Chapter VIII

Conclusion

This dissertation worked at the interface of postcoloniality and land relations. It has been already spelt out that the dissertation is trying to point out a space which is postcolonial. It has also been pointed out that the postcolonial space is such type of space which goes beyond the Capitalocentrism and Orientalism. Postcoloniality signifies the question of difference (from the Ideal of the ‘West) with respect to the cultural, political and economic processes. So far the land relations is concerned, the dissertation pointed out specificity of land relations which exist in the non-western societies, in this case for example West Bengal. The crucial point here is the notion of difference but the rendition of difference is not understood with respect to the empirical experience; it was understood with respect to the philosophy. This research proposed here a different philosophy of land relations.

Side by side, the dissertation problematized the given dominant rendition of land relation. The dominant discourse on land relations has given emphasis upon the logic bourgeois property right over the land. The question of property right over the land as if is unquestioned good for all who are associated with the land and related activities. It posits itself as if the law of the society. The dissertation questioned the natural Universal truth of property right through genealogical analysis of History (Foucault, 2002). This research argued that the methodology of our predecessors is really followed once again there is very little scope for pointing out other possible imaginations of the land relations. The conceptual and methodological issues played the important role in this research. In all of these literatures, it has been found that the authors are valuing private ownership over the land. They are also following the logic of land relations taking place at the Western society. What is valid and true for the
West is valid for the rest is the logic that structures the mindset of the authors. So far we have come across different literatures on land relations, we have found three thinkers who have posed serious questions against the Capitalo\textit{centrism and Orientalism, relating with land relations. They are Radhakamal Mukerjee, Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji and P.C. Joshi. Among them, the dissertation followed the contribution of D.P. Mukerji so far the question of methodology is concerned.

Two traditions of western sociology – Positivism and Hermeneutic – are brought under interrogation. Dhurjati Prasad highlighted the problems within these two strands of thought. He analytically showed how working with these two schools will prove inadequate. The points of departure are laid bare. Marxist dialectics is forwarded as the ‘third’ avenue. Dialectics for DP is not \textit{laws of Karma}. He does not view dialectics in a teleological pattern with its reductive properties. D.P Mukerji’s interpretation of dialectic offers a way out of the entrenched part-whole debate. D.P Mukerji’s rendition of dialectic combines three principles: \textit{taking sides, dynamics of the objective human reality and most truthful to the wholeness}. D.P Mukerji puts forward a postcolonial rendition of dialectic itself. In other words, he offers the West and Western sociology/Marxism another understanding of dialectics. This research follows the dialectical method, as developed by D.P. Mukerji. Neither the positivist method (Capitalism as the law of the society) nor the hermeneutic strategy (valorising peasants’ lived experience) has been deployed in this research.

It has shown that the History is not an innocent process. It shaped the conceptual structure of a particular incident. The specific method of history writings remapped horizontal differences and existing hierarchies-discriminations in the social on to a complex 'temporality-verticality' - where existing temporalities are reduced to a ‘step
ladder verticality of space’ and existing verticalities are reduced to ‘historical and evolutionist temporality.

Two major incidents shaped the land relations thinking in West Bengal. In other words, Permanent Settlement and Land Reform Programme introduced by the Left Front Government in the year of 1977 structured the conceptual mapping of the land relations. The genealogical analysis was able to displace the naturalized understanding of land relation which was upholding the idea of bourgeois property right over the land. What was passed off as the natural was historically constructed fact. Tebhaga movement gave rise to the demand of the appropriation of the crops — two third should be with the direct producer; remaining one third of the share would go to the non-producer, usually known as the ‘jotedar’. But slowly raise the slogan of: land to the tiller — which gradually transformed into, got resolved in private ownership over the land. This dissertation tried to interpret the demand of appropriation of crops by the peasants and it also tried to interrogate why the demand of appropriation of crops by the peasants got displaced into the logic of private ownership over the land. For the Marxist historians, this movement was a struggle for share of crops, a struggle of the share croppers, and not a movement for property right over the land. They traced the seeds of the development of a class consciousness in the Tebhaga Movement. This research questioned the tendency of classifying consciousness into initial, middle and final phases. It also enquired whether there was at all any possibility of conceiving a class processes (understood in terms of production, appropriation, distribution and receipt of surplus labour) through the Tebhaga Movement. This research show why the demand has not been materialized. The struggle of the peasants in the Tebhaga Movement has been discussed in context of the (in)completeness of capitalist transformation. Each among the share croppers,
small peasants and land labourers has been discussed. What remained from being discussed is their method of work. Costing of their method of work has been fixed from Orientalist-Capitalist viewpoint. Hence, the resistance of the share croppers, small peasants and land labourers did not receive any extra-capitalist language. Subalternity is what Spivak calls this namelessness. According to Spivak, “Subalternity became imbricated with the idea of non-recognition of agency” (Spivak, 2005:477). It does not imply that the subaltern is voiceless. For us, Subalternity is the foreclosure of some primary signifiers of language. Spivak does not do away with the possibility of the subaltern speaking. To her, subaltern agency is rather significant. But she has grave problem with an easy sketch of the subaltern agency. For Spivak, subalternity of the peasants lies in their methodological perspective. The collective farming that was based on the ideal of sharing and the possibility of the creation of an ethical narrative centering this ideal from a Marxist perspective was foreclosed and unrecognized in context of the hegemonic symbolic (Orientalist-Capitalocentric) discipline. Hegemony of the hegemonic symbolic structure has never ever been secured. It is produced through the constant refusal of some internal nodal signifier; in this case – the production, appropriation, distribution and receipt of surplus labour. The meaning generated through the signifiers such as profit, competition, productivity, efficiency, market, private property, etc. in context of the anchoring signifier named capitalism renders another signifier – collective farming – as nothing more than a primary moment of the erasure of semi-feudal remnants. As a result of this (Orientalist-Capitalocentric) understanding and in context of the perspectival experience of the movement for crop sharing, it became impossible to assign any other sign than capitalism to another nodal signifier – the production, appropriation, distribution and receipt of surplus labour. Assigning this meaning is, in context of
Orientalist-Capitalocentrism, actually a form of denial. To bring back the refused, denied moment which is foreclosed in Orientalist-Capitalocentric discourse, was a purpose of this research.

Analysis of the demands of Tebhaga Movement in terms of the production, appropriation, distribution and receipt of surplus labour could have opened up yet another cartography of reality. It could have brought in the realization of a possibility of the idea of non-exploitative society. Exploitation is that social relation where the direct producer is cut off from the process of appropriation and distribution of surplus labour, the latter being sole rights of the non-producers. In non-exploitative social relation, such processes will be controlled by the direct producers, or they may also involve non-producers in these processes on basis of their joint decisions. The non-exploitative social reality is based on the ethical principle of sharing. The social entity formed on basis of the ideal of private property (one among the many features of capitalism) renders exploitation-based society valid. But here, such a non-capitalist social relation could not be conceived which would render non-exploitative social reality valid. Incapability of denying the demand of a capitalist symbolic discipline at the very level of concept has compelled us to read the extra-capitalist social relations in terms of capitalism. It would be pertinent to remember Marx at this juncture: “Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts (here, read Orientalist-Capitalocentric thoughts). Let us teach men [sic.], says one, to exchange these imaginations for thoughts which correspond to the essence of man [sic.]: says second, to take up a critical attitude to them; says the third, to knock them out of their heads; and existing reality will collapse.

This research has made it clear that a different space is always viewed by placing it in a historical scale of development from the feudalism to capitalism. That means, it is
something different from capitalism, something exceptional. Something that lags behind capitalism, finds its place at a step lower than capitalism in the staircase. In other words, it is that particular space which lacks the qualities of Capitalism. It is thus represented as the ‘lacking other’ of Capitalism. This ‘lacking other’ does not enjoy the independent definition of its own. It does carry the dependent definition. Things as these are discussed or talked about only when a transition or development is conceived of with capitalism as the starting point. The capitalist developmental project starts with its task of establishing ‘civilizing mission’ by keeping the ‘state of exception’ at the fore such as the Taliban mal-governance etc. It means that unless a state of exception is constructed or something is presented as an exception following the logic of history, capitalist intervention cannot be legitimised. ‘Underdevelopment’, ‘Feudalism’, ‘Third-world’ – capitalism views all these as states of exception – as the derogatory ‘lacking other’. It is necessary to control them because they are ‘exceptional’. This control is executed at times through waging of wars, at times with the slogan of democracy, and at times in the name of development.

Production and reproduction in capitalist system continue with the construction of ‘exceptions’.

‘Exception’ – ‘Control’ – ‘Exclusion’, this procedure runs simultaneously, none precedes or succeeds the others. The various modes of control that are there – war, democracy, development – taking any of one these routes will mean dealing with land and land–relations. And that means dealing with all those men and women who live in and with that land – that includes both the male and female peasants as well as their families and community lives; and this whole, in turn, dwells along with the nature, rivers, soil, forests, insects, various birds and animals and even those small earth worms without whom it would be impossible to think of farming – dealing with all
these and uprooting/displacing/evacuating them only to throw them towards the ‘Bare Life’.

The dissertation pointed out that the globalised capitalist enterprises keep the market under their control in such a manner that price remains fixed at a static rate; i.e. contractual farming gives the peasants less price that what they ought to get and the profit that the globalised capitalist enterprises enjoy because of this less price is their ‘rent’. Peasants, thus, are as if alienated from even their own land, ‘market constitutes a territory as much as land’ – all under the control of globalised capitalist enterprise. Peasants keep themselves busy with not just farming; they also create seeds for the next farming season. The nature of this seed depends on the local geographical features. This kind of seed is the product of peasant’s own knowledge – a knowledge passed from one generation to another. This seed is stored; changes brought in accordance with the situation, and bettered than before. Everyone uses this knowledge form (‘fit for use’). Things were going on like this. New patent law came into being through introduction of Dunkel proposal, GATT agreement, etc. As a result, globalised capitalist enterprises are getting patent for several of these seeds. Seeds which were ‘local’ are now coming under the patent of some capitalist. Now, if some peasant wants to use that seed, s/he will have to pay the price for that seed to the multinational capitalist enterprise. The additional earning of the multinational capitalist enterprise without investment of further labor or capital is their ‘rent’. They are earning rent by just keeping the seed under their patent. It has also been observed that the land-relations, the people who live surrounding these lands – that is not, in a narrow sense, just the male peasants; that includes both the male and female peasants as well as their families and community lives; and this whole, in turn, dwells along
with the nature, rivers, soil, forests, insects, various birds and animals and even those small earth worms without whom it would be impossible to think of farming. Along with that, we have seen how the concept of ‘fit for use’ attaches a shape of simplified ‘whole’ to these complex relations. Capitalism tries to capture, suppress, foreclose, exclude and control this conception of Svata or possessedness or fit for use. The dissertation argued the land relations in non-western societies such as in West Bengal was run by the logic of Svata. The philosophy of Svata was the marked out as the space which goes beyond Capitalocentrism-Orientalism. Capitalism expunged/excluded/foreclosed/repressed this particular philosophy of life i.e. Svata (informed by the forms of life in such a way that the life and philosophy enmeshed with each other) from the world of language, and arranges for every little initiative that it feels necessary to perform that expunging.

This dissertation set up an encounter with those peasants who said ‘NO’ to Capitalism; said ‘NO’ to industrialization. This research also tried to point out how capitalism comes to an agreement with such ‘non-cooperative’ peasants who say so many ‘no’s. Besides, it pointed out why did important social scientists like Hardt, Negri, Sanyal, Chatterjee, etc. fail to see these ‘non-cooperative-resistant’ peasants, bent on so many ‘no’s. These resistant peasants are seen as a ‘social problem’ The Nandigram and Singur incidents proved it clearly. This research demonstrated that the peasants who are passed off as social problem are not actually a social problem. The rustic-farmers of Nandigram did not have the least idea that they were leading life in ‘anarchy’ and that they were actually ‘under-Developed’, had the place never been brought to ‘normal order’ – development that is – as per the standards set by the political leaders and intellectuals. This researcher has also found that the experience of the Nandigram and Singur have transplanted a significant effects on the peasant of
the different areas. This chapter has taken up the issues of Nandigram as to show how this particular incident structures the mind set-up of the peasants of the other parts. In other words, peasants of the Nandigram have problematized the naturalized legitimacy of the Capitalism. The peasants who put to question the normal order of the Capitalism are considered as social problem. This research on the other hand has questioned the very idea of social problem, premised upon the logic of normal order.

Following Max Weber, this research problematized the idea of ‘social problem’ as well as it displaced the naturalized rendition of Capitalism. Weberian understanding of reality defies the received naturalized rendition of Capitalist Development. Recapping Weber’s comment justifies this position. He says, “Absolutely 'objective' scientific analysis of culture or ... of 'social phenomena' independent of special and 'one-sided' viewpoints according to which — expressly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously — they are selected, analyzed and organized for expository purposes” (Weber; as quoted in Parkin, 2002:30). Capitalist Development, for Weber, is not structurally given but one-sided viewpoint. The concept of ‘Capitalist Development’ that sets down the journey from pre-capitalist stage to Capitalist stage is, for Weber, culturally constructed. The concept whereby ‘Capitalist Development' is regarded as the law of society that exists independent of the society is always already a biased concept, prefixed by moral preferences of the knower/observer. Weberian understanding opens up the possibility of different renditions of development that has hitherto been unthinkable from the naturalized History driven understanding of Capitalist Development. In addition, Weberian understanding restricts us to classify/categorize the other as abnormal. It also reminds us that there is no such thing as the Development; there are development(s). Not only that, it also puts into question the dominant mode of thinking where 'I' is the Subject of Knowledge and the
'you' is represented as the object of knowledge; where 'I' poses questions (knowledge) and listens to 'you' simply in order to judge his or her epistemological horizon. To Weber, 'I' and 'you' both possess different understandings of knowledge of development.

A certain section of the people is today being uprooted from their land, home, and way of life in the name of development or capitalist ideal. It appears that the options are limited – either leave land for global capital, or get hooked to global capital as an appendage. Either way, the options are tied to global capital – be a wage laborer within global capital or be a peasant tied to global capital. Global capital is thus the center or the axis in terms of which the peasant has to consider the future. It reduces the complex social and the contradictory textuality of personhood into the language of Capitalocentric-Orientalist Development — understood in terms of the centrism of the categories Capital and the West — understood in terms of the abstract individuality/subjectivity. It may be that they do not want to go along with this ideal of capitalism. It may be that they want to live a life based on land and cultivating; live within an alternative relation.

Peasants of Nandigram put to question the naturalized History driven understanding of Capitalist development. Perhaps they wanted to uphold their mode of being-in-the-world. They were not willing to judge themselves as per the standards set by others (read standards set by the political leaders and intellectuals). They could not agree to identify/classify/categorize themselves as ‘underdeveloped’-'backward'-'third world' subject imposed from above. They wanted to resist the violence of naming, enforced from above. May be, they were attempting to create a new language of development. The political leaders and intellectuals did not like this attempt by them. The big names in power classified them as ‘terrorists’. On March 14, 2007, they sent police to
Nandigram. Perhaps this was the first time that the people of Nandigram realized that there can be nothing as natural order. Natural order serves the interest of a certain class, a certain gender, a certain sex…

The *rustic-farmers* of Nandigram wanted to shift focus towards the prejudices of the political leaders and intellectuals who were in favor of naturalized Capitalist Development. Their resistance grew against this apparent naturalized *norm*. May be, they were trying to say that the standards set by the big names in power are always prejudiced. It is unfortunate that their speech failed to become language. They remained unspoken.

The field work was conducted in the state of West Bengal as because this state has been considered as one of the state in which land reforms have been implemented effectively. South 24 parganas and Barddhaman districts have been selected for this research. One block from each district has been selected. Kakdwip block was chosen from South 24 parganas district and Memari I block was selected from Barddhaman district. From each block 50 respondents consist of *pattadars* (also known as marginal peasant by the official definition of census), share-croppers landless labourers, poor villagers, landowners, and relatives of land owners were selected through the non-probability purposive sampling. The state distributed confiscated land known as vested land among landless labourers, identified as *pattadars*. Now the landless labourers become a property-owner, enjoying bourgeois property right over the land. They have become a ‘bourgeois subject’ but the question remains are their everyday life run by the bourgeois logic? The findings acquired through survey research shows that the peasants are not performing as a profit maximizing agents. The only objective behind carrying out this survey was to show the limits of bourgeois property right (limits of Capitalism).
The survey carried out in these two blocks confirmed that most of the peasants do not perform as a rational calculative agent. They are not trying to maximize their profit. Their first objective is to ensure the subsistence of the family, and then comes the question of accumulation. Neo-classical economics holds the view (this is the dominant view of our time) that small or marginal peasants act/perform as profit maximizing agent. But this survey received a different expression from the respondents who think that the land is more important than money.

This survey disclosed that the marginal farmers are not only lending their helping hand to co-farmers but they are also taking help from co-farmers. These peasants are valuing co-operation rather than earning money. It implied that the land relations in villages are not wholly dominated by the sign of money. Though money still functions as an important factor as far as the organization of life is concerned, this instance of co-operation shows the limit of money-economy.

This research revealed that the peasants though are not performing as a profit maximizing agents but they are using chemical fertilizer and HYV seed for cultivation. It was difficult to draw any general conclusion; all we can say that they are representing a split self. These same agents did perform collective labour without taking money.

This research grappled to understand the property sense of the marginal farmers. Marginal farmers said that the intrusion of animals into other’s land do not create any problem for them. It implied that the marginal farmers do not have strong bourgeois property sense. It is common custom among them that ensures the intrusion of animals into other’s land. Again this description did defy the one dimensional
assumption that marginal peasants are having strong property sense over the land and performing as a profit maximizing agents.

The survey also disclosed that vegetables are produced by the landless labourers on the stray parts of the land. This instance again proved that the land owners do not have strong bourgeois property sense. They did allow landless labourers to cultivate on their land. Landless labourers on the other hand confirmed that they do not face any problem during the cultivation on the stray parts of land. The question remains what is the philosophy of this custom? This research tried to answer out this particular question. It proposed that the philosophy of *Svatva* was the organizing factor so far these experiences are concerned.

Peasants of the Kakdwip and Memari I block have been largely influenced by the incidents of Singur and Nandigram. These peasants have drawn their emotional support from the experience of Nandigram. Most of the respondents have made their opinion that the money is not a motivating factor for selling out land. Respondents put forward the argument that their first priority is to ensure the family’s subsistence. The importance of money comes next. It is a secondary matter. Keeping in mind the experience of the Nandigram, peasants of these two blocks is also saying ‘NO” to Industrialization. The researcher has also found that the philosophy of *Svatva* has played the major role so far these saying ‘NO’ peasants are concerned.

The dissertation has come across the experiences which point out that the rural setting was not dominated entirely by money economy. But, despite everything, community and collective use of land prevailed, and still prevails, outside that private and state use of land; forest land, cattle grazing land, marshy areas, roads and roadsides, and all such posited the idea of another type of possessedness outside that
of private bourgeois ownership and state capitalist ownership, private possessedness and state possessedness. The survey also disclosed that the kinds of food, different other substances and ingredients are available without going to the market place, without buying, without any work in exchange of them (without the SIGN of MONEY), they can be collected.

There are no capitalist markets for these things; no selling and buying, and hence no [socially accepted] economy. And there is [socially unaccepted] economy. If the lifestyle and livelihood of the poor village people have any economy, then these things are portions of that economy. Most of the things that these village people need for their sustenance do not come from capitalist market (money based economy). Most such things are collected from here and there. Had he to collect everything from market, he would fall miserably short of such things. If these places are actually dominated by the market, if these people have to procure everything from the market, a major portion of these village people will not be able to sustain them anymore.

Amdanga Village is within Jagadanandapur Gram Panchayat of Memari I Panchayat Samity/Community Development Block. In my field visit to the Amdanga village, I have seen that many such widows who have raised their children by just frying muri (puffed rice), grazing cattle, and preparing rice from paddy; or by occasionally growing cucumber or some other vegetables on the stray parts of lands and selling them in market. Now, if contract farming or industrial enterprises come up on such lands by of some multinational capitalist enterprise, can they anymore graze their cattle or grow such vegetables on such land? Even if they can, they will have to give ‘money’ to such multinational capitalist enterprise. Money has to be given for using any land under private ownership. Any land under control cannot be used for free. Land can no more be used in the sense of ‘fit for use’ once there is bourgeois private
ownership over land. Else, it will be considered as illegal or, worse, theft. But keeping the land under control in this manner and earning money from that control (without any labor or further investment of capital) is not ‘theft’ in capitalist system.

Subhendu Dasgupta (2005) has written: If the dominance of market really takes over these places, if all elements and all people are brought within the ambit of market, then a large portion of the village people will no more be able to sustain themselves any further. We could re-write it in this manner: If capital really starts dominating this space, if all elements and all people are brought within the ambit of capital, then a large portion of the village people cannot sustain themselves any more. Legal control of bourgeois private ownership would no more allow stray use of the land; rather it would earn money from it by virtue of its control. “In fact, the process of acquiring control over markets can be seen, theoretically, as a part of PCA [Primitive Capital Accumulation]. The market constitutes a territory as much as land. On the basis of control over markets, capital appropriates rent, which is concealed as profit” (Basu, 2008: 42).

The final question is that how to organize the land relations in the non western societies. Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji (2002) once comments, “… it is not enough for the Indian sociologist to be a sociologist. He must be an Indian first, … I must confess that an Indian sociologist finds ‘theory’ congenial to his temperament and traditions.” (Mukerji, 2002: 266 and 264). Following this statement, this dissertation is continually emphasizing the need for recognizing the specificities of the land relations and for reevaluating Western theories and categories in the light of specificities of the non-western societies. This research has made an objection against the uncritical acceptance of the Western theories. This research used non-western theoretical category which is congenial to the non-western land relations. This research would
recommend that the land relations should organize according to the principle of *Svatva*. The philosophy of *Svatva* if otherwise follow would produce co-operative *subjects*. In West Bengal as well as in India, the land related development programmes are associated with logic of private property over the land. The land reform programme for example produces propertycentric *subjects*. These *subjects* on the other hand act as a barrier to the development of philosophy, premised upon the logic of *Svatva*. If the researchers’ turnaround from the Capitalism (valorizing bourgeois property right over the land) they could perhaps see the different forms of being followed the logic of *Svatva* as a day to day ritual. It is not desirable that the professional social scientists have confined themselves in the closed circle of bourgeois institutional legality. This reductionist confinement acts as a fence to the development of a new research on land relations. They have to cross the bourgeois institutional legality in order to understand the land relations with a new approach, proposed by this research. Though it should be mentioned that the relation between *Svatva* and co-operative activities have not further been explored; the future research would highlight this issue more carefully.
Field Photographs

Field enquire by the researcher

Picture I

Field visit before harvesting at Jagadanandapur Gram Panchayat, Memari I CD Block

Picture II
Extending co-operation to fellow peasants

Picture V

Vegetables produced in unowned land

Picture VI
Leaf collection from land demarcation boundary areas

Picture: VII

Leaf collection from land demarcation boundary areas

Picture VIII