thus, points to the impossibility of the

\textsuperscript{33}see the discussion on Althusser's notion of the process without a subject p. 104.
\textsuperscript{34}An expression used by Amritabha Dasgupta, in his article, Unity in Marx: towards a Methodological Reconstruction, \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}, Vo XXVIII, No 5, Jan 30, 1993 PE 48.
sociological mode of approach.

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

The fact-value complementarity thesis of Lukács, leads not only to the impossibility of sociologist mode of theorizing, but more importantly to the impossibility of positivism, especially to the impossibility of the positivist conception of science and scientific knowledge. Explicitly, the impossibility of a positivist conception of science is because of the untenability of the fact-value distinction. Facts, according to Lukács’ observation, are the properties of human praxis, inseparable from the realm of subjectivity and values.
Science, therefore, does not have an independent realm apart from that of human praxis. Scientific knowledge which depends on facts does not constitute an autonomous domain; nor does it work by its own internal logic which is devoid of any social basis. In short, science as a body of factual knowledge is not value-neutral, since facts are human facts, not the 'non-human' objects devoid any value. Positivism views scientific knowledge as autonomous, obviously because the value neutrality thesis implies the conception of facts as forms devoid of any content and, thereby, the radical separation of the domain of facts from the domain of values — the realm of human praxis. Thus, the fact-value complimentarity thesis of Lukács' Marxism discards the possibility of a positivist conception of science and scientific knowledge; it provides an entirely different conception, where science is to be understood as human praxis and scientific knowledge as an aspect of human praxis.

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

\footnote{Althusser's celebrated distinction between science and ideology also, as we had seen, involves the value neutrality thesis of positivism. See Chapter 3, p. 104-107.}
extent, the basis for the 'Frankfurt school' of Marxism i.e., the school of Hegelian-Marxist thinkers who developed a full-fledged critique of modern industrial society and its forms of rationality.

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

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

One-dimensionality: an exposition

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

\[\text{Cf. Douglas Kellner, } \textit{Herbert Marcuse and the crisis of Marxism}, \text{ p. 235.}\]
between reason and actuality gets replaced by a wrong sythesis in which what is actual is reasonable.\textsuperscript{37} Reality, thus, ceases to be bi-dimensional, becomes one-dimensional.

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

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

\textsuperscript{37}Herbert Marcuse, \textit{One-Dimensional Man}, p. 434.
\textsuperscript{38}Ibid, p. 11.
to be one-dimensional man. There is no space, according to Marcuse, even to mark a difference between alienated subjectivity and mechanical objectivity of the system, as they become one and the same reality — a monistic whole.

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

\(^{39}\)Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the crisis of Marxism*, p. 82. For a clear exposition of concept of labour as an ontological category, see Kellner’s discussion, in his same book, on Marcuse’s essay ‘on the philosophical Foundation of the concept of Labour’, p. 87.
The absorption of subject into object gives rise to an objectivistic conception of man, the concept of one-dimensional man. The assimilation of thought into actuality, in the same way, gives birth to a pattern of one-dimensional thought. More concretely the unification of reason and (objective) reality results in an objectivistic paradigm of rationality, i.e., in the terminology of Marcuse and the other thinkers of Frankfurt school, the technological rationality. Explicitly, the concept of one-dimensional man stands against the metaphysical concept of subject-object duality which postulate an active subject controlling the world of objects. One-dimensional thought is contrasted with the philosophical thought which is, as Kellner describes, a "bi-dimensional thought which presupposes antagonism beteween subject and object so that the subject is free to perceive possibilities in the world that do not yet exist but which can be realised through human practice".  

Technological rationality is opposed to the critical rationality which presupposes an autonomy of the subject and an ability to negate and transcend the 'given' state of affairs. Thus, as Marcuse observes, a kind of antimetaphysical, undialectical and uncritical mode of approach comes into existence. This uncritical mode finds its philosophical expression in positivism and, particularly, in operationalism and contemporary analytic philosophy. The following chart shows the points of contrast between Marcuse's critical theory and positivist's uncritical approach.

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Operationalism and behaviorism: critique of positivist paradigms

The conceptual assimilation of the subject into the object is made possible by the positivists through the procedure of translating all that is subjective into the objective, the internal to the external, the metaphysical to the physical, the conceptual to the factual etc. The result is identification of reason and reality (essence and appearance, universal and particular, concept and fact, body and mind etc.) and, practically, absorption of man into the material world of functional process. The man absorbed into the material reality has only one-dimension — the positive dimension, by which he can only be a positive element in the functional process; the second dimension — the power of negativity which makes him free from the objective reality and thereby enables him to go beyond its given limits, becomes eliminated. The elimination of the critical reason, according to Marcuse, is the part of the process of ‘assimilation’, because the identification of reason and reality entails the repulsion of the non-‘conformist elements’ — the elements which cannot be absorbed into the reality — from the faculty of reason. Technological society in Marcuse’s account, ‘functionalise’ human reason by eliminating its critical content. The result is “a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behaviour in which Ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and
action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe”.41

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

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

41 Herbert Marcuse, One-dimensional Man, p. 12.
importantly, restricts us from using "the concepts of which we cannot give an adequate account in terms of operations".\textsuperscript{42} It has become a 'habit of thought' in the modern age, in philosophy, sociology, psychology and other fields to eliminate the 'mysterious concepts' from our scientific, rational discourse by showing that no adequate account of them can be given in terms of operations and behaviours.

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

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

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

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

43Herbert Marcuse, One-dimensional Man, p.172.
from the object (reason which shapes and transcends the reality) is an absurd, meaningless notion and all that we can talk about 'the subjective' is possible only in terms of operations.

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

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

44“For the logical behaviorist, when some one is angry this does not consist in some private state, without physical location, of which he alone can be aware. Rather, to be angry is to behave in an angry way: to be flushed, trembling, banging the table, or abusive”. Anger, therefore is not to be understood as a state of mind, but as a pattern of physical behaviour. Cf. The philosophy of Mind, Edited by Jonathan Glover, p. 7.
concept of body-mind dualism. Mind-body dualism is evidently fallacious, because, for him, mental activities cannot be separated from physical behaviour. In order to attribute subjective experiences of any sort to an individual, Wittgenstein says, there must be certain grounds on the basis of which it may be done. An expression describing a subjective experience is meaningful only insofar as we can invoke a set of criteria for its application. What is the meaning of the phrase "so and so has toothache"? For clarifying the meaning of this expression, we must point out certain kind of behaviour, say, holding the cheek, and holding the cheek in this case functions as the criterion for the application of the descriptive expression "so and so has toothache". And if someone asks, "why toothache corresponds to holding the cheek?", it can be answered only by referring this action of holding the cheek as a socially determined convention for the use of the above expression.⁴⁵

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

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{46}Herbert Marcuse, \textit{One-dimensional Man}, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid p. 134.
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid. pp. 106-107.
is a social fact, the essence of which lies in the historical substratum of human praxis
i.e., in Marcuse's account, the 'historical totality' of the commodity form. The concept
of commodity, in its content transcends the commodity form towards its 'reality' - the
human substratum and, therefore, it has a 'transitive' meaning. All cognitive concepts
refer to the historical totality and comprehend the historical content of the facts. Thus,
they have the dimension of historicity, i.e., in other words, the 'transitive meaning'.

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

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

50G.A.Rauche, Contemporary Philosophical Alternatives and the crisis of truth., p. 29.
in thought and speech, removal of obscurities, illusions and oddities or at least their exposure".\textsuperscript{51} The removal of obscurities and illusions, as we saw, are nothing but the removal of transcendental concepts of which there is no adequate account in terms of operations and behaviours and, for the same reason, which cannot be translated in term of objective empirical evidence. More clearly, that which purports to be eliminated by the therapeutic analysis of linguistic philosophy is the non-operational thoughts and concepts, which are irreconcilable with the immediate facts and, thus, which contradict the prevailing universe of discourse and behaviour. Evidently, such an elimination, i.e., the elimination of the non-conformist thought, as Marcuse argues, aims at an adjustment. That is, making human reason adjusted to the established universe of discourse and behaviours, common usage, common sense and conventional thought and behaviour. This is more or less similar to the method of a conservative psycho-analyst who strives to cure the patient whose mind and behaviours do not conform to the terms of the prevailing social order and make him capable of functioning normally in this world. Marcuse's objection to the analytic method in philosophy is that it lacks the dimension of criticism, the conceptual transcendence of the immediate facts; the function of philosophy being 'critical', not 'therapeutic'. "The philosopher is not a physician; his job is not to cure individuals but to comprehend the world in which they live — to understand it in terms of what it has done to man and what it can do to man".\textsuperscript{52}

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

\textsuperscript{51}Herbert Marcuse, \textit{One-dimensional Man}, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{52}Ibid, p. 183.
dialectical, obviously because, the very essence of it lies in the dialectical tension between reason and reality. Also, it is critical. Because, the autonomous subject or reason presupposed in it is a creative principle which transcends the established universe by using concepts, norms and values that criticise the established form of life—the form of society and discourse. The dialectical logic, Marcuse assumes, stands directly opposed to the logic of analysis, by virtue of its bi-dimensionality, dualistic approach, more concretely its concept of reason as a creative principle superior to the reality; it substitutes analysis by criticism, the description of the facts by the 'transcendence' of the facts.\footnote{Philosophy, according to Marcuse, has always been bi-dimensional, it developed outside the one dimensional logic, positivism. The commitment of positivism is to science not to philosophy. The central concern of western thought has been to demonstrate the antagonistic structure of reality and to establish reason as the subversive power. In classical Greek philosophy, including Plato's system, true discourse is the discourse which reveals and expresses reality as distinguished from appearance. Aristotle, according to Marcuse, challenged the distinction between the concept and fact, thought and reality, and established a different system of logic where reason is not a transcendentel principle supreme to the reality, but a positive element in it. "It canonized and organised thought within a set framework beyond which no syllogism can pass—it remained analytics". It provided the methodological ground for formalist philosophy, the one dimensional mode of thought. However, bi-dimensional thought, Marcuse says, remained the central character of western philosophy, which developed alongside and even outside the formal logic. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, One-dimensional Man, p. 139.}

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

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

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

essence as the critical dynamic principle.

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

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

\textsuperscript{55}Cf. Douglas Kellner, \textit{Herbert Marcuse and the crisis of Marxism}, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{56}See, Herbert Marcuse, \textit{studies in critical philosophy}, p. 4.
real content. Lukács, as we had seen in our discussion on the theory of reification, rightly observes this and recognises the elements of the critique of formal, reified rationality in Marx’s treatment of the analytic method. Marcuse goes further by arguing that, in the advanced industrial societies, where the world of objects (commodities) not merely controls the subjective world but absorbs it into its functional structure, and becomes the only reality — a world without an ‘other’, the paradigm of formal rationality assumes the extreme form, i.e., the form of functional or technological rationality. Technological rationality is necessarily ‘formal insofar as’ it does not recognise the ‘content’ as the ‘other’ dimension of the facts, but more than that it is functional, it implies a ‘total objectivism’, since its presupposition is not the object alien to the subject, or the form separated from the content, but the object into which everything subjective is integrated or the form into which the content is assimilated. The object into which the subject is absorbed as its element is no more a form; it turns to be ‘real in itself’ — the one-dimensional reality. Positivism of technological society, therefore, according to Marcuse, is one-dimensional in the strict sense in which it presupposes the one-dimensional reality.

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

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

Towards an anti-positivist conception of knowledge and ideology

It is beyond doubt that, the concept of knowledge implied in Marcuse’s theory of one-dimensionality is anti positivist. For positivists, as we had seen earlier, true knowledge (scientific knowledge) is objective or object centric; it can never be ideological since
subject is external to the object and has no contribution over the object. Explicitly, the fundamental thrust of this approach is to eliminate subjectivity from the realm of knowledge or, in other words, to 'de-subjectify' knowledge. Marcuse confronts with a new form of positivism which basically engages in the same project of the elimination of subjectivity, but through a different method — the method of assimilating everything subjective into the objective. The positivism of technological world, i.e., the new form of positivism, according to Marcuse's theory, is more anti-subjectivistic than that of 'pre-technological world'. Operationalist concept of knowledge is more objectivistic than classical positivist's concepts of knowledge. The paradigm of technological rationality as different from that of formal rationality of positivism, presupposes a total objectivism in which there is nothing called subjective; subjectivity being absorbed into the objective domain. The critique of technological rationality, in Marcuse's sense, therefore, is the critique of the (total) objectivistic conception of knowledge, the critique of the advanced form of positivist epistemology.

Knowledge, in Marcuse's account, is not to be understood merely in terms of the category of representation, but viewed essentially as the transformative activity which presupposes the active human agency, the 'autonomous' subjectivity. To identify the subject with the object is to dissolve the autonomy of the subject, and thus to conceive all that is subjective as dependent on the objective or to treat knowledge as that which is dependent on the facts. The result obviously is empiricism which pictures knowledge as an activity that consists of representing the facts as they are, but not of going beyond or criticising them. To conceive knowledge merely as the reflection of reality is to conceive consciousness as receptive (to repel the critical content of human thought) and to treat man as a passive being, the product, not the producer. The autonomous subject enjoys
freedom from the objective world, the freedom which enables it to criticise the world and transcend it. The concept of autonomous subjectivity is the concept of transcendental, critical reason. True knowledge is ‘critical’ as it presupposes critical reason which, by its nature, contradicts the given reality and goes beyond it. True theory is ‘revolutionary’; its function is to criticise, not to describe, the given world. Explicitly, the idea of critical theory, in Marcuse’s sense, is rooted in this epistemological conception, the critical rationalist conception of knowledge.

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

57 Herbert Marcuse, One-dimensional Man, p. 117.
True knowledge differs radically from ideological knowledge by virtue of its bi-dimensional nature, its capability of going beyond the given state of affairs. Ideology is false-consciousness; it is a form of affirmative rationality which lacks the dimension of criticism and transcendence. The problem of the distinction between knowledge and ideology thus, in Marcuse's sense, is that of the distinction between bi-dimensional knowledge and one-dimensional knowledge. Explicitly, this formulation is contrary to the epistemological position of positivist Marxism, especially that of Althusser's neo-positivism, according to which ideology refers to the subjective knowledge and true knowledge to 'the process without a subject'. What is false knowledge in Althusser's Marxism becomes authentic (philosophical) knowledge in Marcuse and what Althusser calls as true knowledge (scientific) becomes ideological for Marcuse. In other words, (Althusser's) positivist interpretation gets replaced by a non-positivist interpretation, 'scientific' Marxism by a 'philosophical Marxism'.