CHAPTER – I

TOTALITY– ANTI–TOTALITY DICHOTOMY:
THE MATERIAL DIMENSION
Caste, class and gender movements in Andhra Pradesh have clearly and strictly demarcated their field of operation. While the women's movement addresses issues strictly within the 'socio-cultural' domain (such as domestic and sexual violence, sharing of domestic work, etc), dalit movement has restricted itself to the 'cultural-political' domain (addressing issues such as self-respect, abolishing untouchability, reservations, political power, etc), and the Marxist–Leninist movements have strictly prioritised the 'political – economic' domain (with struggles for land reforms, minimum wages, armed struggle for capture of state power, etc). Such a strict bifurcation of practices in the material domains allows movements to depict each other as misguided and thereby fragments the struggles they seek to carry out. However, further study of these movements reveals that despite of their demarcation of 'enclosed' and 'regionally separated' domains, they were forced in course of their practice to address issues in the other domains as well (a detailed account of which would be given in the second section of this study). This precarious situation of the movements in Andhra Pradesh raises pertinent conceptual issues that are imperative precursors to a more detailed study of the history of these movements.

What is the precise relationship between these demarcated domains and their components? Can they be perceived to be adding up to a totality? If so, of what kind? The starting point for such an enquiry should again be located in the practice of the social movements in Andhra Pradesh. The Communist movement, which was the first social movement on the political plane of Andhra Pradesh, with Marxism as its guiding theory and ideology, believed in the absolute primacy of economic conflicts over all other issues. Such a practice was the outcome of their comprehension of social reality through the 'base-superstructure' model. Not only did they take up exclusively economic struggles but believed that all other issues got subsumed under these struggles. Autonomous caste and gender movements, which were born as a reaction to the Communist movement and its bifurcated practice, not only failed to correct its practice but also, on the contrary, created their own competing regional domains of practice.
Although there were competing notions of totality in these movements, they were all founded around the base-superstructure model. Consequentially it is this that forms the starting point for any theoretical elaboration. This chapter argues that there are alternative and more integrated approaches to the conception of totality that have come as a correction and improvement over the base-superstructure model of material reality. And it is these conceptualizations that we need to draw upon. The argument starts the conventional reading of the base-superstructure relation found in Lukacs' model of ‘expressive totality’ and then proceeds to more complex and integrated models in Althusser’s ‘contradictory totality’, E.P. Thompson’s ‘organic totality’ and finally Habermas’ ‘inter-subjective totality’. It suggests, at the end, that movements are confronting an ‘integrated material life’ (presented in a figure), as against regionally enclosed domains.

I

From Expressive to Inter-Subjective Totality

The concept of totality is a meta-narrative. It is a generic term, which refers to the study of societies or social reality in their inter-connected and systemic existence. Totality could therefore mean order, coherence, harmony, consensus or community as against alienation, fragmentation, disorder, conflict, contradiction serialization, atomization or estrangement\(^1\). It is a broad concept which could take any of these meanings in a particular, given context. It is obvious that such a broad concept would subsume various other concepts and categories that conceptualise different (analytical) levels of social reality. To understand totality, we need to comprehend the various components and parts that constitute it, along with the dynamic inter-relation between them.

Within Greek social thought Cycides, Aristotle and Polybius viewed human institutions and affairs in terms of recurrent cycles and sequences of seasonal change.

growth and decay. Classical metaphysics and the medieval society understood unity in terms of timelessness of the order of the natural cosmos. It was only with Judeo-Christian view, which infused the idea of a transcendental theological meaning, that it no longer seemed sufficient to contemplate eternity in the manifest recurrent cycles. There was a need to understand social reality as going beyond the existing order in terms of linear motion, or progress. Organic naturalism used to legitimise social differentiation and hierarchy by naturalising the wholeness. It was only with Enlightenment that human kind shifted from a natural to a rational concept of totality with the idea that human beings have the capacity to know the world. "Instead of surrender to that natural totality which organicist theorists had assumed to be already in existence, Rousseau here proposed surrender to an artificial totality of man's own collective creation, on which would express the authentic, higher self-potential within him".

It is this artificial totality, the creation of human subject that was problematised by Marx and later writers influenced by him. Marx sought to conceptualise his notion of totality around the building-like metaphor of base and superstructure, to propound the idea that the economic structure of society conditions the existence of the legal-political, social and cultural spheres. In other words, the nature of the totality is determined by the base or alternatively referred to as the mode of production (combination of productive forces and production relations) and those structures part of the superstructure do not emerge out of themselves autonomously, and transform in accordance with the necessities of the economic foundation of the society. However, there have been attempts to recover the effectivity of superstructure through categories such as 'relative autonomy'. Engels emphasizing 'relative autonomy' wrote "neither Marx nor I have ever asserted more than this. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that economic factor is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phase". This sort of correction of the imbalance created by the base-

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superstructure model makes it prone to the idea of various spheres being regionally separated and linked through an external mode of causation.

Further, many of the classical writings on the inter-relation between various spheres, based on the base-superstructure model, were prone to reductionism. Lenin claims that Marx in capital explains the economic structure only by the relations of production and that superstructure does not need to be analysed by itself. Consciousness is understood to be only a reflection of being, at best approximately true reflection of it.

Finally, the base-superstructure model presents a static image of social reality without proper conceptual space for the mediating category of practice or praxis. For instance, the idea that structures within both base and superstructure are negotiated and transformed through various human struggles (not class struggles alone) is impossible to depict with the base-superstructure model of social reality.

Notwithstanding the more liberal interpretations of Marx’s writings, the totality based on the base-superstructure model suffers from these three limitations—external modes of causation, reductionism, and absence of practice or praxis. Various currents in Marxism always had base-superstructure as the reference point for a more comprehensive conceptualisation of the idea of totality, and to overcome the three cardinal limitations of the model.

Georg Lukács who is often considered the founding father of Western Marxism, was one of the early Marxists who recognised the centrality of the category of totality to Marxist theory. According to Lukács, "it is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality. The category of totality, the all-pervasive supremacy of the whole over the parts, is the essence of the method which Marx took over from Hegel and brilliantly transformed into the foundation of a wholly
new science... The primacy of the category of totality is the bearer of the principle of
revolution in science\textsuperscript{4}.

Lukacs, in the Hegelian fold, based his concept of totality on the primacy of
whole over the parts. His method was contrary to bourgeois political economy, which
cannot integrate the individual and the general because it fails to transcend the limits of a
view that takes in only atomized objects or independent formal structures. Thus
"following the fundamental principle of the dialectical method...means that the whole
takes precedence over the parts, that the parts must be from the whole and not the whole
from the parts. It is this unconditional hegemony of the totality; of the unity of the whole
over the abstract isolation of the parts, which constitute the essence of Marx's social
theory, the dialectical method"\textsuperscript{5}.

The role of the social facts should not be merely absorbed as unaltered facts to be
fed into an analysis, which constructs the whole from the simple aggregate of the parts.
Rather, the parts are the starting points from which the analysis must necessarily begin
but the end goal of the analysis is not a generalisation about the average features of the
conglomerate of facts, or a summary of their features as in statistical description. The
goal of the analysis is a conceptual reproduction of totality of society, and the nature of
this reproduction may be grasped from a number of other statements\textsuperscript{6}. In other words,
when Lukacs is arguing that purpose of analysis is not to find the average features but to
conceptually reproduce totality, he is referring to finding and conceptualising a real
concrete totality in the concrete historical and material processes of the capitalist society.

Thus, Lukacs is presenting an ‘expressive totality’ within the Hegelian fold
wherein each specific element or moment of a seemingly complex whole is interpreted as
expressing in its own particular way some \textit{essential character} of the whole. For Lukacs
this essential character of totality in capitalism refers to the principle of ‘reification’.

\textsuperscript{4} Georg Lukacs, \textit{History and Class Consciousness}, Merlin, London, 1971 p.27
\textsuperscript{6} James Schmidth, ‘The Concrete Totality and Lukacs Concept of Proletarian Bildung’ \textit{Telos}, 24 1975, p.23
The essential character of various component parts of the society, under capitalism is in their reified or alienated existence, from its creator. The proletariat's self-knowledge must consist of an ability to see that the forms (or social structures) that confront it are, on the one hand, the real determinants of their day-to-day existence and, on the other, the result of a historical process, which led to the composition of the present. Objectivity of the social structures is transient and exists only as mediation between past and present. Objectivity of the social structures, in the sense of existing beyond the subjectivity of proletariat exists only to the extent proletariat is not conscious of them as its own creation.

Thus, for Lukacs the reality of a concrete totality that is made out of the praxis of proletariat gets realized (and the subject-object distinction would collapse), when men adopt a practical attitude towards the objective world. Being would then be understood as becoming, things would dissolve into processes, the subjective origin of those processes would become apparent to the 'identical subject – object' of history.

In this model of 'expressive totality' of Lukacs, objectivity of economic, political and cultural structures is denied and posited as the creation of proletarian praxis. The moment proletariat becomes conscious of this, objectivity collapses and subjective praxis becomes the moment of revolution. In other words, the essential character of the whole is redefined in terms of 'subjective self-consciousness' of the proletariat and new unity or totality is realized.

The complexity of totality is reduced by Lukacs to a single nodal point, the praxis and subjective consciousness of proletariat. The autonomy and dynamism of all other levels of totality are denied by the methodology adopted by Lukacs. As he clearly says, "the essence of the dialectical method lies in the fact that in every aspect correctly grasped by the dialectic the whole totality is comprehended and that whole method can be unrivalled from every single aspect". Lukacs' model of totality has certainly overcome

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7 Ibid. p.175
the static image of reality in the base-superstructure model. It is the practice that mediates and unifies the various component parts of a totality. However, the reductionism in presenting totality as the 'reflection' of a single essence replicates the tendencies inherent in the base-superstructure model.

Historically, locating the model of Lukacs and his reductionist approach, Martin Jay comments that, "Lukacs' privileging of history over nature, his emphasis on subjective consciousness over objective matter, his premature confidence that the proletariat would emulate its most radical wing and his reliance on an expressive view of totality to resolve the antinomies of bourgeois culture were indicators of euphoric mood of 1917".

It needed the tranquility of 1950s to renew the Marxist notion of totality. Louis Althusser presented the much-needed 'epistemological break' from the 'expressive' notion of totality. According to him "Marxist materialism commits historical materialism to a recognition of the irreducible complexity of social totalities, ideological forms, particular forms of the state and so on. They do not 'reflect' or 'express' any inner principle through which the whole can be grasped". In other words, Marxist totality is a 'decentered' whole that has neither a generic point of origin nor a teleological point of arrival. A genuinely Marxist view of totality conceptualized reality as an 'ever-pre-given complex whole' in which each contradiction was 'complex-structurally-unevenly determined' or overdetermined. Overdetermination is "an attempt to avoid the isolation of autonomous categories but at the same time to emphasize relatively autonomous yet of course interactive practices".

Althusser is conceptualizing the objective structures as being autonomous and dynamically interrelated. Each and every entity within the realm of the social was always

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8 Martin Jay, 1984, op.cit. p.118
presumed to be determined by the effects of all others in the social totality. However
within this system of natural determinations it is the 'economy' that 'in the last instance'
determines the whole. The contradiction (between productive forces and production
relations) determines all other contradictions and their constitutive nature. However, this
determination does not occur at a definite moment either spatially or temporally but is
always present as 'effects'. According to Althusser, to argue that causality was a
mechanized result of an anterior cause or a posterior effect was non-Marxist. Instead
causality was always 'structural causality', "it is the very form of the interiority of the
structure, as a structure, in its effects...it implies that the structure is immanent in its
effects in the Spinozist sense of the term, that whole existence of the structure consists of

Althusser's totality was a 'contradictory totality'. The various social structures
persisted in 'differential historical time'. This caused the unevenness and rupture
necessary for historical transformation. However, as it is clear, in this structuralist
reading of Marxist totality, subjective factors are completely neglected. In fact Althusser
proposed to study history as a 'process without a subject'. While the dimensionality of
objective factors is problematised through a decentered notion of totality, which was
missing in the expressive model of Lukacs, dimensionality of subjective factors i.e. inter
play of subjective factors with objective structures and inter play between multiple
'subject – positions' is undermined.

Similarly, while objective structures are understood temporally in terms of
'differential historical time', transformation of subjective identities in their temporal
dimension is completely undermined, so is their complex interplay with objective
dimensions.
In spite of a structuralist reading of objective factors, they are in the 'last instance' subjected to reductionism—on the one hand autonomous dialectics of nature are not considered, on the other dimensionality of various objective structures is manipulated into 'internal moments' of a meta structure - the mode of production - that exists outside all causality and historical process. In other words, in overturning the subjectivist 'expressive' totality of Lukacs, Althusser formulated a different type of objective totality constituting enclosed domains without subjective practice to mediate them.

It is in this context that we need to examine the model of 'historical totality' of E.P. Thompson, which attempts to present a more complex concept of totality. It not only lays out the complexity of objective structures and their plausible interconnection within a synchronic totality, but analyses subjective factors in their evolution both synchronically and diachronically. Finally Thompson's 'organic totality' analyses the processes internal to the moment of subject-object interaction.

The dimensionality of objective structures could be comprehended, not when one segregates them into 'instances' and 'levels' but when we capture historical process at the moment of unitary co-existence of various human activities within a single material life. Thompson was critical of all Marxists who "adopted modes of analysis which, explicitly treat the economic base and the legal, political and ideological superstructure which reflect or correspond to it as a qualitatively different more or less enclosed and regionally separated spheres". In other words, what is imperative to comprehend is that economic base is not just reflected in and maintained by certain superstructural institutions, but that the 'productive base itself exists in the shape of social juridical and political forms'. Base, therefore, could include the work process and division of labour among working personnel; education was involved in the production of the most important of all commodities—labour power; law, rights and policy are in certain respects basic (for

instance, governing institutions have intervened in the economic system); in some societies even art and aesthetic impulse occupy an important place in the base. However, if all social relations or social structures within the realm of the 'social' are completely intermeshed, on what grounds do they coalesce into a totality? If production relations or mode of production itself is expressed simultaneously in economic, political, legal and cultural relations, what happens to the proposition that 'economic' determination is central to Marxist theory?

Thompson's model of 'organic totality' does not collapse various realms into one another but instead attempts to capture the moments of interconnection and determination on the one hand and the moments of autonomy, on the other. In other words, Thompson recognizes that through the realm of 'production', the social is in conflict with the natural realm, therefore various structures within the social get determined by the imperatives of the productivist logic. Certain 'practices' within certain social structures coalesce into a totality under the logic of the production process. E.P. Thompson seems to suggest the necessity "to distinguish between juridical - political forms that are the constituents of productive relations and those that are more distant from, or external to these relations - even if there are no sharp discontinuities between them". To put it in the base-superstructure language, we need to distinguish the 'basic' and 'superstructural' judicial-political and cultural attributes of the productive system.

However, what happens to those objective structures, which are at distance from the 'basic' or production processes? What happens to those practices within the political and cultural structure of the realm of the social that do not come under the direct influence of the production process? And those processes that are autonomous of the contradictions of the natural realm?

Thompson recognized this problematic domain, for any theory interested in arguing for an integrated social reality. "These two reservations - as to the complexity of
the 'correspondence' and as to its significance - are so severe as to call in question the affectivity of Marx's general notions. Very few of the critically - significant problems which we confront in this field of correspondence; nationalism, racism, sexual oppression, fascism, and Stalinism itself are certainly not removed from this field (for the presence of class antagonisms and class ideologies can be felt in all) but equally certainly they cannot be seen as 'developed forms of the fundamental relation of production'; they are forms in their own right, and for their analysis we require a new set of terms". So many of the practices mentioned above do not originate out of activities managing the conflict between the natural and social realms. Are they fragmented from the rest of social activities?

Thompson believes that the problem of 'correspondence' or totality cannot be conceptualized in terms of structures interacting as enclosed domains with an a priori logic of absolute determination. On the contrary, it can be understood only when 'subjective factors' are brought into play. Subjective factors or subjectivity of human collectives - need to be understood in terms of 'human practice' based on 'experience'. Various social structures in a totality correspond because they are the various activities of human beings within a unitary material life. Human agency mediates the relation between various structures and transmutes them into a 'process'. Human agents are born into given structures; they comprehend them through experience in their consciousness and then decide to deal with them in multi-fold manner. This common human experience, for instance the ability to experience 'class structure' in various social structures where class is not apparent and dominant (for instance, within the nationalist agenda the ability of the human collectives to 'experience' the influence of class interests. The way class interests are divided within the nationalist agenda), is the mode through which they correspond. "Kinship, custom, the invisible and visible rules of social regulation, hegemony and difference, symbolic forms of domination and of resistance, religious faith and millenarial impulses, manners and ideologies - all of which, in their sum, compose the genetics of the whole historical process, all of them joined at a certain point in common

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human experience which itself (as distinctive class experiences) exerts its pressure on the sum". 15

E.P. Thompson, thus, opened the search for the micro-foundations of Marxist theory. He argued that individual and his needs and cherished concerns (cultural, sexual, normative etc) are as important, to comprehend both 'correspondence' and 'motion' in historical process, as the study of objective structures. It is only in their constitutive and dialectical interaction that clues to comprehend the 'integrated social reality' reside.

Thus, subjective factors and logic internal to them, along with the moment of their interaction with objective structure needs to be problematised to comprehend totality in its differentiated existence. Subjectivity - such as class - of human collectives play significant role in realizing the correspondence between various social structures. However, subjectivity itself has a differentiated presence across spatial and temporal dimensions. Complex inter-play between internal logic of subjective factors and the 'external' influence of objective structures make the process of subjectivity itself differentiated, and not given and static in any social reality. Differentiated subjectivity, owing to the temporal and spatial dimensions, makes realization of totality both a historical (temporally) and a differentiated (spatially) phenomenon. In other words, realization or presence of 'concrete totality' would always be subjected to concrete historical process and cannot be comprehended a priori, either temporally (across different periods) or spatially (across different nations or regions). Both objective structure and subjective factors undergo change across time and space. They need to be understood in their specificity to make sense of the nature of differentiated totality.

Thompson enumerates the temporal dimension of subjective factors, in his detailed account of class formation. He argues that class is not a physical thing, entity or a pre-given structure, which determines historical process, instead it evolves in the course of historical process and becomes its own agency, being responsible for its creation and
its evolution. In his formulation, "working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time...It was present at its own making."\(^{16}\) This certainly means that no structural definition of class can by itself resolve the problem of class formation – process- and that no model can give us what ought to be the 'true' class formation for a certain 'stage' of the historical process. "The basic theoretical and methodological principles of Thompson's whole historical project is that objective determinations - the transformations of production relations and working conditions - never impose themselves on 'some nondescript' undifferentiated raw material of humanity' but on historical beings the bearers of historical legacies, traditions and values."\(^{17}\)

In other words, subjectivity of any identity - class, caste or gender is never given but takes shape over a period of time and in differentiated ways across space. Character and nature of any given subjectivity, for instance, class movement would not be the same (though it is a universal subject) across various regions or nations. Such dimensionality of subjective factors has to be taken into account if underlying processes of totalization are to be understood.

The spatial and temporal dimensions of subjectivity can be further understood through Thompson's writings on the nuclear movement. Thompson who understood the complexity of subjectivity through his study on 'class' in his early writings, true to his model 'shifts his focus on the emerging subjectivity - the phenomenon of 'new social movements' - in advanced capitalist countries.

According to Thompson, it is the ingenious human agency which has opted for a 'third way' (beyond capitalist and socialist options) to democratize society. "In the peace and the human rights movements of the 1980s and their associated and supportive 'new social movements' the 'third way' emerged on a substantial scale not as theory only but as real social forces, as a historical fact."\(^{18}\)

Cold war was driven by forces within each bloc (USA and USSR) and through their reciprocal interactions more and more came to resemble each other. This natural and reciprocal interaction has taken a significant dimension, to the extent of becoming self-determining beyond the scope of the fact that it (mutual reciprocation) emerged from different social systems. “Exterminism insisted that the logic of the arms race is no longer analyzable in terms of (historical) origins, intentions or goals, contradictions and conjectures. It should be seen as a "gathering determinism" generated by the confrontation of two collocations of fragmented forces that are interlocked in a mutually aggravating antagonism. For the cold war passed long ago, into a self generating conditions of cold war-ism (exterminism)”\(^\text{19}\).

The dimensionality of subjectivity, across its spatiality and temporality, makes the movement of interaction with objective structures a complex affair. (An elaborate analysis of this relation would be attempted as part of the second chapter of this study). Thus, Thompson’s model analyses totality in its differentiated. yet unified, presence. The social realm was understood to be differentiated according to practices driven by interaction with nature and those practices (such as sexuality, etc), which are at a distance from this interaction within the social realm. Though Thompson attempted to bring these practices together through their unity based on 'class' experiences (because class is a universal structure - spatially and temporally), his later analysis of nuclear movements (falling beyond class analysis), exposes a hiatus in his analysis. This definitely means that certain processes and practices in the social realm cannot be understood directly in terms of class logic. There seem to be other imperatives driving social processes (as Thompson himself argued). We need to comprehend those underlying imperatives within the social realm at a distance from the production process, if we wish not to understand the dynamics of subjectivity in an empiricist/ positivist method. In other words, to go beyond empiricism, the autonomous social realm needs to be grounded in alternative practices and principles, which however seems to be the glaring limitation in Thompson’s framework. Though Thompson recognizes 'new social movements' as a radically new

\(^{19}\) J. Rosenberg 'After Exterminism', New Left Review, 168, 1988, p.72
phenomenon, which cannot be comprehended directly in terms of class analysis and which cannot be reduced to practices in the 'economic' realm; and which have 'gathering determinism' of their own, he offers no theoretical/conceptual alternative.

Secondly, Thompson’s framework can be further criticised for a different kind of reductionism, in not considering the plurality of subjective identities and the interaction between them. How does that influence the 'concrete totality'? In other words, Thompson considers the dimensionality of a single subjective identity vis-à-vis its internal (both its subjective and objective) logic. For instance, he analyses the formation of class vis-à-vis the capitalist class within production relations, however he does not consider this process amidst plural subjective identities. Does the simultaneous presence of plural subjects, substantively change the nature of concrete totality? If so, what alternative terms would we need?

It is to answer these questions that we need to turn to the model of 'inter-subjective totality' of Jürgen Habermas. In what specific terms does he analyse the 'autonomous' social realm (those practices at a distance from the production logic) and the plurality of subjects, within and outside that realm.

The Habermasian paradigm is distinct from all the above models. Uniqueness of this model lies in Habermas' partiality for 'reason', which was the central aspect of his entire project and as such was at the heart of his reconstruction of western Marxist holism. Habermas redefines the various levels of totality according to the 'rationality' behind various 'practices' of a realm. Various types of rationality or knowledge systems provide the basis to define various 'sectors' within a realm and different institutional arrangements of the society.

Firstly, let us describe the method by which Habermas redefines the objective structure within a totality and then proceed to comprehend the specificity of subjective
factors. According to Habermas, Hegel recognizes the formative process of spirit as occurring through three separate media.

(a) Symbolic representation or language
(b) Labour or control of nature
(c) Interaction or struggle for recognition

Social evolution has to be explained in terms of all the three processes and not just labour as Marxists often do. Social evolution, according to Habermas, occurs with the progress and accumulation of technically exploitable knowledge, on the one hand, and 'practical cognitive interest' or 'communicative rationality' on the other. While the former guides the relation between men and nature, the latter guides the relation between human beings or various social groups.

Technical cognitive interest develops out of man's interaction with 'nature' and the need to subsume it to further human needs. In the production process, nature is converted into a raw material and by means of labour it is converted into a finished product. This relation between man and nature is essentially a means-ends affair in which nature is transformed instrumentally. Productive forces are therefore one of the most important driving forces for social transformation.

However, beyond the work or labor sector, is the domain of 'interaction' - between individuals. Within this domain human beings do not relate to each other 'instrumentally'. In other words, they do not relate as a means-end affair to control each other. Instead human beings interact through a 'practical cognitive interest' in order to realise each others identity. "The practical cognitive interest may be referred to as the interest in identity. Human beings do not simply relate to nature, they must relate to each other in a definite fashion. Human beings expect certain behavior from each other, not just from nature. These mutual expectations are articulated in inter-subjectively shared ordinary language - in the form of social norms, which govern what Habermas calls symbolic
interaction system". In other words, species regenerates itself through productive labour but forms itself through an inter-subjective struggle for recognition. Human beings define or recognize each other in terms of social norms, which are arrived at through mutual agreement born out of interaction or communication between them. In the process of social evolution, as societies become increasingly complex and differentiated these norms and traditions are open to 'self-reflection' and lose their quasi-natural existence. 'Communicative action' i.e. the possibility of rationally discussing, arguing out every social norm, is as important a driving force, as technical progress for social evolution.

Within this exhaustive scheme Habermas believes that 'Marx acknowledged only technical progress and failed to comprehend the autonomy of the domain of interaction'. "For Marx, therefore, social 'identity is an achievement of labour, the species persists itself and thereby forms itself only in the process of transforming nature Marx does not view the interest in social identity as a relatively autonomous human dimension but rather relegates it to a subordinate aspect of the interest in control over nature". Habermas argues more succinctly that, "Marx does not explicate the interrelationship of interaction and labour, but instead under the specific title of social praxis, reduces the one to the other namely communicative action to instrumental action".

These two sectors - labour and interaction - within the social realm are further divided according to the nature of action in various institutions of the social realm. According to Habermas, modern societies reproduce themselves through the economic, political and socio-cultural processes. The economic and political domains within the 'interaction' sector are dominated by technical or purposive rationality. These processes together are designated as the 'system'. The socio-cultural domain is termed as the 'life world' governed primarily by communicative rationality.

20 Tony Flood, 'J Habermas' Critique of Marxism', Science and Society vol. XLI. No.4, winter. 1977-78, p.452
21 Ibid, p.461
Figurative representation would clarify Habermas’ formulations.

Thus, Habermas has redefined the concept of totality. He has divided the social realm into ‘sectors and institutions, according to the purposive and communicative rationalities. That part of the social realm that is at a distance from productivist logic (which we focused on in E.P. Thompson’s model) is now grounded on communication and language. The relatively autonomous struggles such as peace movements, which were not explained, can alternatively now be explained in terms of crisis of communicative rationality. The concept of totality is therefore, made more complex by refining the social realm into sectors grounded on varied principles. This partly explains the hiatus that was located in E.P. Thompson’s model.

The relatively autonomous part of the social realm, (which Habermas designated as the realm of ‘interaction’), is further differentiated by identifying this autonomous realm with the socio-cultural institutions. The differentiated concept of totality (spatially) is explained through the complex interplay between the ‘system’ and the ‘life world’, where both operate with a completely independent logic. These independent institutional sectors, however, are also strongly inter-connected due to the systemic context in which they are located.
According to Habermas, in organised or advanced capitalism, economic crisis i.e. class contradictions, are flattened by the interventionist welfare state. The conflicts within the 'system' are contained. "The conflict over distribution of wealth has been institutionalized by the welfare state in such a way that a broad majority of people in work confront a minority of marginal grouping thrown together to form a heterogeneous mass without the power to set up any similar sort of embargo". However, due to the overwhelming presence of the 'system' as a welfare state, it interferes with various institutions of the socio-cultural domain through its 'purposive-rational action', giving rise to identity crisis in the domain of the 'life world'. Habermas explains this phenomenon of shifting contradictions through the concept of 'colonization of life world'. He contends that crisis specific to the current development of capitalism can arise at different points, which are qualitatively different.

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Late capitalist societies are endangered by at least one of the four possible crisis tendencies. " The consequences of controlling crisis in sub-system are achieved only at the expense of displacing and transforming the contradictions into another. What is

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presented is a typology of crisis tendencies, a logic of their development and ultimately, a postulation that the system's identity can only be preserved at the cost of individual autonomy i.e. with the coming of a totally administered world" 25.

The expanding role of the state into new social areas bring forth alternative issues related to communication and consensus, such as planning, choice, autonomy, identity, cultural differences, etc. As an example Habermas suggests the phenomenon of monetarisation and commercialization of traditional family structure and relations of domination between religious groups. The displacement of 'communicative rationality' by the external 'purposive rationality' (i.e. an orientation of success) is what Habermas means by 'colonization of life world'.

It is within this elaborate and complex interplay between objective structures that 'New social movements' – as subjective forces - emerge. To comprehend the nature of subjectivity of these forces we need to understand the structural context. Habermas explains it when he writes, "in short, the new conflicts are not ignited by distribution problems but by questions having to do with the grammar of forms of life...the new problems have to do with quality of life, equal rights, individual self-realization, participation and human rights" 26.

Thus, the latitudinal concept of totality in Habermas is a loose and decentered whole. No single level is the basic determinant of the others. It is within these uneven and decentered, structural or objective practices, Habermas locates the subjective determination.

The novelty and intricacies of Habermas' model of totality could be better comprehended in the backdrop of E.P.Thompson's relatively under developed model. In

25 Ibid., p.185
Thompson's concept of latitudinal totality, he recognized two relatively autonomous domains— one guided by the productivist logic and the other, which is at a distance— within the social realm, he however could not problematise their relation. In other words, he could not explicate on what different principles were they grounded and how certain commonality can be drawn between them. Habermas, on the other hand more clearly elaborates the two domains as that of labor and interaction and further as 'system' and 'life world' grounded on 'purposive' and 'communicative' rationalities.

In the remaining part of this section we shall deal with the subjective dimension of Habermas' model. Again Thompson developed the notion of relative autonomy of contemporary subject-positions as that of Peace movement and Human Rights movement, however he could not explicate their novelty on the one hand and their relation with 'class forces' on the other. He ambiguously refers to new social movements, as the ingenuity of subjective forces (it is due to such ambiguous conceptualization that E.P.Thompson's model becomes susceptible to criticism of being voluntaristic). It is Habermas who explains the difference between the class movement and contemporary new social movements, on the one hand, and difference of interests within the new social movements, on the other, as being constitutive and real. This concept of constitutiveness of different material interests between various subjects entails a radically different concept of totality. It is in the context of varying material interests between the new social movements that Habermas locates the problematic of subjectivity on the one hand and the role of critical theory on the other. It is extremely important to comprehend that this recognition of multiple subjects with varying interests is completely unique to Habermas' model. "The advocacy role of the critical theory of society would consist in ascertaining generalizable interests in a representatively simulated discourse between groups that are differentiated from one another by articulated, or at least virtual opposition of interests"27.

Habermas, like Thompson, argues that subjective dimension of totality is activated on the basis of its 'experience' of the social reality around it. By employing the

27 J.Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, Heinemann, London 1973, p.117
method of phenomenological hermeneutics he argues that, "the required coherence of the theoretical approach with the total societal process... points towards experience. But insights of this sort stem, in the last instance, from the fund of pre-scientifically accumulated experience which has not yet excluded, as merely subjective elements, the basic resonance of a 'life historically centered social environment that is education acquired by the total human subject'.

However, this pre-scientific 'experience' is located not in a unified ego which objectifies itself and knows its objectifications through a monological process of self-reflection, instead it is a product of human interaction or inter-subjective communication. In other words, in course of interaction various social groups realize their own material/social interests and thereby attempt to objectify themselves. Each subject has its own different interests. Totality cannot be conceptualized from any single subjective viewpoint. Habermas is critical of the Marxian project, which identified totality with the interests of the proletariat (ex-Lukacs). According to Habermas totality is always relative, different subjects such as class, gender, caste/race, experience it variedly. Class and gender might be universal but within a given spatial whole they have only relative presence.

However he wished to avoid the absolute relativistic implications of a pure hermeneutics i.e. he did not wish to endorse all types of experience as valid, on contrary he wanted to distinguish between various experiences in order to understand the relation between experience and practice better. Human experience and cognition needs to be judged against three anthropological interests. They are:

(a) technical interest - control of nature
(b) practical interest - inter-subjective communication
(c) emancipatory interest - overthrow of exploitative relations of power.

Social groups relate to their social reality through these three types of interests. Subjective interests of each social group can be generalized in terms of these three interests. The emancipatory interest is the most important of the three in determining human experience. Emancipatory interest subsumes reason, and is nothing but the will to achieve rational understanding of reality and change it.

Emancipatory interest itself occurs at three different levels. Firstly, rational reconstruction, this is a mode of knowledge system, which is removed from practice. It would refer to abstract philosophical systems. Secondly, self-reflection, it is that knowledge which has immediate practical consequences of transforming the world. It could be the various ideologies practiced by social movements. Thirdly, the most important was the strategic action oriented towards the future. It reflected the future normative dimension of a fully emancipated society.

Though all these types of emancipatory practices attempted to understand the social reality rationally for transformative purposes, and attempted to draw together various diverse interests of different social groups, the future goal should not be a meta-subject of history or the kind posited by Hegelian Marxism. “Even if social evolution should point in the direction of unified individuals consciously influencing the consequences of their own evolution there would not arise any large-scale subjects, but at most self-established higher level, inter-subjective commonalties”29.

Modern subjects are what Habermas calls ‘self-limiting’. Each subject has limited capacity to understand and transform social reality around itself. Totality itself is differentiated, therefore the experience of the subjects understanding it needs to be specific, limited and relative. Various processes and institutions would be understood through the subjective position of the social group.

29 J. Habermas, 1987, op. cit. p.324
Thus, Habermas has presented a model of totality, which is objectively decentered, and subjectively relativised. Social structures are divided according to varied principles of social arrangement and subjects are characterized as self-limiting and not totalising. However this is not a fragmented notion of reality because underlying this is the belief that "there are core moral/social values that are universally felt and that historical development must involve articulating these values and constructing societies in which they can be expressed. Habermas' search for a 'theory of communicative action' involves the effort to understand how a set of values can be developed that will make rational consensus possible".30

In other words, amidst the relativised positions of subjects there are certain values and interests that can be generalized, it is on the basis of these values that a plausible construct of totality stands. These values can be realized and shared on the basis of 'rational communicative action' based on the 'universal ethics of speech'. Language, according to Habermas has tied mankind together as members in a fictive world society. It has inherent potential to bring human collectives to consensus over issues that are generalisable. "Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal unconstrained consensus".31 The general interests could be realized by various social groups and social movements through a smoothly functioning language game which rests on a background consensus formed from the mutual recognition of at least four different types of validity claims - comprehensibility, truthfulness, sincerity and appropriateness.

Habermas argues that all the social movements should recognize that relative and subjective knowledge about totality generated out of interaction within or internal to each social group is potentially valid depiction of the reality. Within each of these relativised knowledge systems (belonging to class or gender movements) there are relativised

31 J. Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, Heinemann, London, 1971, p.24
knowledge systems (belonging to class or gender movements) there are certain hidden moral values, which have universal validity. By externalizing and opening the 'internal' knowledge to discursive negotiation, the apparent differences could be, partly, overcome to reach a consensus. Internal knowledge of each social group should be judged against the above four validity claims. These four validity claims can come into full play in discursive negotiations only in an 'ideal speech situation' which implies a situation where 'all participants (must) have the same chance to initiate and perpetuate discourse, to put forward, call into question, and give reasons for or against statements, explanations interpretation and justifications"\textsuperscript{32}.

Habermas, therefore, formulates a concept of weak totality, while objective structures are differentiated along autonomous principles of social arrangement, subjective forces are relativised in their mode of experiencing and conceptualising social totality. \textit{Totality is grounded on the contingent situation of achieving a consensus on certain core values} (which can be known not apriori but only in their moment of consensus). There is no guarantee that an evolutionary logic will be followed by the species. "It is not evolutionary process that is irreversible but the structural sequence that a society must run through if and to the extent that it is involved in evolution"\textsuperscript{33}. It is only in course of historical evolution that human societies gain coherence and consensus.

In conclusion, according to Habermas in contemporary modern societies only a weaker notion of totality can be justified. It is weaker because only some interests and not all are generalisable; we can conceive not a unified world community but only self-established, higher-level inter-subjective commonalties; finally, unwarranted supremacy of instrumental reason may be challenged by practical reason through dialectics of labour and language which may not come together in a harmonious way.

\textsuperscript{32} J.Habermas, 1973, op. cit., p. XVII
\textsuperscript{33} J.Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Heinemann, London, 1979, p.141.
The concept of totality as it develops from the various models elucidated, is a complex whole that is continuously mediated and transformed. It has various components that had no simple linear relations, as represented in the base-superstructure model of totality. A more comprehensive model of totality can be figuratively depicted as follows (in the next page).

Actors in social movements need to realize that the various components (in the below figure) of a totality are irreducible. Unlike what the base-superstructure model presents, social reality is an 'integrated material life' without artificial discontinuities.

Material practices do not exist in terms of regionally separated spheres but are inextricably linked and incessantly mediated through human practice. Material life is integrated not only around the processes of production but also that of communication. When social movements move beyond artificially enclosed regions such as ‘socio-cultural’, ‘cultural-political’ and ‘political-economic’, they would begin to address issues in a more integrated manner. Each of the movement would address issues related to all aspects of the material life, and in the process create radically new subjects of transformation based on politics of durable and substantive solidarity. Integrated material life presents conditions for ‘inter-subjective’ communication and the scope for actors in each movement to reach consensus around more universal goals.
34 Only Caste/Race are referred to because of the specific focus on caste movement in this study, other particularistic identities are therefore not considered.
III
Solidarity and Theory of Anti-Totality

While the Communist movement bifurcated the social reality by the configuration of their practice on the base-superstructure model of totality, autonomous women’s groups conceptualized social reality through contemporary theories of post-Marxism. They argued in favour of a more dispersed, localized and fragmented practice as a means to emancipation. We need to, briefly, analyze both the limitations and contributions such an approach can make to the study on the inter-relation between movements.

We have so far theoretically understood the prospects of solidarity among the social movements around the concept of totality. We have assumed that totality or coherence is a constitutive part of social process and therefore we probed the possibility of durable solidarity amidst apparent and transient fragmentation of social forces.

However, we need to now negotiate theoretically with the concept of fragmentation from the point of view of anti-totality. We need to negotiate with theories that make fragmentation the constitutive part of reality and make coherence unstable and transient. In other words, fragmentation among social forces would become 'real' and solidarity only a momentary possibility.

The post-Marxist theoretical system pleads that social movement should begin by anti-totalising the social reality. If democratic politics is to survive, movements should 'deconstruct' rather than totalise social relations. In other words, the meaning of solidarity and fragmentation, as we understood, is now transformed. The prospects for solidarity are now (de) centered on anti-totality.

In the first part of this chapter we concluded that the prospects for solidarity could be analyzed on the basis of the complexity of the concept of totality, adopted by each movement. The more the dimensionality of the notion of totality, the higher the prospects for forging stable solidarity between various social movements.
However, in the second part of this chapter, we shall discuss the arguments in the post-Marxist theoretical system. A section of post-Marxists would argue that prospects for solidarity cannot be comprehended through the complexity of totality but could be made possible if movements 'deconstruct' or de-totalise the social conditions. On the basis of such a deconstruction, momentary, unstable or discursive solidarity between movements could be achieved. Another section of post-Marxists would argue more radically that solidarity is neither a plausible goal nor is it desirable. According to them the 'social' is constituted only through 'differentiation'. In other words, each social identity defines itself only in differentiating itself from the 'others'. Thus fragmentation should be the new goal of contemporary social movements.

Post-Marxists are arguing not for one or the other type of totality but against the very concept of totality. The component parts of the so-called totality - subjective and objective - need to be understood in a radically different set of terms. Social conditions should be understood as a floating mass, which cannot be completely comprehended and made sense of in any totalised form. Totality, therefore, is essentially equated with totalitarianism.

According to the post-Marxists this radical shift in the terms of discourse and normative goals of the social movements is necessitated by certain (de) structural changes in postindustrial societies. We need to briefly comprehend these changes before we elaborate on the new terms of discourse problematised by the post-Marxists. Each of the component part of the social condition has undergone too radical a change to be identified with processes in industrial societies; we shall enumerate certain 'basic' and 'fundamental' changes.

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35 Post-Marxist is used as a generic term to refer to various types of post-structural formulations. It is not used in the restricted sense of referring to the writings of Laclau & Mouffe.

36 More changes are enumerated in architecture, aesthetics, literature, archeology, etc, which are beyond the scope of the present study and do not concern us directly.
As early as in 1920s Gramsci noted that "construction of basic industry had been accomplished and capitalism was driven instead by production of consumer goods" \(^37\). This consumption pattern has taken a decisive turn in 1970s with the emergence of cultural resources as the central commodity, which has altered the mode of existence of social relations. Mass availability of these resources produce cultural patterns that reproduce social relations, as relations of dominance, more through symbolic codes than real material/economic differences. The abundance of social wealth and new patterns of production have displaced the old economic conflicts, with new cultural differences. Touraine in this context writes, "I apply the term programmed to a society in which the production and mass distribution of cultural commodities play the central role that belonged to material commodities in industrial society. The production and distribution of knowledge, medical care, and information, and therefore education, health and the media are to the programmed society what metal working, textiles, chemicals and even the electrical and electronics industries were to industrial societies" \(^38\). Through massive flow of information, certain types of knowledge systems and standardized health codes social relations replicate as new 'power' relations. Component parts of social conditions cannot be made sense of in terms of nondescript production or economy objectively. New sites have to be located if one has to discern the new social conditions. For instance, Touraine believes that "managerial power consists in predicting and modifying opinions, attitudes and modes of behavior and in molding personalities and cultures rather than remaining in the realm of utility, it is therefore directly involved in the world of values" \(^39\).

Thus, social conditions cannot be understood objectively in terms of differentiation between 'economic', 'political' and 'cultural' realms or structures. Production has collapsed into culture, and culture has become the new means of power. Objective structures (refer to the figure at the end of the previous section) have to be radically reconfigured and even the old subjects have been displaced by new identities.

\(^{37}\) Barbara Epstein, ‘Rethinking Social Movement Theory’, Social Research, Vo.52, 1985, p.40
\(^{38}\) Alain Touraine, Critique of Modernity, Blackwell, Cambridge, 1995, p.244
\(^{39}\) Ibid.,
Post-Marxists argue that new social conditions leave no plausible space for old class politics. Class struggle in conventional Marxist sense is irrelevant in contemporary societies. According to them, measures initiated by the welfare state protect large parts of the middle and working classes against the worst dangers of labor markets. For instance, welfare state has initiated wages, health services, insurance, regularization of union activity, etc. "The mobilization of this idiom, and the consequent formation of lifestyle, identity oriented and civil rights - oriented state-policies, is causally linked with the historical development of liberal democratic systems with their specific ideology and powerful welfare state machinery. As a result of this historic change, the old conflict between the working class and the bourgeois has been replaced by a more complex pattern of conflicts for identity, political recognition and welfare provision".

The alternative identities radically change the field of collective action. Neither are they definite, completely identifiable nor structured around socio-economic inequalities. The new field is a floating mass, which is proliferating with conflicts all over. All these conflicts can neither be structured nor understood in a hierarchical manner. They are all dispersed, they coalesce and decenter themselves very quickly. "The negative side effects of the established modes of economic and political rationality are no longer concentrated and class specific but dispersed in time, space and kind so as to affect virtually every member of society in a broad variety of ways".

Subjective identities such as class, gender, race, (caste) are only momentary 'nodal points' in dispersed conflicts. They are engaged simultaneously in various conflicts against diverse practices in society that cannot be structured around any single center. They are simply diverse struggles against fragmented forms of power relations. Only broad and generic 'nodal points' could be traced in the social space in which these struggles are located. Therefore post-Marxists declare that they will defend the image of a

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society organized around the attempt to re-establish such a society that no longer uses exclusion from the means of production as the dichotomising criterion. The social dichotomy that is invented and ultimately defended is one in which the exclusion from a society allowing for identity and expressive individualism is the dominant criterion. The culture of new social movements contains an element of dichotomizing reality, namely the ideas of exclusion for the social means of realizing identity."42.

Thus, because of these primary changes—collapse of production into culture, rise of welfare state and dislocation of class struggle, proliferation of identity struggles that are multi-dimensional, and decentered—social conditions have to be understood in a new set of terms. Contemporary social movements, have to be understood not in their moment of totalization (however complex) but in their attempts to 'deconstruct' the social reality into fragmented and decentered social relations. This shift from totality to anti-totality entails solidarity as unstable and momentary and fragmentation as constitutive and more permanent.

Post-Marxists have problematised issues already raised by Marxists such as Althusser, E.P.Thompson and importantly Habermas, but from the point of view of anti-totality. The notion of decentered totality (found in Althusser), the concept of understanding totality not in terms of segregated sub-totalities but imbricated practices which cannot be clearly identified except analytically (found in E.P.Thompson) and the concept of constitutive difference between subjects which cannot be reduced at any point (found in Habermas), have all been understood as underdeveloped concepts, due to the conceptual space being restricted by the underlying notion of totality.

The post-Marxists have constructed an alternative political imaginary. "The rejection of the privileged part of rupture and the confluence of struggles into a unified political space, and the acceptance, on the contrary, of the plurality and indeterminacy of

42 Klaus Eder, "Does Social Class Matter in the Study of Social Movements", in L. Maheu (ed), 1995, op .cit. p.34
the social, seem to us the two fundamental bases from which a new political imaginary

can be constructed."43

Hebermas had also understood subjective interests of various social groups to be
relative and difference between them to be constitutive and permanent. However, he
believed that underlying these differences were 'certain' core moral values, which could
emerge, historically as generalisable interests. These common interests brought
coherence to otherwise divided and relativised social field. Post-Marxists disagree
vehemently with any concept of 'universal' or 'generalisable' interests. On contrary, they
redefine the 'social' in terms of infinity and permanence of differences. The nature of
difference as such that they neither have a unifying logic nor are they finite, within a
comprehendible limit.

In modern societies there is a massive proliferation of 'subject positions' (locus of
conflicts), each subject comprehends it in diverse ways, through various discursive
constructs, which are themselves product of a contingent conjuncture of various historical
practices. The 'social' therefore is nothing beyond a floating mass of practices, which
have neither a historical logic nor structured limits. "Against this essentialist vision we
tend now a days to accept the infinitude of the social, that is, the fact that any structural
system is limited, that is always surrounded by an 'excess' of meaning' which it is unable
to master and that consequently 'society' as a unitary and intelligible object which
grounds its own partial processes is an impossibility."44

'Social' is hypostatised on 'infinity'. Objective dimension of social conditions
(otherwise referred to as totality) is a loose ensemble of conflicts, which have both,
infinite meanings and capacity to get 'dislocated' into completely new conflicts without
any essential continuity with the old conflicts. The object therefore sets an infinite quest

for knowledge for the epistemological subject, without the power to ever realize it. Foucault therefore argues that this 'incomplete epistemological mutation' makes the concept of continuity and progress an ideological fiction and an attempt to impose an illusionary identity on recalcitrant and dispersed events. It is around this concept of the 'social' with radically constitutive and infinitely pluralised and relativised subjective interests, that the concept of totality is 'deconstructed' and an alternative imaginary posited on radical decenteredness and anti-totalisation is proposed for the contemporary social movements.

Michael Foucault was one of the earliest post-Marxist to challenge the longitudinal totality of history. There could be no closure at the end of time that would render coherent the whole of history. Nor did Foucault accept the assumption that specific eras would themselves be understood as latitudinal wholes. Rather than expressing constitutive genesis or a sharing of a common telos, the discursive formations or epistemes that he chose to study were dispersed, decentered force-fields of statements that locked the mediated integration of dialectical totalities. From Focault's perspective scientific Marxists were wrong to search for some principle of coherence beneath the plurality of appearances, in any discursive formation. Discourse, in this context, had nothing to do with inter-subjective dialogue; it implied instead the initial and impenetrable materiality of language, which always undercut what he saw as the fiction of intended meaning.

In other words, any structuration of the event's temporality takes place through repetition, through the reduction of its variation to an invariable nucleus, which is an internal moment of the pre-given structure - 'the metaphysics of presence'. Neither space/synchrony (a set of elements/events at a given point of time) nor time/diachrony (a set of events at different stages) could be comprehended in a given known pattern" spatial and temporal dimensions are opened to 'pure' temporality i.e. a change/transformation of elements and events that is in radical discontinuity with the known events or elements. Latitudinal and longitudinal dimensions are reconfigured and posited on constitutive
It is important to note that we are not dealing with the synchronic/diachronic opposition here. Diachrony insofar as it is subject to rules and attempts to capture the sense of a succession is also synchronic in our terms. Only a maladjustment, which is spatially unrepresentable, is an event. Discontinuity or what Laclau refers to, as ‘dislocation’ is the very form of possibility - change or transformation of the present. With dislocation there is no telos which governs change, possibility therefore becomes an authentic possibility, a possibility in the radical sense of the term. As we have seen, because structural dislocation is constitutive, the dislocated structure cannot provide the principle of its transformation.

As the 'Social' was posited on 'infinity', the relation between elements within it was characterized by 'discontinuity' or dislocation. There is therefore no meaningful relation between the whole and part. The fragment or the part is a genre unto itself. Every fragment reflects upon itself and its own activities. In fact the mode of constitution of the fragment itself is contingent and temporary. Instead of the whole part relation, post-Marxism recasts social conditions in terms of diverse practices, institutions, discourses and identities thrown together randomly. This methodology gets clearly manifested in their conception of the categories of objective and subjective factors.

Objectivity or study of social structures as sub-totalities is denied because of their inherent discontinuity, uneveness, dispersion, decenteredness, contingency and serialization. In a general scenario of rejection of the objective totality, it was posited on subjective or hermeneutical understanding. However, Foucault’s critique of totality is grounded in a virulent, anti-humanism and anti-subjectivism. Foucault dismisses the idea of a unified and invariant subject as the site of creation of all values. He critiques the notion of an atomized, rational individual of the enlightenment as a popular prejudice or ideological construct. He proposes the notion of decentered subject, where rational ego is

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45 E. Laclau, 1990, op. cit., p.42
46 Ibid
merely a layer in the complex structure of the personality. The 'social' is therefore considered neither as an object nor a subject, it is alternatively understood as a 'genealogy'. It assumes that knowledge about social conditions (including our notions of object and subject) is generated by a concrete matrix of practices. This -interwoven network of practices, procedures, institutions, disciplines, knowledge and truth constitutes historically contingent regimes of truth/power47.

'Power' therefore for Foucault exists at all levels. Our very conception of 'objectivity' is based on certain hidden power relations - exclusion of marginal interests. According to Foucault the totalising political perspective of Marxism has tended to either subordinate or ignore the vast domain of 'unpolitical politics' of oppression and conflict not reducible to class and economy - sanity, insanity, illness, crime and sexuality are some of the issues which Foucault now problematises and liberates from silence. He argues that 'power' is also manifest in discourses that eliminate them from their emancipatory projects. All objectivity and subjectivity are therefore posited on the exclusion of the 'other' - the potentially possible dynamics or identity. This is the only method of positing objectivity in the face of infinity. "What this principle of structural undecidability does mean is that if two different groups have taken different decisions, the relation between them will be one of antagonism and power, since no ultimate rational ground exists for their opting either way. It is in this sense that we assert that all objectivity necessarily presupposes the repression of that which is excluded by its establishment"48.

By arguing that objectivity itself is posited on power relations and that power relations characterize entire social conditions, Foucault himself has problematised social relations in terms of a 'negative totality'. Foucault's contradiction lies in his anti-totalising attitude towards power and resistance i.e. their ubiquitous presence cannot be made sense

47 John E. Grumley, 1989, op. cit., p.191
48 Laclau, 1990, op.cit., p.31
of or overcome from any 'closure'. However the totalising presence of 'power' has a notion of undifferentiated totality beneath it. "Foucault's general characterization of modern power as inescapable, all pervasive and productive can be succeeded only by leveling and blurring all discriminatory categories and nuances concerning modern power and therefore simply avoiding the vital political question of the distinguishing instance of eradicable and coercive power."

Similar is the case with Laclau and Mouffe. Though they begin by arguing that the 'social' is infinite and plurality irreducible to any commonality, they argue that through 'hegemonic articulation' atomized elements or demands of various social groups get over-determined and open the possibility of drawing 'equivalence' or commonality among diverse groups. This moment of equivalence is temporary and is always prone to dislocation. Radical temporality of events, however, does not deny formation of discursive totalities, however momentary they may be. In fact this mode of totalization is said to be inherent part of the dynamics of any 'social'. Social has not only infinite meaning but also an attempt to 'domesticate infinitude'. In other words, "totality does not establish the limits of 'the social' by transforming the latter into a determinate object. Rather the social always exceeds the limits of the attempts to constitute society. At the same time, however, that 'totality' does not disappear: if the suture it attempts is ultimately impossible, it is nevertheless possible to proceed to a relative fixation of the social through the institution of nodal points. Each social formation has its own forms of determination and relative autonomy; which are always instituted through complex process of over determination and therefore cannot be established a priori."

It is on the basis of these concepts of 'overdetermination' and 'hegemonic articulation', that various radically diverse groups with absolutely relativist interests are drawn back into a possible solidarity and conflict for common goals or telos. The fact that

49 John E. Grumley, 1989, op.cit, p.203
50 E.Laclau, 1990, op.cit, p.91
'rainbow coalition' is not grounded in any material logic and forged purely through discursive articulation, makes it an 'ahistorical totality' grounded on (neither objective logic nor subjective consciousness but) contingent discursive formations. However, it needs to be recognized that rainbow Coalition' opens the possibility and necessity of drawing radically divergent forces into coherent commonality of concerns, demands and modes of transformation. "For it is not a matter of establishing mere alliance between given interests but of actually modifying the very identity of these forces. In order that the defense of working interests is not pursued at the cost of rights of women, immigrants or consumers, it is necessary to establish an equivalence between these different struggles. It is only under these circumstances that struggles against power become truly democratic"\textsuperscript{51}.

We need to extrapolate some of these formulations from an otherwise, underproblematised (de-materialised) theoretical system, to conclude this chapter. One of the contributions of post-Marxist theory to the concept of totality would be to recognize the permanence of plurality and irreducibility of difference. Social groups would totalise the social reality in radically different manners, in accordance with their own subjective interests and subjective experience. Therefore 'autonomy' is as important a political concept as 'solidarity'. Whenever 'autonomy' is neglected totality would become totalitarian. "Between the logic of complete identity and that of pure difference, the experience of democracy should consist of the recognition of the multiplicity of social logics along with the necessity of their articulation"\textsuperscript{52}. Self-limiting ones own demands in accordance with the demands of other social groups as the only mode of both democratizing and forging solidarity. Totality, in other words, should always be based on plurality and plural social logic.

Concept of plurality is closely connected to the concept of 'infinity' of the 'social'. This seems to be the second most significant conceptual category that needs to be

\textsuperscript{52} Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, op.cit, p.198
incorporated into a differentiated notion of totality. There are always dimensions of the 'social' that are unknown to the subjective consciousness. Each social group has limited consciousness regarding the 'social'. Further, unlike Habermas who believed that certain 'universality' could be grasped through inter-subjective communication; Post-Marxists would argue that the dynamics of the 'social' is beyond even inter-subjective communication. Human collectives or social movements should always be aware of this complexity of the 'social'. Longitudinal infinity introduces radical temporality across both subjective and objective dimensions of social reality. Both the subject and the object are always in 'motion' and always located within radical temporality and therefore knowledge of reality at any given moment is always inadequate. Thus social movements need to incorporate the dimension of radical temporality or infinity into their notion of totality.

While longitudinal dimension is differentiated through its inherent infinity, positing it on its micro foundations differentiates latitudinal dimension of reality. In other words, every practice, institution and discourse is understood to be potential contributor to any historical process. Thus, structural transformation does not refer always to macro-transformations nor do macro-transformations always subsume the micro-foundations. Individual psychology, human will, sexuality, aesthetics, etc are all 'real' dimensions of any reality. Comprehensive transformation has to occur at all 'levels' of the society. Thus, totality is further differentiated into micro-macro dimensions. For instance, within social movements democracy within their organization structure, mode of decision making, the 'personal' domain are all part of the transformative process.

Thus, the concepts of irreducible plurality, infinity, micro foundations and discursive articulation,(though not disconnected from material processes, as we shall study in the next chapter) further differentiate the concept of totality. These self-limiting characteristics of social movements should not always be discounted as either passivity or neo-conservatism; they are significant dimensions of any process of democratic totalisation. Tolerating plural view points, being aware of the possibility of an 'unknown' dimension emerging within the 'social' and locating domination in its most microscopic.

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dimensions are all potentially democratizing factors for social movements. They would also play significant role in forging stable solidarity. Self-limiting by tolerating difference, being aware of the potentiality and dimensionality of an identity, and being self-reflective regarding various unknown/hidden micro-dimensions of power, all these factors entail politics of durable solidarity.

Thus, the dichotomy of totality and anti-totality is renegotiable through a more differentiated notion of totality, and are not always mutually exclusive. These factors should be observed in the concrete activities, programs and ideological perspectives of various social movements. This would be attempted in the second part of this study.