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THE LIMITS OF WESTERN MARXISM: A CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL ONTOLOGY SINCE WORLD WAR II

City University of New York PH.D. 1981

THE LIMITS OF WESTERN MARXISM:

A Critique of Social Ontology Since World War II

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The City University of New York.

1981

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 6, 1981
date

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August 17, 1981
date

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Abstract

THE LIMITS OF WESTERN MARXISM:
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In this dissertation I attempt to display the theoretical presuppositions and limits of post-World War II Western Marxism. I analyze the writings of Henri Lefebvre, Jurgen Haberman, Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Althusser, E. P. Thompson, and Harry Braverman. In addition to providing a textual analysis, I develop a criticism of social ontology.

I oppose the social ontology of Western Marxism to the historical perspective of Classical Marxism. I elaborate this fundamental opposition throughout the dissertation. In closing, I situate the development of Western Marxism within the historical context of the cold war. By means of that historical grounding, I bring out still further the limits of Western Marxism as a social theory of late capitalism.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my appreciation for the assistance and support of the following members of a Study Group I participated in at the Graduate Center: Michael Brown, William DiFazio, Dawn Esposito, Pat Graham Eric Lichten, and Meryl Sufian.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION: THE ANALYSIS, CRITIQUE, AND METHODS OF THIS WORK

Analysis: Post-World War II Western Marxism as Ontology

The term "Western Marxism" was first used by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his Adventures of the Dialectic. In this work, he uses the term "Western Marxism" to designate a series of theoretic tendencies which had existed in the writings of Marx and Lukacs, but which were later excluded from the discourse of orthodox Marxism:

> If we have undertaken to recall Lukacs' attempt (very freely, and emphasizing certain points that in his work were only indicated), it is not because something of it remains in today's Marxism or even because it is one of those truths which only by chance miss the historical record. We shall see, on the contrary, that there was something justified in the opposition it encountered. But it was necessary to recall this lively and vigorous attempt, in which the youth of revolution and Marxism lives again, in order to measure today's communism, to realize what it has renounced and to what it has resigned itself. (Merleau-Ponty:57-58)

According to Merleau-Ponty, the themes which were present in Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness, and were later renounced by orthodox Marxism, include culture, consciousness, and intersubjectivity.

Merleau-Ponty does not offer a precise definition of Western Marxism. He uses this term to establish an opposition between Marxist cultural analysis and the

official Marxism of the Soviet Union and the Western European communist parties. He argues that the latter have developed a purely mechanistic theory. He formulates an opposition between cultural Marxism and a mechanistic version of political economy.

The term Western Marxism has recently been reformulated by Perry Anderson in his Considerations on Western Marxism. According to Anderson, Western Marxism designates a series of authors who have developed an analysis of culture and philosophy in Western Europe since the Russian Revolution. These authors include: Lukacs, Korsch, Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Habermas, Sartre, Lefebvre, Althusser, and Colletti. Anderson emphasizes the fact that Western Marxism has developed in opposition to both the ideology of cold war liberalism and the official Marxism of the Soviet Union. Anderson's use of the term Western Marxism is much broader than Merleau-Ponty's. He includes authors which Merleau-Ponty might have excluded, such as Althusser and Colletti.

For Anderson, the term Western Marxism is more of a label than a theoretic concept. This term designates a cluster of authors and problems. It refers to specific political and historical developments within Western Europe and the United States.

The term Western Marxism makes a political distinction. It identifies a body of social theory and a collection

of authors as Marxist and, at the same time, distinguishes itself from Soviet or official Marxism. The political nature of the distinction between Western Marxism and Soviet Marxism is of central importance. On the level of the principles and presuppositions of Marxism, the distinction between Western and Soviet Marxism would be of little consequence. It is only in the context of history and politics that this distinction makes sense.

Neither Western Marxism nor Soviet Marxism exist as pure theory. These two versions of Marxism exist in the context of political interests and turmoil. The social theory of Western Marxism has developed in opposition to both capitalism and Stalinism. From within the political boundaries of capitalist society, the theorists of Western Marxism have attempted to formulate a critique of capitalist society. This theoretic project opposes itself to the existing capitalist and socialist societies. It criticizes these societies from the perspective of a higher Reason. It criticizes the present organization of social life in the name of "the possible." It polemicizes against the ideologists of both capitalism and Soviet orthodoxy.

The distinction between Western and Soviet Marxism does not specify the character of Western Marxism as a social theory. The specific focus of my analysis is to locate and elaborate the theoretical specificity and distinctiveness of Western Marxism. My primary interest

is in clarifying the development of Western Marxism in the post-World War II period. Of special interest here is the way in which the theorists of Western Marxism have analized late capitalist society in terms of transformations within culture and everyday life.

Most of all, I will argue that Western Marxism has involved the formulation of an ontology, a view of human existence of Being. In this case, the ontology consists of a conception of consciousness, language, and subjectivity. This ontology consists as well in a departure from emphasizing the mode of production and class relations, which were central to earlier, Classical Marxism.

In addition, I will offer a critique of the theoretic transformation from Classical to Western Marxism. As I will explain below, I question the shift from historical to metaphysical grounds.

In his Consideration on Western Marxism, Perry Anderson attempts to analyze the development of Western Marxism after the Russian Revolution. I can clarify my own theoretical analysis by comparing and contrasting it with his.

The central focus of Anderson's analysis is upon the transition from Classical Marxism to Western Marxism. In terms of theoretical developments, as he sees it, this transition involved a movement away from the centrality of economy and politics toward an analysis of culture and philosophy:

> The progressive relinquishment of economic or political structures as the central concerns of theory was accompanied by a basic shift in the whole centre of gravity of European Marxism towards philosophy. The most striking single fact about the whole tradition from Lukacs to Althusser, Korsch to Colletti, is the overwhelming predominance of professional philosophers within it. Socially, this change meant an ever increasing academic emplacement of the theory that was produced in the new epoch. (Anderson:49)

Anderson situates the development of Western Marxism in the fifty year period from 1918 to 1968.

The analysis which Anderson develops attempts to describe the theoretic tendencies of Western Marxism and attempts to account for the specific character of its theoretic transformations. He opposes Western Marxism to the theoretical and political concerns of Classical Marxism. He attempts to demonstrate the transition from Classical Marxism to Western Marxism in terms of a shift of emphasis from concrete political concerns to abstract philosophical investigations. In this context, the transition from economy and politics to culture and philosophy represents a shift from working class parties to the university.

For Anderson, the development of Western Marxism in the context of the university, and not that of the political party, represents the isolation of theorists from viable working class struggle. He grounds this isolation within the concrete history of the period after the Russian Revolution:

> The language of Western Marxism, in this sense, was subject to a wider historical censor: the gulf for nearly fifty years between socialist thought and the soil of popular revolution. (Anderson:55)

Of central importance as determining factors of this separation between socialist theory and working class struggle was the rise of fascism and Stalinism and the absence of a revolutionary working class struggle in Western Europe. For Anderson, these historical conditions are of central importance in the explanation of the development of Western Marxism.

As an alternative perspective to the theory of Western Marxism, Anderson offers the political and economic analysis which has been developed by Trotskyism. Here his reference is to the analysis of Western Europe which had been developed by Trotsky and continued by his followers, such as Isaac Deutscher and Ernest Mandel. According to Anderson, unlike the theory of Western Marxism, the Trotskyist analysis has maintained an emphasis upon economy and politics and has not been reduced to the analysis of culture and philosophical speculation. Trotskyism has remained political and has avoided academic seclusion within the confines of the university.

Anderson suggests that the theoretic traditions of Trotskyism are a continuation of the perspectives of Classical Marxism. In addition, he suggests that Western Marxism will be surpassed when the working class once

more becomes revolutionary:

> When a truly revolutionary movement is born in a mature, working class, the 'final shape' of theory will have no exact precedent. All that can be said is that when the masses themselves speak, theoreticians -- of the sort the West has produced for fifty years -- will necessarily be silent. (Anderson:106)

It seems to me that Anderson's aim here is not so much to defend Trotskyism as it is to defend the Classical Marxist emphasis upon economy and politics against their abandonment by Western Marxism. Consequently, the purpose of his analysis and polemic is to reassert the centrality of the Classical Marxist project.

My own analysis is primarily concerned with the development of Western Marxism since World War II. The theory of Western Marxism during this latter period tends to follow the perspectives and traditions of Western Marxism which had been developed after the Russian Revolution. Here I share Anderson's views. As he clearly shows, there is a tendency within Western Marxism to analyze culture and philosophy instead of economy and politics. However, there have occurred specific developments in the social theory of Western Marxism since 1945 which are not merely logical extensions of the earlier work of Lukacs, Korsch, Gramsci, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse. For this latter period, therefore, my interpretation differs from that of Anderson.

It is true that the analyses of culture and

philosophy remain predominant themes after World War II. It is also true that new developments have taken place in an attempt to grasp the historical development of this latter period. I will attempt to show that the leading theorists of Western Marxism since World War II have developed an analysis of culture and everyday life which is based upon an ontological conception of consciousness, language, and subjectivity.

I will go on to relate the ontology to Classical Marxism. I will argue that this substitution of ontology for history has prevented a clear grasp of the reality of late capitalism. The theorists of Western Marxism begin their analysis of the concrete reality of everyday life and then attempt to explain this reality by confusing historic specificity with an ahistoric and eternal conception of human essence as the ultimate determining factor. In other words, they begin with an historical object and then transform it into an eternal conception of Being. Classical Marxism both begins and ends with an historical object.

I will attempt to develop and clarify this argument by analyzing the theoretic works of six of the leading theorists of Western Marxism since World War II. These theorists are Henri Lefebvre, Jurgen Habermas, Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Althusser, E. P. Thompson, and Harry Braverman.

Each of these theorists has developed an analysis

of late capitalism with a specific emphasis upon the problematic of everyday life. They have analyzed the domain of everyday life in terms of language (Lefebvre and Habermas), consciousness (Sartre and Althusser), and subjectivity (Thompson and Braverman). It is with these areas -- the theoretic formulations of language, consciousness, and subjectivity -- that I am fundamentally concerned.

There is one other theorist of Western Marxism who I might have included, Herbert Marcuse. The case of Marcuse is complex. He has developed an analysis of everyday life in late capitalism, which is based upon an ontological conception of human essence. This ontological conception is sometimes formulated in terms of psychoanalytic categories. At other times we see it formulated in terms of an aesthetic dimension of human consciousness. In this respect, his basic orientation to social analysis is quite similar to that of Lefebvre and Habermas. He attempts to grasp concrete history in terms of a universal conception of Being.

Although the similarities between Marcuse, Lefebvre, and Habermas can be plausibly argued, I would situate Marcuse's social theory in relation to the first generation of theorists of the Frankfurt School, namely Horkheimer and Adorno. It seems to me that the particular synthesis of classical German philosophy with Marxism and psychoanalysis, which is the basis of all of Marcuse's

investigations, is much closer to the theoretic perspectives of the early Frankfurt School theorists than it is to either Lefebvre or Habermas. Marcuse's writings after World War II attempt to analyze new social conditions by means of extending a social theory which had been developed during the 1920's and 1930's. The basic principles and presuppositions of the theory did not undergo transformation. Instead, Marcuse attempted to analyze the new social conditions by applying the theory without fundamentally altering any of its presuppositions.

The major significance of Marcuse's social analysis since World War II results from the fact that he provided the connection between the traditions of Western Marxism of the inter-war period and the development of the social theory of the New Left, especially in the United States. Marcuse's influence is evident in many of the recent analyses of working class culture and everyday life. His theoretic orientation and political commitment have influenced such authors as Bruce Brown, Stanley Aronowitz, Eli Zaretsky, Stuart Ewen, and Juliet Mitchell.

The cultural analysis developed by Marcuse and the younger theorists of the 1960's and 1970's has created a political and intellectual climate for further debate and investigation. They have directed theoretic attention upon the centrality of personal life and the domain of intersubjectivity. They have articulated the problematic

of domination in late capitalism.

My analysis is primarily concerned with the specific character of the theoretic developments in Western Marxism since the Second World War. In this context, the contributions of Marcuse are less significant than the six authors I have selected for analysis. Marcuse's work is more of an application of social theory than a theoretic innovation. I am primarily concerned with transformations within the new ontology.

Critique: Western versus Classical Marxism

Next to my central concern with the new ontology itself, stands my own critique of Western Marxism. I base that critique on Classical Marxism.

Perry Anderson suggests that Classical Marxism can be identified with a series of authors. These include Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, and Trotsky. Here, Anderson's stress is upon the concrete political and economic analysis these authors have produced. He opposes their texts to those of the authors of Western Marxism, who have, instead, analyzed culture and philosophy.

Although this distinction serves Anderson's polemical aims, it does not constitute the sufficient theoretical grounds for the distinction between Classical Marxism and Western Marxism. Contrasting politics and economics with culture and philosophy as the basis for this

distinction is too arbitrary. We need to develop a means of specifying what the fundamental difference is between the social theory of Western Marxism and that of Classical Marxism.

Instead of attempting to identify a series of authors as representing Classical Marxism, I have attempted to formulate this distinction in terms of the theoretic grounds of each of the two theories. I would argue that the social theory of Western Marxism is grounded in an ontological conception of human nature and that Classical Marxism is grounded in an historical perspective. The two central components of the social theory of Classical Marxism are the concepts of the mode of production and historical development.

The clearest expression of the historical perspective of Classical Marxism is to be found in Volume One of Marx's Capital. In this work, the capitalist mode of production is the central focus of Marx's analysis. It is central because it provides a means of analyzing the totality of capitalist society in terms of definite social relations. My formulation of the historical perspective of Classical Marxism is very close to that of Lucio Colletti:

> The historical subject then is neither Idea, World-Spirit, Vico's Providence, nor a transcendental subject. Nor is the subject conceived as Evolution, Struggle for Existence, Societal Instinct, Race, etc. Against these generic abstractions, all equally fruitless, Marx produces a new concept

> of the subject as a historical-natural entity, as a species or collectivity of empirical formations -- such, precisely, as are social classes. (Colleti: 14)

Capitalist society is defined by the specific characteristics of class relations within the mode of production.

The problem with Western Marxism is not in its analysis of culture and philosophy instead of politics and economics. I will argue that the problem is rather in the ontological grounds of Western Marxism. It has produced an analysis of late capitalism which is based upon an eternalized conception of the human subject. As a result, the specificity of class relations within capitalism has been reduced to ambiguity.

I assume that there is something problematic about the development of an ontological conception of language, consciousness, and subjectivity. The presupposition underlying my critique is that these ontological conceptions distort the reality of late capitalism. In subsequent chapters, I will attempt to show how the formulation of late capitalist society in terms of ontological categories has distorted our understanding of this period. This distortion, I hold, has led to the abandonment of the notion of history.

What is problematic in the social theory of Western Marxism is not the fact that the theorists under consideration have attempted to analyze everyday life. Nor is there anything problematic in analyzing consciousness, language,

or subjectivity. These analyses only seem problematic to me when they isolate everyday life from history -- from the mode of production of capitalist society -- and when, instead of the historical object of Classical Marxism, they formulate consciousness, language, and subjectivity in terms of human essence. Through the formulation of an ontological conception of consciousness, language, and subjectivity, they negate the notion of historical development.

The notion of historical development, which had been central to Classical Marxism, required that phenomena under analysis be situated within the existing mode of production. The mode of production was viewed as an historical product. Consequently, a phenomenon such as consciousness was viewed as developing in relation to concrete class relations internal to the existing mode of production. Neither consciousness nor everyday life could be formulated as autonomous or as embodying a universal essence, for the simple reason that the conception of universal essence is external to the very notion of historical development.

According to Classical Marxism, class relations are the central mediation in capitalist society. These class relations are formulated in terms of the contradiction between the existing forces of production and relations of production. These contradictions are expressed in the

relationships of commodity production and in the appropriation of surplus-value. These class relations and contradictions constitute the capitalist mode of production. They provide both its internal logic and its tension. Its logic is that of capital accumulation through exploitation of the working class, and its tension is the existence of class struggle.

According to this formulation, neither the accumulation of capital nor the existence of class struggle can be viewed as arbitrary components of capitalist society. They are, instead, determined by the capitalist mode of production. The conceptions of accumulation and class struggle are grounded within the historical development of the mode of production. It is this very development which constitutes the necessary contradiction between labor and capital. The labor theory of value attempts to formulate the relationship between the accumulation of capital and the exploitation of the working class.

Analyzing the capitalist mode of production in terms of its development and internal logic does not exclude the analysis of everyday life. Nor does it prohibit the analysis of language, consciousness, or subjectivity. In fact, the analysis of consciousness and subjectivity was central to Marx's analysis of capitalism. Consider the importance he placed upon the alienation of labor, the fetishism of commodities, and the reification

of consciousness. The theoretical conceptions of alienation, fetishism, and reification were central components of Marx's theory of capitalist society. However, it must be stressed that these concepts are specific to the capitalist mode of production and are not the formulation of eternal categories of human existence. For example, the concept of fetishism refers specifically to the fetishism of commodity production.

From the perspective of Classical Marxism, everyday life would have to be analyzed concretely, in relation to the existing mode of production. In turn, the conceptions of consciousness, language, and subjectivity would have to be situated within the historical process of the development of the capitalist mode of production. Accordingly, consciousness, language, and subjectivity would be viewed as historical products and not as eternal categories of Being. Particular emphasis would have to be placed upon investigating the mediations between class relations and the intersubjective relations of everyday life and community. The autonomy of everyday life could not be presupposed.

This may, in fact, have been the aim of the six theorists under consideration. However, instead of producing a materialist theory of culture, they have reduced the very notion of historical development to ambiguity. They have isolated everyday life from the existing mode

of production and ontologized the conceptions of consciousness, language, and subjectivity. My critique holds that the theory of late capitalism they have produced has both theoretic and political consequences.

One of the consequences of the social theory of Western Marxism is a reliance upon spontaneous mass revolt. This is as true for Thompson and Braverman as it is for Sartre and Lefebvre. For Thompson, the principle of spontaneity takes the form of the self-generation of working class resistance against capitalism. For Braverman, the degradation of work signifies the loss of self-control over work and everyday life. This latter conception ultimately relies upon a future in which self-control will be reestablished through revolt against the hegemony of monopoly capitalism.

For Sartre and Lefebvre, the reliance upon spontaneity is couched in more sophisticated, philosophical language. These authors also await the occurrence of mass revolt against the domination and alienation of capitalist society. For Lefebvre, this spontaneous revolt takes the form of the abolition of everyday life as we know it, and the creation of a new realm of freedom. For Sartre, it is freedom's revolt against human alienation. Central to each of these conceptions is an emphasis upon mass spontaneity and the creation of a more humane social order. In the new social order, human capacity could be realized instead of

being denied and repressed.

For Habermas and Althusser, the theoretic emphasis is not placed upon the principle of spontaneity. Spontaneous political resistance is the type of political struggle these two theorists dread most. Instead, their emphasis is upon the principle of education. For Habermas, this involves the reform of the educational system. For Althusser, it involves counteracting capitalist ideology through political education. In neither case is the project of education elaborated or fully developed.

Education, as a specific form of political practice, is implied by their theoretic formulations of distorted communication and ideology. According to Habermas, distorted communication is learned through institutions such as the family, school, and the mass media. For Althusser, ideological practices are transmitted through these very same institutions. For both theorists, the problem is one of socialization. Workers are adapted to the existing form of capitalist society through institutional socialization. The problem of socialization is also a component in the theories of Sartre, Lefebvre, Thompson, and Braverman.

For Sartre, Lefebvre, Thompson, and Braverman, the normative order achieved through the process of institutional socialization will be overthrown through spontaneous revolt against the very order of late capitalism. For Habermas and Althusser, other solutions are sought: the

replacement of repressive and ideological forms of socialization by emancipatory and class conscious forms of socialization. For Habermas, this would involve reforms of the educational system. For Althusser, it would involve political education through the political party, the university, and ultimately through the development of socialist culture. In both cases, the political implication is that the agency of historical transformation is to be pedagogy.

Emphasizing spontaneity or education relegates theory to an abstract and marginal relation to political struggle. For theory, this involves a formulation of commitment. However, this commitment is on the level of an articulation of principles. These principles take the form of a commitment to Humanism, Dialectics, or Science. Consider Sartre's, Lefebvre's and Thompson's insistence upon the integrity of the Individual, or Habermas's, Lefebvre's, and Sartre's commitment to Dialectical Analysis, or Althusser's and Braverman's stress upon the development of Marxist Science.

The theoretic formulation of spontaneity or education involves an attitude of waiting and a commitment to the possibility of human emancipation. Theory awaits the unfolding of this possibility. At the same time, it remembers resistance and reason as eternal components of the human project. As the consciousness of this project, theory attempts to clarify and assert this very project. In this

context, theory becomes a moral force.

The resulting theory (that of post-World War II Western Marxism) is not merely an idealist error. This theory itself expresses political conditions which are not immediately transcended by a theoretic or moral commitment on the part of theorists. Theory does not operate from a vantage point outside of history. The lived contradictions of the historical situation often appear in a distorted and ambiguous manner. Social theory can not escape its own conditions of existence. As a social product, it arises out of these very conditions.

This is not to argue that social theory is a simple consequence of the social conditions from which it is produced. These social conditions form a boundary and set limits upon the theoretic enterprise. My point here is that social conditions exercise an historically specific influence upon social theory. These conditions influence both the form and the content of the theory.

By social conditions, I mean both the existing class relations and the development of class struggle. In capitalist society, classes are defined by their relationship to the means of production. The form of political struggle develops in relation to the existing class relations. There is no real separation between class relations and class struggle. Both develop concretely in relation to the capitalist mode of production.

The social theory of Western Marxism has developed in relation to existing class relations and political struggles. This theory becomes more intelligible if we consider the conditions of its production. The social theory of Western Marxism (especially during the post-World War II period) expresses a tension between despair and hope. Its commitment to human emancipation and its focus upon a future not yet realized occur in opposition to a generalized political despair. On the level of theory, Western Marxism refuses to succumb to this despair. The idealism of Western Marxism has been a form of political resistance.

Since 1945, political struggles in the United States and throughout Western Europe have not produced unambiguous victories for the working class. The development of the welfare state has provided both a degree of economic security and increased dependency upon the state apparatus. In a similar sense, the rise of organized labor has resulted in economic security for some workers and increased dependency upon labor unions, over which workers have very little real control. During periods of economic decline, neither the state nor the labor unions have been able to protect the economic gains workers had made during periods of economic boom. In addition to rising unemployment and inflation, the quality of community and personal life has steadily declined.

The social theory of Western Marxism has developed outside of the labor movement and has had very little direct relationship with working class struggles. This theory has developed in the historical context of anti-communism, imperialist wars, and the rise of the welfare state. It has developed within the university and has addressed political problems from an academic and isolated theoretic perspective. This is not to say that the theorists of Western Marxism have not opposed the Algerian and Vietnamese wars, or that they have not been sympathetic to working class struggles. It is rather that the primary role of Western Marxism has been reduced to critical reflection.

It is not sufficient to argue that the social theory of Western Marxism suffers from the separation between theory and practice. This very separation requires analysis. My whole work seeks to offer such an analysis. I stress more the analysis of subsequent theoretical developments than I do the separation itself.

In the context of the external relationship between Western Marxism and the labor movement, critical reflection becomes a form of political resistance. This resistance is on the level of the ideological struggle against capitalist hegemony. It is on this level that even the idealism of Western Marxism represents opposition to the existing order. It puts this order into question.

The theory of late capitalism, which has been

developed by the theorists of Western Marxism, makes sense if we view it in relation to the historical conditions of its production. Little is gained by merely identifying and attacking its idealism. The tendency to offer an ontological conception of human existence as a grounds for analysis should be understood as a dilemma. It is a dilemma because the particular formulations of everyday life in late capitalism can not go beyond their conception of human essence as the principle of transcendence. This analysis can not move from ontology to history without first abandoning its own presuppositions.

This is why my work attempts to analyze and criticize the ontological conceptions of consciousness, language, and subjectivity in Western Marxism. It is only through such analysis and critique that it will be possible to make the necessary transition from "eternal essence" to "historical development" as the basis for theorizing.

In the following three chapters, I will analyze the concept of everyday life which has been developed by the theorists of Western Marxism since World War II. In Chapter Two, I will analyze Habermas's and Lefebvre's conceptions of language and distorted communication. In Chapter Three, I will analyze Sartre's and Althusser's conceptions of consciousness and ideology. In Chapter Four, I will analyze Braverman's and Thompson's conceptions of working class culture and subjectivity. In the fifth and

concluding chapter, I will analyze the historical context of post-World War II Western Marxism. I will first discuss the shared grounds and internal divergence of Western Marxism and then treat the changing historical context of the 1970's and 1980's. I will argue that only an analysis grounded within the historical perspective of classical Marxism can provide an understanding of the new social conditions of this period.

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Chapter Two

EVERYDAY LIFE AS LANGUAGE

Introduction

Henri Lefebvre and Jurgen Habermas have attempted to develop an analysis of everyday life in late capitalism. For Lefebvre, this analysis takes the form of a critique of fragmented consciousness. For Habermas, it takes the form of an analysis of distorted communication. In both analyses, the importance of language, communication, and intersubjectivity are emphasized.

Lefebvre and Habermas attempt to develop a theory of social repression. They formulate everyday life as the object of institutional domination. In terms of their formulations, the fundamental contradiction of late capitalism is between the repression of human needs and the struggle against this repression. In other words, the central contradiction is not between labor and capital, but is rather between domination and human emancipation.

Both authors attempt to develop a theory of language and communication. For Habermas, the problem is formulated in terms of his conception of distorted communication and the possibility of realizing "undistorted communication." For Lefebvre, the problem is formulated in terms of the fragmentation of everyday life and the possibility

of realizing "consciousness of social totality." In this context, his conception of totality is formulated as the possibility of transcending a condition of fragmented consciousness. Both "undistorted communication" and "consciousness of social totality" make reference to a condition of social Being which is denied realization by the existing order of late capitalism.

In both formulations, language is treated as the central dimension of social Being. In this context, language expresses the fundamental character of social relations in late capitalism. According to Lefebvre and Habermas, the social relations of late capitalism are characterized by institutional domination and psychological manipulation. The political conclusion of their analyses is that the only meaningful form of political struggle would be one directed against organized social repression. In other words, their analyses identify everyday life as the domain of struggle against institutional domination. They attempt to establish the theoretic grounds for the transformation of social Being and the realization of human emancipation. These theoretic grounds involve the formulation of a conception of a universal human essence, which is denied realization by the social order of late capitalism.

The Separation Between Everyday Life and Social Totality

Henri Lefebvre formulates everyday life as both a description of existing social conditions and the possibility of abolishing these very conditions. In theoretic terms, this is a formulation of the contradiction between the givenness of the world and some other possible world. Everyday life is formulated as the tension between concrete reality and "appearance" mistaken for reality. In his theoretic formulation, Lefebvre posits the given reality of the social world as a condition to be surpassed.

Everyday life makes reference to a domain of subjectivity. Although Lefebvre is not always explicit on this point, the central theoretic concern underlying his analysis is a conception of human subjectivity. Everyday life refers to both concrete experiences people live and some larger historical reality which remains outside the understanding of both everyday life and philosophy. The separation between everyday life and philosophy allows history to occur behind the backs of men and women and precludes the comprehension of the world as a social totality.

On the descriptive level, Lefebvre begins his analysis of the "modern world" with the separation between everyday life and history:

> Everyday life is non-philosophical in relation to philosophy and represents reality in relation to ideality. Secluded, abstract and detached, the philosophical life is considered superior to everyday life, but when it attempts to solve the riddles of reality it only succeeds in proving the

> unreality, which is, indeed, implicit in its nature. (Lefebvre, 1971:12)
>
> Philosophy defines the nonphilosophical world the philosopher is to penetrate and transform, yet cannot penetrate it, cannot change reality into truth by its own means. The image of man it forms cannot be made real. (Lefebvre, 1968:12)

Lefebvre describes the separation between the immediate understanding of experiences within the ordinary domain of everyday life and some other possible mode of understanding, defined by a greater level of abstraction and universality. Both modes of understandng fail to grasp the historical totality. Everyday life fails to understand the movement of history, and philosophy fails to grasp the immediacy of lived experience.

The notion of totality is intelligible as an alternative to the separation between everyday life and history. This notion does not refer to a series of empirical facts; it rather formulates two possible forms of understanding as oppositional. They are oppositional in the sense that the fragmentation of the world precludes the ability to grasp or even conceive the notion of totality, and totality itself presupposes the overcoming of the separation between everyday life and history.

On the level of a theoretic formulation, the concept of everyday life presupposes its very abolition. The separation and fragmentation described by Lefebvre always presupposes some other possible world. His theoretic formulation takes the form of the contradiction between

the given and the possible. In order to avoid utopianism, the notion of an alternative to the fragmentation of the social world can not be formulated as a mere object of desire. Instead, it must be conceived in terms of both human capacity and as the result of struggle. Instead of denying politics, it must itself be translatable into political action.

This analysis can not begin from some future vantage point. It rather begins from within the world we know:

> ...this inmate of everyday life, whether male or female, a member of one social class or another, has no (or hardly any) intimation of all that we have disclosed and discussed; he takes for granted all that he observes, he accepts as the here and now everything he sees and perceives, all his experiences... (Lefebvre, 1971:187)

This assertion by Lefebvre would make no sense outside of the social arrangements which condition it. External to these institutional and class relations, Lefebvre's remarks would appear to be nothing more than declarations of some version of elitist philosophy.

Lefebvre's analysis does presuppose the ability to remove oneself from the prison of everyday life in order to articulate the structures which determine everyday life. This analytic distancing of oneself from the domain of everyday life in order to specify the contours of this troubled object never involves a complete freeing of engagement. The resulting analysis does not possess the objectivity of a science defined by the separation between

science and the object of investigation. Lefebvre's theoretic investigation is itself a lived contradiction, since it involves both the immediate experience one lives through and the attempt to remove oneself from this immediacy in order to formulate a political analysis. The resolution of this contradiction is only made possible by the abolition of the separation between everyday life and history.

It is necessary to specify what Lefebvre means by "everyday life." Everyday life is not merely the mundane practices and events we all live and experience; nor is it strictly defined by institutional contexts such as family, school, workplace, or the institutions of leisure activity. This is not to say that institutions are irrelevant to the analysis of everyday life:

> What, if not everyday life, bears the weight of institutions? They subdivide it and distribute it between themselves according to compulsions representing and realizing the requirements of the state and its strategies. (Lefebvre, 1971:57)

What is central to Lefebvre's conception is the fact that everyday life is knowable as compulsion. The various forms institutions take in contemporary capitalist society make visible the structure of compulsion. It is compulsion, in all of its ambiguity, which defines the boundaries of the ordinariness of lived experience.

In Lefebvre's analysis, the state is fundamentally intelligible as domination. This is not to deny the

concrete mediations and practices of the institutional structures of the state apparatus. This approach does not deny the reality of particular strategies or governmental politicies; it rather attempts to situate these concrete practices within the problematic of administered subjectivity. Within this conception, particular forms of bureaucratic administration, such as city planning or regional development, take on a coherent logic, the logic of control.

It is the concept of compulsion which unifies and integrates Lefebre's analysis of the macro-political and economic structure of capitalist society with the micro-analysis of the immediacy of everyday life. It is through this analytic conception that the connection between everyday life and history is relentlessly sustained. Within this formulation, the social relationships of capitalist society are constituted.

The objectivity of everyday life refers to a specific historical development. It is this development that Lefebvre seeks to display:

> In the modern world everyday life had ceased to be a 'subject' rich in potential subjectivity; it had become an 'object' of social organization. (Lefebvre, 1971:54)

The development made reference to here is an apparatus of social control. This apparatus seeks to limit and control the domain of personal experience and desire. It does so by providing both the means of satisfaction (commodity

consumption) and by restricting the range of desire through complicated forms of ideological manipulation.

From an analysis of historical developments within the capitalist mode of production, Lefebvre arrives at everyday life as the object of control. It is the domain of managed subjectivity. The ideological manipulation of personal life and experience is centered around the sphere of consumption, but it is not restricted solely to consumption. If this manipulation is to be successful, it must embrace all aspects of human experience.

Lefebvre develops the concept of a "terrorist society." In such societies, people do not know if what they do or desire is the result of choice or compulsion. Terrorist societies develop historically in relation to the problem of social order. Their function is containment:

> Repressive and terrorist societies cannot leave everyday life well alone but pursue it, fence it in, imprison it in its own territory. (Lefebvre, 1971:182)

If this isolation is successful, order is maintained.

The central focus of his argument centers in upon social relationships within the domain of consumption. The activity of consumption is clearly specified in relation to commodity production. Within this context, it is the emergence of the spectre of everyday life that allows and promotes the relationship between production and consumption to appear as the relationship between need and satisfaction. Desire, as the object of control, provides

the unity between relationships of production and consumption.

Lefebvre situates his concrete analysis of everyday life and distorted communication within the context of the capitalist mode of commodity production. Centering in upon language as the medium of communication, he attempts to reveal the ways in which everyday life is transformed by particular institutional and interpersonal uses of language and other forms of symbolic communication:

> Language endows a thing with value but in the process it devalues itself. Simultaneously it makes everyday life, is everyday life, eludes it, disguises and conceals it, hiding it behind the ornaments of rhetoric and make believe, so that, in the course of everyday life, language and linguistic relations become denials of everyday life. (Lefebvre, 1971: 120-121)

Admittedly, this is not the clearest of formulations. In a sense, some of the ambiguities which define everyday life reappear in Lefebvre's own formulations.

Everyday life is both real and unreal; this ambiguity constitutes its very Being. The opposition between the real and the unreal is formulated most clearly in Lefebvre's discussion of the social Being of commodities. The distinction is made here between the symbolic meaning and the real meaning of the commodity:

> Consumer-goods are not only glorified by signs and 'good' in so far as they are signified; consumption is primarily related to these signs and not to the goods themselves. (Lefebvre, 1971:91)

This is an interesting but somewhat troubled formulation.

In this formulation, Lefebvre posits the distinction between the imaginary or symbolic meaning of commodities and their real meaning. The presupposition here is the distinction between "false needs" and "real needs." The commodities themselves have the capacity of fulfilling real needs, while the symbolic aspect of the commodities can only fulfill false needs. Consider the following two statements:

> The act of consuming is as much an act of the imagination (fictitious) as a real act ('reality' itself being divided into compulsions and adaptions), and therefore metaphorical (joy in every mouthful, in every perusal of the object)... (Lefebvre, 1971:90)

> Thus every object and product acquires a dual existence; perceptible and make believe; all that can be consumed becomes a symbol of consumption and the consumer is fed on symbols, symbols of dexterity and wealth, of happiness and of love; sign and significance replace reality... (Lefebvre, 1971:108)

The problem the reader is faced with is how to interpret these statements. One possible interpretation is that Lefebvre is asserting an ontological theory of human needs. If this were the case, the distinction between "symbolic" and "real" needs would be based upon a conception of human needs outside of any particular history. The concept of real needs would be posited as a universal. From this vantage point, judgments could be made as to which needs are false or real. Of course, this type of classification presupposes the possibility of being in the position of knowing how to make such judgments. The analyst or observer

would have to be in a position outside of the history being judged.

Another possible reading is that the distinction between the "imaginary" and "real" properties of the commodity is an analytic distinction of opposition, similar to Marx's distinction between "exchange value" and "use value." In this interpretation, the imaginary can be understood as both a social product and the negation of the possibility of the primacy of the human subject. By social product, I mean that the imaginary, or symbolic, existence of commodities is determined by developments within the character of social relations within late capitalism. The activity of consumption is only intelligible if situated within this historical process.

For Marx, "use value" is not something that has an existence external to its opposition to "exchange value." Both the concepts of use value and real need can be understood as formulations of the opposition between the given and the possible. It is not that real needs exist concretely alongside false needs within capitalist society. These concepts rather make reference to a particular form of contradiction. They make reference to two particular moments within commodity exchange. Whereas Marx's formulation illustrates the primacy of the logic of profit in market relationships of exchange, Lefebvre's formulation makes reference to the logic of control within the domain

of consumption. In both of these formulations the contradiction between the given and the possible takes the form of the present conditions of life under capitalist society and the possibility of the abolition of that very society.

The intelligibility of this latter interpretation of Lefebvre's formulation of the distinction between imaginary and real needs is in part dependent upon his formulation of the development of the apparatus of control and a history of language situated within the history of capitalist society. The development of the apparatus of control can clearly be situated within the development of institutional structures such as family, state, school, advertising, and leisure. The history of language accompanies these developments but is not identical with them; its boundaries surpass the limits of institutional contexts. Language is an all-embracing presence, invading all aspects of our lives.

Lefebvre offers the reader a descriptive history of three stages in the development of language:

> Remarkable changes have taken place in the semantic field considered as a whole (that is, the whole of society as the theatre where meaning is enacted in various specific contexts). Symbols had been prominent in this field for many centuries, symbols derived from nature but containing definite social implications. However, in the early stages of our civilization there was a perceptible shift from symbols to signs as the authority of the written word increased, and especially after the invention of the printing press. Today a further shift, from signs to signals, is taking place, if it has not already happened. (Lefebvre, 1971:62)

This evolution in human language (from the dominance of symbols and signs to that of signals) articulates a movement in relation to Lefebvre's notion of the separation between everyday life and history in terms of the fragmentation of the social world and the separation between administration and the objects of social control.

This particular transition within language does not mean that symbols and signs are no longer used and that the semantic code is defined now only by the presence and use of signals. It rather suggests the emergence of a dominant form of language usage for the purpose of maintaining control. Symbols and signs exist alongside signals. Each of these classifications refers to a particular use of language. In Lefebvre's analysis, language is defined by use within the context of a social relation.

The existence of language presupposes a linguistic community at a particular moment of historical development. The problem in reflecting upon Lefebvre's discussion of the development of language is in terms of "what can be meant by historical development?" For example, it is possible to interpret this development as the advance of relationships of authority, control, and complexity within society. This reading represses the relation between the development of the capitalist mode of production and the specific changes within the semantic field articulated by Lefebvre. The problem here is one of ambiguity.

It is possible to interpret the "historical development" as the development of relations of authority and manipulation. It is also possible to interpret the development of these relations in terms of advances in technology, such as the invention of the printing press and the electronic media of communication. Such a reading presupposes the independent existence of technology as the moving force of history. It denies the historical context in which any particular technological development occurs. It attributes to technology an independent existence outside of history.

If we understand technology not as a thing but as a social relation, it is possible to render an alternative interpretation of Lefebvre's formulation of the history of language. In doing so, it is also necessary to situate authority, control, and complexity within the development of the capitalist mode of production. It is a reading that situates facts and events within the analysis of the contradictions within the history of capitalist society. The fundamental contradiction in capitalist society is the relationship between labor and capital.

If we view the development of language and technology as internal to the capitalist mode of production, it is then possible to read Lefebvre's analysis of everyday life as a critique of domination in late capitalism. If we deny the autonomous development of technology, language, and social

institutions, it is possible to locate his central problematic of alienation within the concrete historical development of capitalist society. These are points on which Lefebvre is sometimes unclear. His problematic of domination and manipulation is precise, but the historic specificity of his arguments is sometimes open to question. These ambiguities constitute a problem for the reader.

Lefebvre's formulation of the relationship between labor and capital is fundamentally in terms of the Marxist notion of alienation. Although the notion of exploitation (in terms of the labor theory of value) may be implied in Lefebvre's analysis, it is certainly not the predominant category of this analysis. Everyday life is formulated in terms of a particular developed form of alienation. This alienation takes the form of the fragmentation of the social world into limited and isolated spheres of activity.

The notion of totality is posited by Lefebvre as a possible realization in opposition to the present givenness of the world. He begins his analysis with the condition of everyday life as we know it. In presenting everyday life to the reader, he describes the detailed aspects of the alienation of Being in terms that the reader can recognize and grasp. At the same time, he violates the facticity of everyday life by formulating it as a condition to be surpassed.

This notion of totality would be nothing more than a

utopian or idealist formulation if Lefebvre did not formulate some notion of political struggle as the means of realization:

> A revolution takes place when and only when, in such a society, people can no longer lead their everyday lives; so long as they can live their ordinary lives relations are constantly re-established. (Lefebvre, 1971:32)

Compare this with Lefebvre's description of the May events in France of 1968:

> Under circumstances of tension and disorder, "uninterrupted speech", initiated and literally discovered in the event, challenged not only paternalist authority and the authority of the employers, but also the aim and finality of these authorities -- the condition of everyday existence. (Lefebvre, 1969:88)

Along with positing the necessity for political struggle, the notion of revolution contained in these formulations is in terms of a grand refusal. This is not a revolution which will merely abolish class exploitation; it will result in the abolition of everyday life as we know it. In this sense, Lefebvre's analysis is closer to the critique of domination developed by Critical Theory than it is to the Marxist notion of class struggle. It is in this sense that Lefebvre's theory of everyday life can be directly related to Habermas's theory of "distorted communication."

Everyday Life as Distorted Communication

The concept of everyday life is not central to Habermas's analysis of late capitalism in the literal sense.

He does not discuss the fragmentation and repression of life in capitalist society in terms of the notion of everyday life developed by Lefebvre. Instead, his emphasis is upon language and distorted communication. It is through the analysis of distorted communication that he arrives at a notion of repressed subjectivity.

In Lefebvre's analysis the concept of everyday life is a means of making reference to a particular form subjectivity takes at a particular historical moment. Subjectivity is itself Lefebvre's prime concern. It is in terms of this problematic of subjectivity that the connection between "everyday life" and "distorted communication" becomes evident. The connection between these two analyses is in terms of both the way in which they articulate the problem of subjectivity and the way in which language takes on central importance within each of the analyses. In each case, the analysis of language makes reference to a fundamental relationship of compulsion and domination within capitalist society.

Habermas begins his analysis with the structure of class relations defined by Marx in terms of the forces of production and relations of production within capitalist society. Consequently, his analysis proceeds from the conditions of class antagonism and exploitation. He does not attempt to deny or reject the validity of the "labor theory of value." Instead, he attempts to restrict the labor

theory of value to the domain of economic relations. After doing this, he makes the separation between instrumental and communicative action:

> Alongside the forces of production in which instrumental action is sedimented, Marx's social theory also incorporates into its approach the institutional framework, the relations of production. It does not eliminate from practice the structure of symbolic interaction and the role of cultural tradition, which are the only basis on which power (Herrschaft) and ideology can be comprehended. (Habermas, 1971:42)

After having made the separation between relations of production and communicative interaction, Habermas is able to treat distorted communication as an object for analysis. It allows him to concentrate upon relationships of inter-subjectivity:

> The institutionally secured suppression of the communication through which a society is divided into social classes amounts to fetishizing the true social relations. (Habermas, 1971:60)

The advantage of this position is that it allows him to analyze and formulate the concrete processes by which ideological legitimation occurs. It provides the theoretic framework in which it is possible to analyze institutional processes in terms of a distorted perception of the world. He proceeds by treating the production of ideology in terms of manifestly distorted communication.

Certain problems arise from making the separation between economy and communication. On one hand, it is possible to understand this separation as an analytic

distinction. The purpose of such a distinction would be to analyze relationships of communication and then reconnect this particular analysis with the totality of relationships within capitalist society. This procedure would be justified by its results. If it were at all useful, it would serve to clarify the nature of the class struggle.

On the other hand, the danger in making this separation is that communication may take on the appearance of an autonomous domain. The analytic distinction may be translated into either a factual domain or an ontological category. In this context, communication would either become a domain of empirical study isolated from the totality of social relations, or language would take on a Being of its own.

Habermas's own analysis of distorted communication does not avoid these problems of interpretation. In his analysis, communication often takes on the appearance of an autonomous Being. The reader is left with the problem of reconnecting communication with the social totality.

The relationship between distorted communication and the necessity of political struggle is likewise ambiguously stated by Habermas. In his analysis, the existence of distorted communication presupposes the abolition of this condition and the possibility of realizing a condition of undistorted communication. However, the means of this abolition and realization are never clearly stated:

> However, only in an emancipated society, whose members' autonomy and responsibility had been realized, would communication have developed into the non-authoritarian and universally practical dialogue from which both our model of reciprocally constituted ego identity and our idea of true consensus are always implicitly derived. (Habermas, 1971:314)

In this context, "emancipation" is stated as a logical presupposition of undistorted communication.

The condition of undistorted communication is formulated by Habermas in terms of a goal. This goal is stated as a possible historical realization. The realization of undistorted communication is dependent on an interest in emancipation. In turn, the notion of emancipation is dependent upon two other theoretic concepts: autonomy and responsiblity.

Autonomy and responsibility are formulated as conditions that make the realization of undistorted communication possible. On one level, autonomy and responsibility can be thought of as constituting the prior conditions which make undistorted communication a plausible notion. In terms of this level of understanding, the autonomy and responsibility of subjects is a necessary presupposition upon which the concept of undistorted communication is logically dependent. It is still necessary to account for this dependence if it is not to be understood as arbitrary.

Habermas formulates the concepts of autonomy and responsibility as expressions of a general human interest in emancipation. He justifies this formulation by

attributing ontological significance to the structure of language:

> The human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori. What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we can know: language. Through its structure, autonomy and responsibility are posited for us. (Habermas, 1971:314)

Habermas seems to be saying that the notions of autonomy and responsibility are, in fact, not arbitrary conceptions, but rather determined by the nature (essence) of human language.

His treatment of communication is situated within a philosophic context which underlies each of the particular points of his argument. The philosophical presuppositions of his formulation of the problem of distorted communication are dependent upon an ahistoric notion of Reason:

> Taken together, autonomy and responsibility constitute the only Idea that we possess a priori in the sense of the philosophical tradition. (Habermas, 1971:314)

His own formulations are dependent upon an a priori notion of the universality of Reason; they are, in turn, justified by a philosophical tradition.

The problem Habermas is faced with is how he can demonstrate both the importance of investigating communication and the logical necessity of the way in which he formulates the concepts of distorted and undistorted communication. Through arguments he must demonstrate the strategic importance of communication within the context of

a political struggle for human emancipation. At the same time, he must convince the reader of the adequacy of his particular formulation of the problem. Neither his emphasis on communication nor his logical presuppositions can appear as the result of an arbitrary choice or decision.

He must make his argument intelligible within the historical context of the development of late capitalism. Locating his own formulations within a philosophical tradition or within the nature of language can not achieve this purpose. These are in a sense appeals to the authority of the universality of knowledge and can not serve as an historical justification. In order to avoid utopianism, Habermas must attempt to formulate communication as a domain of political struggle. In order to do this, he must convince the reader that the domain of communication is somehow more strategic than other domains of political struggle, such as economic exploitation or the seizure of state power.

One of the ways Habermas seeks to justify the importance he attributes to communication is by his attempt to develop a theory of legitimation. A political system legitimates itself through processes of communication. By political communication, Habermas means both the direct political communication emanating from the state apparatus and the ways in which relationships of communication are produced and reproduced throughout the institutions of daily life.

He analyzes both the institutional framework of political discourse and the domain of intersubjectivity.

In his attempt to articulate the existence of political discourse as an instance of distorted communication, he attempts to apply linguistic analysis to the political arrangements within late capitalist society. This formulation takes the form of his thesis of a "legitimation crisis." Habermas attempts to ground his discussion of distorted communication within the activities of daily life. In doing so, he attempts to integrate political discourse with the discourse of intersubjectivity. The result of this analysis is a formulation of late capitalist society in terms of patterns of distorted communication.

In order to advance this argument, Habermas must find distortions in communication on an elementary level. He does this by examining psychoanalytic literature in terms of providing an illustration of distorted communication. Psychoanalysis serves as a model for the analysis he attempts to apply to the totality of capitalist society. Psychoanalysis provides a scientific legitimation for his analysis and conclusions.

In the literature of psychoanalysis, Habermas finds distorted communication in the form of a repressed content:

> No matter on which level of communication the symptoms appear, whether in the linquistic expression, in behavioral compulsions, or in the realm of gestures, one always finds an isolated content therein, which has been excommunicated from the public language performance. This content expresses

> an intention which is incomprehensible according to the rules of public communication; as such it has become private and remains inaccessible for the author as well, to whom it must be ascribed. (Habermas, 1970:118)

The subjectivity of authorship is repressed, and the individual loses the connection between the original meaning and the later expressed content. Speech is inauthentic and fragmented; neither the speaker nor the public understand the nature of the distorted communication expressed.

The psychoanalytic dialogue is formulated by Habermas, not as an empirical relationship to be found in the real world, but as an ideal relationship:

> By treating psychoanalysis as an analysis of language aiming at reflection about oneself, I have sought to show how the relations of power embodied in systematically distorted communication can be attacked directly by the process of critique, so that in the self-reflection, which the analytic method has made possible and provoked, in the end insight can coincide with emancipation from unrecognized dependencies -- that is, knowledge coincides with the fulfillment of the interest in liberation through knowledge. (Habermas, 1973:9)

Psychoanalysis is, in this formulation, conceived as an instance of "critique as self-reflection." It is the formulation of the possibility of the abolition of distorted communication. For Habermas, psychoanalysis expresses a theoretic possibility, rather than an event occurring in the real world.

In the empirical world, the practice of psychoanalysis may or may not result in a reduction in the degree of distorted communication. A judgment concerning this matter

would depend upon the possibility of arriving at a definitive answer to this question. It would presuppose a method of attaining sufficient knowledge to make such a judgment. Habermas is not interested in defending the legitimacy of psychoanalytic practice. Even if this were his intention, he has no available evidence to substantiate such a claim.

Instead, Habermas offers the psychoanalytic dialogue as a theoretic model of the relationship between distorted communication and the process of understanding and abolishing distorted communication. This relationship is formulated in terms of the intervention of knowledge (in the form of the analyst who theoretically understands the structure of distorted communication). The patient suffers from distorted communication, but can not himself understand this process. His or her enlightenment is dependent upon the knowledge of some Other (the analyst) who knows. The possibility of self-understanding is dependent upon a pedagogic relationship; the patient learns the truth and realizes human emancipation.

More important than the concrete practice of psychoanalysis is the more general relationship posited by Habermas between theoretic understanding and the level of knowledge exemplified by the condition of distorted communication:

> Theories which in their structure can serve the clarification of practical questions are designed to enter into communicative action. Interpretations which can be gained within the framework of such

> theories cannot, of course, be directly effective for the orientation of action: rather, they find their legitimate value within the therapeutic context of the reflexive formation of volition. Therefore they can only be translated into processes of enlightenment which are rich in political consequences, when the institutional preconditions for practical discourse among the general public are fulfilled. As long as this is not the case, the restrictive compulsions, that is, the inhibitions to communication which have their origin in the structures of the system, themselves become a problem to be clarified theoretically. (Habermas, 1973:3-4)

The ordinary understanding of everyday life (in the form of distorted communication) requires the theoretic understanding of psychoanalysts, philosophers, and political theorists. This explanation, however, is unable to account for the possibility of a theoretic knowledge freed from its own version of distorted communication. It presupposes a freedom from contamination, for which it can not account.

After formulating the separation between knowledge and everyday life, Habermas is faced with another problem. He must account for the possibility of translating theoretic knowledge into enlightened political practice. He must specify the conditions that would make understanding possible for the proletariat. He does this in terms of making reference to existing institutional structures such as education, the family, and mass media. Within the logic of this argument, reforms within institutional practices (such as education) are more plausible than building working class political parties.

For Habermas, political struggle takes the form of

ideological debate and institutional reform. The most difficult problem he is faced with is how to connect the various foci of his argument. He must be able to connect the problems of interpersonal communication, communication among political publics, and the possibility of going beyond the existence of distorted communication. For Habermas, this "going beyond" must take the form of political action. It can not be formulated as the mere realization of some abstract notion of reason.

Habermas attempts to integrate his conception of distorted communication on the interpersonal level with a conception of distorted political communication. He does this by making reference to a notion of "consensus," which underlies all communication:

> We can proceed from the fact that functioning language games, in which speech acts are exchanged, are based on an underlying consensus. This underlying consensus is formed in the reciprocal recognition of at least four claims to validity which speakers announce to each other: the comprehensibility of the utterance, the truth of its propositional components, the correctness and appropriateness of its performatory component, and the authenticity of the speaking subject. (Habermas, 1973:17-18)

These "claims to validity" are formulated as constitutive rules for the achievement of a consensus among participants engaged in communication. These logical conditions are as necessary in political communication as they are in interpersonal communication. In fact, the distinction between these two types of communication can best be understood as

an analytic distinction.

The significance of this very distinction is, in part, surpassed analytically in the formulation of concepts such as consensus, discourse, and the formation of a rational will. In these latter formulations, the notion of individual speakers as the subjects in the communication process is replaced by the formulation of a collectivity as the subject of communicative action. Admittedly, intersubjectivity (communication between individual speakers) is not entirely surpassed by these latter formulations of the problem. The concreteness of intersubjectivity appears as a moment of tension in opposition to the formulation of the trans-individual subjectivity of a class or political public.

For Habermas, intersubjectivity provides the concrete existential basis for his theory of communication. At the same time, it is not plausible to assume that political discourse is merely the collection of all the various instances of intersubjective communication. The generalizable will is not intelligible as the collection of individual wills. The conceptual problem concerns the movement from formulating subjectivity in terms of individual subjects to the formulation of a collective subjectivity. This is a problem Habermas addresses but does not resolve.

For example, the notion of discourse is formulated by Habermas in terms of an ideal speech situation. Presumably,

the logical conditions defining this speech situation would apply equally to interpersonal or collective forms of communication:

> Discourse can be understood as that form of communication that is removed from contexts of experience and action and whose structure assures us: that the bracketed validity claims of assertions, recommendations, or warnings are the exclusive object of discussion; that participants, themes and contributions are not restricted except with reference to the goal of testing the validity claims in questions; that no force except that of the cooperative search for truth are excluded. (Habermas, 1975:107-108)

This is a formulation of structures that make truth possible. In a sense, the idea of discourse formulated here can be understood as a metaphor for the realization of truth.

Undistorted communication is dependent upon the absence of coercive intervention. It is dependent upon equality among participants. Each participant would have the same chance and right to call into question claims to validity without reverting to the authority of status or tradition. There would be no possibility of making such appeals. Justifications would depend entirely upon argumentation.

This is clearly not a description of the world in which we find ourselves. The rational presuppositions for undistorted communication formulated by Habermas are in opposition to the irrationality of late capitalist society. Communication free of coercion is nowhere to be found.

Instead, we find nothing but ideology in the form of fragmented and manipulated understanding. Claims to validity are, in fact, made by the use of authority and position. There is no equality among participants.

If we focus on the concept of norms governing action, the distinction made by Habermas between distorted and undistorted communication is evident. Norms result from various processes of communication. The normative order of capitalist society is the result of the unequal distribution of power between groups and individuals. Consequently, the norms arrived at do not express the rational motives or agreement of participants. Instead, they express coercive social relationships.

In opposition to the normative order defined by coercion and domination, Habermas formulates the logical conditions for the possibility of a rational consensus:

> ...we cannot explain the validity claim of norms without recourse to rationally motivated agreement or at least to the conviction that consensus on a recommended norm could be brought about with reasons. (Habermas, 1975:105)

Again, the formulation is in terms of logical conditions and presuppositions. Habermas seeks to make intelligible a condition of social Being which has no existence in the world. Through the process of critical thought and reflection he negates, with reasoned arguments, the coercive validity claims of capitalist society.

Both distorted and undistorted communication possess

an operational logic. It is possible to formulate this logic in terms of structures and conditions which make communicative practices plausible. This logic helps to make the opposition between two possible modes of communication recognizable. The clarity of this opposition exists on the level of critical thought.

Habermas's formulation of the possibility of achieving a generalizable interest among a political public is a conceptual negation of the legitimacy of a normative order based upon a forced consensus. By means of this conceptual negation, he attempts to both delegitimate the existing coercive order and, in turn, justify the practice of Critical Theory:

> A social theory critical of ideology can, therefore, identify the normative power built into the institutional system of a society only if it starts from the model of the suppression of generalizable interests and compares normative structures existing at a given time with the hypothetical state of a system of norms formed, ceteris paribus, discursively. (Habermas, 1975:113)

Operating within relationships of distorted communication, Critical Theory seeks to articulate the contradiction between the given state of the world and some other possible world.

Habermas begins with the existence of the institutional order of contemporary capitalist society. He then attempts to overturn the logical necessity (legitimacy) of these existing relationships. For example, he remarks:

> The ever more densely strung communications network of the electronic mass media today is organized in such a manner that it controls the loyalty of a depoliticized population, rather than serving to make the social and state controls in turn subject to a decentralized and uninhibited discursive formation of the public will, channeled in such a way as to be of consequence -- and this in spite of the technical potential for liberation which this technology represents. (Habermas, 1973:4)

It is the social relations which determine the specific use of technology and the existence of distorted communication. A problem arises when we attempt to understand exactly what is the nature of these social relations.

Although Habermas acknowledges the validity of the "labor theory of value" in strictly economic relationships, the relevance of the concept of social class diminishes in his own analysis of late capitalist society. The concept of class struggle, which is predominant in most Marxist social theory, is replaced in his analysis by the conflict between the administration of the state apparatus and a manipulated political public. In a more general sense, the concept of class exploitation is replaced by the relationship between massive structures of domination and the possibility of human emancipation.

After having relegated the "labor theory of value" to the status of a valid but restricted theory for the understanding of economic relations, Habermas is faced with the problem of formulating a political theory which will outline the posssibility of abolishing relationships of domination

within capitalist society. Any theory of historical transformation (if it is not to be understood as evolutionary or utopian) must account for the possibility of bringing about the world it envisions. The theory can formulate both immediate and long-range goals to be achieved. Such goals, in turn, will be subject to modification in relation to an ongoing analysis of the historical situation.

The formulation of such a theory (if it is not to allow the separation between theory and practice) must specify a mode of political struggle. Merely formulating the logical possibilities for total human emancipation is never enough. Such formulations state the desirability of ends without specifying a means of achieving such goals. In doing so, they formulate utopian goals without acknowledging the necessary practical conditions for such transformation.

Habermas's theory of distorted communication suffers from his failure to even address the problem of political struggle. What he offers the reader is an argument justifying the possibility of human emancipation. However, the level of abstraction of his conception of emancipation precludes him from dealing with the concrete problems of an organized struggle against human domination. Formulating the logical conditions for the possibility of realizing his vision of a possible world is not sufficient.

Conclusion

Habermas wishes to raise the political consciousness of everyday life to the level of understanding achieved by Critical Theory. The formulation of this project is dependent upon prior assumptions as to the nature and value of the theoretic enterprise. He uncritically posits philosophy as the vehicle of reason against the irrationality of everyday life. He fixes as his goal a pure knowledge uncontaminated by the domination he theorizes against.

This positive evaluation of the philosophic enterprise of critical thought tends to devalue and reject the possibilities manifested in direct political action. From the vantage point of the philosophic understanding attained by Habermas's conception of Reason (in the form of undistorted communication), political action tends to violate his theoretic model. The irrationality of strikes and other forms of political protest are replaced by the rationality of therapy and pedagogy.

Unlike Habermas, Lefebvre is much more critical of the function of philosophic understanding. In his formulation, both everyday life and philosophy suffer from the distortions imposed by the historic development of late capitalist society. In Lefebvre's formulation, philosophy defines itself against the ordinariness of everyday life. In doing so, it loses the possibility of grasping the social totality and reverts to a self-conscious idealism.

In Lefebvre's formulation, the central political problem is the separation between everyday life and theoretic understanding. This separation can not be surpassed merely by the acquisition of a higher level of abstract understanding. For Lefebvre, the supercession of the present conditions of social Being will be attained through political struggle. Admittedly, he does not do much in the way of articulating the specific forms political struggle must take. Nor is he explicit in formulating the relationship between theoretic analysis and political practice. This relationship is posited by him as necessary, but he does this without concretely analyzing the definitive nature of this relationship.

Although Lefebvre is more troubled than Habermas over the separation between theoretic understanding and the fragmented understanding of everyday life, his resolution of this problem is expressed in terms of an ontological conception of human subjectivity. It is the struggle of this subjectivity against the repressive nature of everyday life which will bring about human emancipation. In this context, his notion of "consciousness of social totality" is similar to Habermas's notion of "undistorted communication." Both conceptions are dependent upon a notion of human emancipation as the process of overcoming domination and the alienation of consciousness.

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Chapter Three

EVERYDAY LIFE AS CONSCIOUSNESS

Introduction

Jean-Paul Sartre and Louis Althusser have attempted to formulate an analysis of everyday life in late capitalism. From divergent theoretical perspectives, they have attempted to formulate the relationship between consciousness and the social practices of everyday life. Both authors begin their analyses with the concrete practices of everyday life and then offer theoretical explanations which are based upon ontological conceptions of consciousness and human existence. Admittedly, Sartre's and Althusser's ontologies are not identical. Each arises out of a divergent theoretic perspective.

Both Sartre and Althusser attempt to integrate psychoanalytic and sociological perspectives into a Marxist analysis. This integration of psychoanalysis and sociology occurs in their analyses of social institutions and the process of institutional socialization. Consequently, each begins with a conception of human nature and then constructs a theory of human social practice, which is based upon both an ontological conception of human nature and a theory of institutional control.

The central difference between the ontologies of

Sartre and Althusser is that Sartre formulates an eternal conception of human freedom and Althusser formulates an eternal conception of ideology. For Sartre, the human project is defined by an ahistorical conception of freedom. According to him, human beings are always in the process of becoming, of projecting themselves toward a future not yet realized. For Althusser, ideology is an eternal factor of the human condition. According to him, individuals exist as ideological subjects throughout all of history.

Although Sartre and Althusser make reference to the Marxist conception of the mode of production and to the process of historical development, their own analyses introduce conceptions of human essence which are external to the mode of production of any particular society. Both authors analyze the class relations and institutional structure of capitalist society. At the same time, they explain human social practices in terms of ontological conceptions of human nature. The conceptions of the mode of production and of historical development are reduced to ambiguity by the introduction of ontological conceptions of the nature of human consciousness. Consequently, the problem of history is replaced by the problem of Being in both of these analyses.

Everyday Life as the Project

Jean-Paul Sartre attempts to formulate the grounds

for the intelligibility of everyday life in relation to historical totalization. In his attempt to formulate the dialectics of individual praxis and history, he elaborates a theory of subjectivity. From the point of view of the present analysis, two particular aspects of this theory are of interest: his conceptions of praxis and the field of the possible. The relationship between these two concepts is formulated as the project.

Sartre does not make the mistake of reifying the concept of everyday life. He does not fetishize the immediacy of direct experience. Instead, his is a theory of mediation, in which he attempts to establish the singular unity of individual praxis and history:

> The dialectical totalization must include acts, passions, work, and need as well as economic categories; it must at once place the agent or the event back into the historical setting, define him in relation to the orientation of becoming, and determine exactly the meaning of the present as such. (Sartre, 1962:133)

The ordinariness of everyday life is defined by its negation, by forces and structures limiting freedom.

In opposition to everyday life as the "field of the given," Sartre posits human freedom as the need to go beyond the historical facticity of reified institutions and social relations. In this context, need is understood as lack, and freedom (in the form of praxis) attempts to surpass this condition of negation. In Hegelian terms, freedom is the negation of the negation.

In this formulation of the problem, everyday life is presented as contradiction and struggle. In terms of Sartre's notion of the project, the subjectivity of human experience and practice violates and struggles against objective restraints upon freedom and becoming. At the same time, Sartre posits history as the product of the objectification of praxis. Men and women both produce and are produced by the objectifications of their own practices. Historical totalization is the struggle between the subjectivity of freedom and the reified objectivity of blocked freedom. In other words, men and women both exteriorize interiority and interiorize exteriority. The process seems endless.

As I will argue later on in this section, this particular formulation of the problem involves the positing of an ontological conception of freedom. Freedom takes the form of a universal in relation to particular fields of institutional restraint. Freedom is understood on the level of a universal precondition in relation to a particular historical condition of the possibility of individual and collective praxis. In this formulation, freedom is not itself conditioned by the particular history in which it is objectified.

Before pursuing this criticism, I will first examine the more concrete analysis contained in Sartre's formulation. This analysis concerns the relationship between the individual and history. In his formulation, Sartre attempts

to integrate the approaches of psychoanalysis, sociology, and existentialism within the fundamental, theoretical, and political perspectives of Marxism. He attempts to incorporate these disciplines within Marxism and, in doing so, extend the perspective of Marxism. This enterprise is both polemical and theoretical in scope. His polemic is written in opposition to positivist and mechanistic versions of Marxism.

Sartre's appropriation of psychoanalysis to Marxism is not another version of the synthesis of Freud and Marx, similar to those developed by the Frankfurt School. It avoids the particular problems involved in such a synthesis. Instead, he attempts to appropriate the object of psychoanalysis into a Marxist analysis. In doing so, he entends the domains of investigation to include the family and childhood. In opposition to mechanistic Marxism, Sartre remarks:

> As we read them, everything seems to happen as if men experienced their alienation and their reification first in their own work, whereas in actuality each one lives it first, as a child, in his parents' work. (Sartre, 1963:62)

His attempt here is to grasp the concrete significance of childhood and not to incorporate the instinctual theories of either Freud or Reich.

His interest is both more general and more concrete. It avoids the scientistic dogma often associated with psychoanalysis. His interest is in disclosing the

relationship between childhood and the social totality each child enters into through his/her experiences within the family:

> The family in fact is constituted by and in the general movement of History, but is experienced, on the other hand, as an absolute in the depth and opaqueness of childhood. (Sartre, 1963:62)

According to this forumlation, the opaqueness of working class life (in all of its alienation) does not begin at the moment that the worker enters the factory, but is rather mediated through the family he/she is born into. The objective conditions of working class life are lived first on the level of childhood.

The Marxist appropriation of psychoanalysis enables Sartre to formulate the relationship between biography and history. It provides grounds for the formulation of the relationship between concrete social practice and historical totalization:

> Psychoanalysis, working within a dialectical totalization, refers on the one side to objective structures, to material conditions, and on the other to the action upon our adult life of the childhood we never wholly surpass. (Sartre, 1963:63-64)

The version of psychoanalysis expressed here has been reconstituted in relation to the Marxist problematic. It is not the psychoanalysis practiced by analysts in either treatment or research. This version of psychoanalysis discovers only particular facts in isolation. It never grasps history.

The reconstituted version of psychoanalysis formulated by Sartre is not confined to the study of sexuality or neurosis. In fact, this formulation of psychoanalysis does not have a distinctive domain of its own. It rather constitutes a moment within the dialectical understanding of society. If such an understanding is to be adequate, objects of study (such as the family and childhood) must be reciprocally connected with other domains of social practice:

> The child experiences more than just his family. He lives also -- in part through the family -- the collective landscape which surrounds him. (Sartre, 1962:79)

Sartre moves from the appropriation of psychoanalysis to the appropriation of the domain of sociology.

In a similar fashion, Sartre does not incorporate either the positivist findings or theoretical framework of bourgeois sociology. Instead, he appropriates its object of study:

> At the level of the relations of production and at that of political-social structures, the unique person is found conditioned by his human relations ...The person lives and knows his condition more or less clearly through the groups he belongs to. The majority of these groups are local, definite, immediately given. It is clear, in fact, that the factory worker is subject to the pressure of his "production group", but if, as is the case at Paris, he lives rather far from his place of work, he is equally subject to the pressure of his "residential group." (Sartre, 1963:66)

Sartre's interest here is not with particular findings. Instead, he is interested in social and institutional

relations as objective conditions influencing social and political practice. These collectives exist both as objective structures and as the subjective conditions of life.

He argues that thus far the practice of sociology has served the interests of the capitalist class against the working class and that it is an instrument made use of in the control of the working class. According to this argument, sociology is not merely the scientific practice of collecting social facts, nor the formulation of general theories of society. Such practices express particular and not universal interests. Sociology serves the interests of capital's need for control and does not express the universality of science. This is particularly evident to Sartre in the fields of urban and industrial sociology, although he concludes that it also applies to the entire practice of bourgeois sociology in less obvious ways.

After attacking the ideologically embedded practices of sociology, he suggests that a Marxist appropriation of its object domain would serve the interests of the working class against the interests of capital. He argues that a Marxist sociology could be used by the working class in their struggle against capital. Sartre does not spell out the concrete details of how the working class might use sociology as an instrument in their struggle for emancipation. One conceivable level of this appropriate is the formulation of counter-ideology through the intellectual

apparatuses of working class parties and trade unions. Concerning the ideological struggle, a Marxist sociology could also engage the predominant bourgeois ideology within the universities and political journalism.

The Marxist version of sociology which Sartre outlines would represent the particular interests of the working class in opposition to the particular interests of capital. According to this argument, a Marxist appropriation of sociology would not express universal interests, since capitalist society is divided into antagonistic classes. According to Sartre's conception, the proletariat is a particular class on the way to becoming a universal class. The notion of universal interest is not conceivable within capitalist society. For Sartre, socialism represents the possibility of attaining a condition of social existence where universal interests might find expression. The achievement of socialism is in no sense inevitable; it rather expresses an historical possibility.

In a similar fashion to the Marxist appropriation of psychoanalysis, Sartre argues for the appropriation of sociology to the Marxist problematic. As in the case of psychoanalysis, sociology can not merely be absorbed into Marxism. Nor can sociology exist as an autonomous discipline within Marxism. According to his formulation, sociology would be transformed and reconstituted as a moment of the dialectical understanding of historical totalization. Its positivist, theoretical perspectives and

methodology would be discarded. As in the case of psychoanalysis, the Marxist appropriation of sociology would be in terms of the inclusion of its object of study within the working class political struggle against capitalism.

In Sartre's formulation, the appropriation of psychoanalysis and sociology is intelligible as a movement toward the dialectical formulation of the relationship between individual praxis and historical totalization. This theoretical enterprise involves both the specificity of the concrete social practices of everyday life and the larger historical process. The aim of Sartre's analysis is to make the connection between everyday life and history intelligible. It is to surpass the apparent separation between everyday life and history. Individual praxis is understood as a moment of dialectical intelligibility.

According to Sartre, orthodox Marxism has dissolved the concrete praxis of individuals into a metaphysical conception of social classes and history. This transformation within Marxism represents to him the re-emergence of idealism within Marxism. According to his reading of the predominant contemporary Marxist analysis, this analysis begins with a series of dogmatic assumptions as to the nature of historical change. They have transformed social class into a metaphysical Being which acts in accordance with scientific laws of history. The concrete praxis of individuals is excluded from the Stalinist version

of Marxism which Sartre polemicizes against.

The central point of his analysis is to reintroduce individual and collective praxis into Marxism. In order to do this, he relies upon his own existential conception of individual consciousness and freedom. He asserts the irreducible primacy of these conceptions:

> A product of his product, fashioned by his work and by the social conditions of production, man at the same time exists in the milieu of his products and furnishes the substance of the "Collectives" which consume him. (Sartre, 1963:79)

By means of the ideology of Existentialism, Sartre reintroduces the praxis of the individual subject into history.

In this formulation of Existential Marxism, history is analyzed in terms of the praxis of individuals and collectives. The insertion of Existentialism into Marxism insists upon the conclusion that men and women are both the subjects and objects of history. However, they do not make history as isolated individuals, but in relation to a collective struggle within given conditions:

> Now it is in terms of his relation with collectives -- that is, in his "social field" considered in its most immediate aspect -- that man learns to know his condition. Here again the particular connections are one mode of realizing and of living the universal in its materiality. (Sartre, 1963: 78-79)

According to this formulation of the problem, the social Being of a class does not dissolve the existential reality of individual praxis or consciousness. Instead, the individual is transformed by his/her situated praxis. For

Sartre, class is always a multiplicity of agents and never a singular unity.

According to this formulation, individual praxis embodies the subjectivity of a trans-individual freedom. Freedom by means of the praxis of individuals goes beyond the given materiality of the world. This materiality is understood as including both the domains of nature and social institutions. On the level of universals, freedom opposes material scarcity. This condition of scarcity presents itself as both a given fact and as an historical product.

Within Sartre's analysis, the concepts of freedom and scarcity are presented on two levels. They are presented as both the universal prior conditions determining human praxis and the specific historical conditions in which concrete praxis takes place. On the level of the universal, they provide ontological grounds for the meaning of human existence. They constitute the dialectic of freedom and necessity. This dialectic is the formulation of a political problem in philosophic terms.

These universal conceptions form a frame of reference for the analysis of individual and group praxis. In this analysis, Sartre continually moves back and forth between the domains of concrete social praxis and the universal preconditions of this activity. The universal categories of freedom and scarcity are posited as the underlying

explanation for human praxis. As categories, they form the prior condition for the understanding of events and actions.

Within his analysis, individual subjects are formulated as the agents of historical change. Within historically defined circumstances, human actors produce and reproduce the social world. They act in combination and in relation to other subjects:

> For us man is characterized above all by his going beyond a situation, and by what he succeeds in making of what he has been made -- even if he never recognizes himself in his objectification. (Sartre, 1963:91)

Human subjects do not merely adapt to given circumstances; they go beyond these circumstances.

Individual subjects are analyzed by Sartre in relation to objective conditions limiting the range of choices immediately available. These constraints are referred to as "the field of the possible." However, this domain of limitation or restraint is never absolute. Instead, this field constitutes an historical condition to be surpassed through human praxis:

> It is by transcending the given toward the field of possibles and by realizing one possibility from among all the others that the individual objectifies himself and contributes to making History. (Sartre, 1963:93)

The history made results from the objectified surpassing of this given field.

The objective conditions of social life exist as alterity, as the Other. Although these conditions result from prior objectifications of human praxis, they are often

experienced as forces external to human design or control. Sartre's analysis attempts to go beyond these appearances by restoring (at least in theoretical terms) the relationships and activities which constituted them:

> Thus man makes History; this means that he objectifies himself in it and is alienated in it. In this sense History, which is the proper work of all activity and of all men, appears to men as a foreign force exactly insofar as they do not recognize the meaning of their enterprise (even when locally successful) in the total, objective result. (Sartre, 1963:89)

According to this conception, alienation does not result from the isolated praxis of an individual. It rather results from a particular organization of society, which in turn determines the ability of subjects to comprehend the underlying social relations and forces.

The particular organization of capitalist society forms a field of denied possibilities for individual workers. These denied possibilities are formulated by Sartre as the negation of freedom:

> Every man is defined negatively by the sum total of possibles which are impossible for him; that is by a future more or less blocked off. (Sartre, 1963:95)

Racism, sexism, and class relations are concrete examples of such restraints upon the realization of freedom through praxis. However, such restraints never constitute absolute barriers. The future is always "more or less" limited by these institutional practices.

Sartre's theory of history presupposes a structure of

intentionality governing the practices of everyday life. This intentionality projects individual praxis toward surpassing, toward the realization of freedom. This presupposition as to the nature of intentionality is apparent in the way in which Sartre defines the object of his analysis:

> The most rudimentary behavior must be determined both in relation to the real and present factors which condition it and in relation to a certain object, still to come, which it is trying to bring into being. This is what we call the project. (Sartre, 1963:91)

The goal of surpassing given conditions is defined as an attribute of the activity analyzed. The aim of human praxis is the realization of freedom by going beyond the given field of the possible.

Sartre attempts to analyze concrete human praxis in relation to historical totalization. He attempts to demonstrate the relationship between the ordinary practices of everyday life and the larger historical process. He attempts to demonstrate the relationship between the individual moments of this process and that history is only intelligible as a relationship between praxis and the objective results of praxis interiorized and re-exteriorized. This relationship is formulated as the dialectical relationship between subject and object.

The relationship between subject and object is formulated on two levels: on the level of the universal and the particular. On the level of the universal, this relationship

takes the form of the relationship between freedom and materiality. This is an abstract, trans-historical formulation of the problem. The particular formulation expresses the relationship between concrete individuals and the social-historical situations in which they live their daily lives.

Sartre attempts to analyze concrete social praxis in terms of his abstract conceptions of freedom and materiality. These concepts form the grounds for his analysis of the concrete. The particular consciousness and intentionality of human social existence in relation to a field of possible action expresses the more general relationship between freedom and materiality. In this formulation, individual praxis expresses both individual subjectivity and human freedom in general. Such praxis is both historical and ontological. Sartre's abstract, philosophical conception of freedom expresses the trans-historical essence of men and women.

In attempting to formulate a method for analyzing concrete human praxis, Sartre has imposed categories which are external to the object of his analysis. In attempting to analyze the concrete individual in his/her situation in the world, he has introduced the category of freedom as a universal, preexisting condition. This conception of freedom is not derived from his concrete analysis of social praxis, but precedes this very analysis. The universal relationship

between subject and object, between freedom and materiality, is concretely experienced as the relationship between individual consciousness and the given social field.

Even in socialist society, the fundamental nature of this relationship would not be altered. The field of the possible will have been extended by collective human praxis. Scarcity will no longer be produced in terms of the capitalist need for profit. The bourgeois individual will have been replaced by the socialist individual. However, the ontological relationship between subject and object will not have changed.

Having once constituted the ontological grounds for the analysis of concrete social praxis within capitalist society, Sartre is then faced with the problem of either presuming this conception to be eternal or he is forced to discard these fundamental categories and introduce some other theoretic conception. The problem he is faced with is how to theoretically grasp social totality. He attempts to do this from within the social fragmentation of capitalist society. In attempting to transcend this very fragmentation, his theoretic project posits the existence of abstract, universal categories. In this attempt at transcendence, Sartre's theory expresses a fundamental contradiction within capitalist society: between the fragmentation of everyday life and the possibility of comprehending social totality. What can not be achieved in the concrete praxis of everyday

life can not be achieved in purely theoretical terms. This contradiction finds expression in Sartre's formulation of the relationship between everyday life and history in terms of an ontological conception of human freedom.

Although the preceding discussion makes reference to Sartre's theoretic formulations contained in Search for a Method, his basic ontological conception of freedom is also present in The Critique of Dialectical Reason. In this latter work, a more complex historical analysis is set forth. Additional concepts are developed in his attempt to make history intelligible. However, his basic ontological conception of freedom as an eternal category is not altered. It remains the fundamental conception underlying his analysis.

In the Critique of Dialectical Reason, Sartre continues to posit freedom as a trans-historical category of human existence. This freedom projects human beings toward a future not yet realized:

> From this point of view, it must be pointed out that the practico-inert field exists, that it is real, and that free human activities are not thereby eliminated, that they are not even altered in their translucidity as projects in the process of being realised. (Sartre, 1976:323)

The practico-inert (in the form of social, political, and economic institutions) conditions the praxis of concrete individuals, but can not alter or transform the essence of human freedom. Freedom itself remains unchanged and eternal.

For Sartre, the field of possibility (now referred to

as the practico-inert) is both the result of human praxis and a real constraint upon men and women as they lead their everyday lives: "The field exists: in short, it is what surrounds and conditions us." (Sartre, 1976:323) This field of existing institutions conditions and shapes the praxis of individuals and groups, but does not, and can not, alter the existence of human freedom. Sartre's conception of freedom remains transcendent and external to the concrete praxis it attempts to explain.

Although attempting to formulate the unity between individual and group praxis in relationship to historical totalization, Sartre has left his readers with an unresolved theoretical ambiguity. After setting himself the task of formulating the intelligibility of the historical process, he has introduced categories which are external to this very process. He begins by asserting the concrete reality of human consciousness and praxis as it is lived by men and women within given historical conditions. He then dissolves this very conception of the concrete by explaining it in terms of a universal conception of freedom. He ends up by leaving his readers with a conception of history as being determined by the realization of freedom through the joint praxis of individual agents. This formulation arbitrarily unites the universality of freedom with the particularity of concrete human existence. The concrete reality of everyday life is united with the process of historical

totalization, not through the intelligibility of history, but rather by means of the positing of an ontological conception of freedom.

Everyday Life as Ideology

It might seem that the concept of everyday life would be of no particular interest to Louis Althusser, since one of the fundamental points of argument in his theoretic work is that history is a process without a subject. His fundamental concerns are with the development of the epistemological grounds for the "science of Marxism." The object of study for this "science" is defined as the mode of production of a society. The subjective experiences of everyday life in capitalist society are not of immediate relevance to this scientific and political project. Individual consciousness is not an object of investigation for Marxism.

Althusser attempts to justify his theorizing by situating his concerns within the Classical Marxist tradition. This tradition provides both continuity and boundaries for theoretic investigation. The concept of everyday life is investigated by Althusser in terms of an identifiable Marxist problematic: the study of ideology. Outside of the province of ideology, the study of everyday life would itself be ideological. It would be another example of bourgeois ideology.

Althusser makes a fundamental distinction between

ideology and science. Ideology presupposes individual subjects who possess a distorted understanding of reality. Science, on the other hand, is subjectless and produces knowledge independent of distortion. One of the fundamental differences between ideology and science is determined by the category of subject. Whereas ideology always involves the activity and experience of individual subjects, scientific discourse has no subject. It is free from the distortions of consciousness.

I will argue that the distinction made by Althusser between ideology and science is based upon an ontological conception of the individual subject. This conception of the subject is not a knowledge of individual subjects, modifiable by historical change. It is, instead, a universal conception of the individual subject external to the specific mode of production of a society. In Althusser's words: "Ideology is eternal."

In order to demonstrate the plausibility of this argument, it is necessary to examine the way in which Althusser presents the problem of everyday life in terms of the problematic of ideology. His ontological conception of the nature of individual subjects occurs within this formulation. This problem is most clearly presented in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." In this essay, Althusser both describes the reality of everyday life in capitalist society and attempts to provide

principles for the investigation of the domain of everyday life as ideology.

He begins this investigation by situating the problem of ideology within the problematic of "reproduction." He concerns himself with the way in which the capitalist mode of production reproduces material and social relations:

> It follows that, in order to exist, every social formation must reproduce the conditons of its production at the same time as it produces, and in order to be able to produce. It must therefore reproduce:
> 1. The productive forces,
> 2. the existing relations of production. (Althusser, 1971:128)

Capitalist society must reproduce both its productive forces (factories and machinery) and relations of production (workers to produce commodities). This reproduction of the working class is both biological and social.

Capitalist society must be able to reproduce labor power possessing sufficient technical skills to be employed within the given division of labor. However, workers must also develop personality and attitudinal attributes conducive to the mode of production and organization of work:

> But besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the 'rules' of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination. (Althusser, 1971: 132)

Althusser argues that ideology is a necessary component in

the production and reproduction of the working class. Workers must be sufficiently disciplined and take for granted the existing social relations of their society. They must not be aware of the true conditions of their exploitation.

The theoretic problem Althusser attempts to clarify is the process of the reproduction of the relations of production of capitalist society. He attempts to situate the problematic of everyday life in terms of this conceptual formulation. He argues that the relationship between the substructure and the superstructure is not a theoretic concept, but rather a spatial and descriptive metaphor:

> I believe that it is possible and necessary to think what characterizes the essential of the existence and nature of the superstructure on the basis of reproduction. Once one takes the point of view of reproduction, many of the questions whose existence was indicated by the spatial metaphor of the edifice, but to which it could not give a conceptual answer, are immediately illuminated. (Althusser, 1971:136)

His aim here is to both reject the mechanistic theory of the superstructure being directly caused by the economic base and to constitute the problem of everyday life and ideology within the problematic of reproduction.

Once having established the problematic of reproduction, Althusser then attempts to formulate and develop the Marxist "theory of the state" in relation to the reproduction of capitalist society. He begins with the repressive state apparatus which had been formulated by Marx, Engels,

and Lenin and then attempts to develop his conception of an ideological state apparatus. This latter conception is, in part, a development of Gramsci's "theory of hegemony." Like Gramsci, Althusser emphasizes the importance of ideology in controlling the working class, in maintaining class domination.

Althusser formulates the state as having two distinctive sets of apparatuses. He makes the analytic distinction between the functioning of repression and ideology in terms of specific institutions and practices:

> Remember that in Marxist theory, the State Apparatus (SA) contains: the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc., which constitute what I shall in the future call the Repressive State Apparatus...I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions. I propose an empirical list of these which will obviously have to be examined in detail, tested, corrected and reorganized...
>
> - the religious ISA (the system of the different churches),
> - the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private Schools),
> - the family ISA,
> - the legal ISA,
> - the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties),
> - the trade-union ISA,
> - the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.),
> - the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.). (Althusser, 1971:142-143)

For Althusser, the rationale for the distinction made between the repressive and ideological state apparatuses is based upon his assertion that the repressive apparatuses

function primarily by means of repression and secondarily by ideology, and that the ideological apparatuses function primarily by ideology and secondarily by repression. This is both an analytic and empirical assertion as to the concrete functioning of institutions within capitalist society.

Althusser has nothing to add to the Marxist theory of the repressive state apparatuses. Instead, he attempts to develop a theory of ideology in terms of his conception of the ideological state apparatuses, as formulated above. After having identified a series of institutions which function primarily by means of ideology (placing particular emphasis upon the family and education as the dominant ideological institutions in capitalist society), he then attempts to account for the relative success of the ideological apparatuses in the control of the working class. He argues that the ideological apparatuses function in the process of class struggle and have their origins within this fundamental relationship and not within institutions. Consequently, class struggle is the central focus of his thesis and not the empirical analysis of institutions.

After having formulated the centrality of class struggle, the problematic of reproduction, and having formulated the Marxist theory of the state in relation to class struggle and the process of reproduction, he then attempts to formulate a conception of the individual subject. For Althusser, there exists both concrete ideological

apparatuses and individuals who perceive or misperceive their situations in society. If ideology is successful, then they misrecognize the reality of their class situation and the existing class relations defining this situation.

Althusser sets forth two general theses concerning the functioning of ideology:

> THESIS I: Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real condition of existence. (Althusser, 1971:162)
>
> THESIS II: Ideology has a material existence. (Althusser, 1971:165)

These two theses are assertions as to the nature of ideology. The first thesis constitutes the individual as an ideological subject, and the second specifies the concrete role of institutions and ritual practices in the ideological process. It will be helpful, in terms of my analysis of Althusser's theory of ideology, to discuss his second thesis first and then return to the first thesis.

The second thesis locates ideology within the concrete practices of daily life. According to this formulation, these ideological practices exist within ideological appartuses:

> ...an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material. (Althusser, 1971:166)
>
> And I shall point out that these practices are governed by the rituals in which these practices are inscribed, within the material existence of an ideological apparatus, be it only a small part of that apparatus: a small mass in a small church, a funeral, a minor match at a sports' club, a school day, a political party meeting, etc. (Althusser,

1971:168)

According to this thesis, the concept of the "ideological apparatus" refers to social practices, which are material practices. Althusser does not conceive ideology as merely distorted or mistaken ideas.

This does not mean that individual subjects do not have distorted or mistaken ideas. Althusser's argument is rather that ideology takes place as an ensemble of material practices by individual subjects within ideological apparatuses:

> I shall therefore say that, where only a single subject (such and such an individual) is concerned, the existence of the ideas of his belief is material in that his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject. (Althusser, 1971:169)

According to this formulation, ideas can never have an existence external to social practices. Thinking is itself a social practice.

Althusser is emphatic when he stresses the material nature of ideology. Clearly, this is done in order to situate the problematic of ideology within the "science of historical materialsm." This should not be understood as theoretical dogmatism. Instead, Althusser's insistence upon the material basis of ideological practices can be more clearly understood in its polemical relationship to what he considers to be idealist analyses of culture.

Althusser makes an analytic distinction between

ideological apparatuses and ideological subjects. In the concrete practices of everyday life, these two moments of the ideological process are unified. The formulation of this conceptual distinction is an attempt to clarify the functioning of ideology:

> And I shall immediately set down two conjoint theses:
> 1. there is no practice except by and in an ideology;
> 2. there is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects. (Althusser, 1971:170)

The mere existence of ideological apparatuses would not provide a sufficient explanation for the success of ideology and class hegemony through ideological control of the working class. This explanation requires a conception of subjects as a necessary factor in the ideological process of the reproduction of the relations of production.

Having granted the logical connection between the conceptions of the idelogical apparatuses and ideological subjects in the context of concrete ideological practices, it is now necessary to attempt to clarify Althusser's conception of the ideological subject. It is necessary to establish exactly what constitutes the nature of this subject. In Althusser's formulation of the problematic of ideology, the ideological subject is a theoretic concept. His aim is to make the process of ideology intelligible, to transform ideology into a knowledge. In developing this theoretic formulation of the ideological subject, I will argue that Althusser has constructed an ontological

conception of the individual, which is a formulation of an ahistoric conception of individual consciousness.

Althusser's formulation of the ideological subject occurs on two levels: as a description of a social process (interpellation of individuals as subjects) and as a universal condition of human existence. The first level of analysis attempts to describe the social process of transforming individuals into ideological subjects. This descriptive process is in fact very similar to the process of socialization as it is discussed within the discipline of sociology. The fundamental difference between Althusser and bourgeois sociology is in his denial of the neutrality of the socialization process and in his focus upon the specific class interests served by ideology. The second level of analysis is a formulation of a universal conception of the nature and limits of human consciousness. This is an ontological formulation.

Althusser's discussion of the ideological process of recruiting subjects should not be understood as arbitrary. In his formulation, ideological practices interpellate individuals as subjects because the functioning of ideology requires these subjects. The theoretical connection between the ideological apparatus and the ideological subject is based upon a logical necessity:

> I shall then suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects

> (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' (Althusser, 1971:174)

In the self-recognition by the individual of his personal identity (in relation to the rest of society, he or she becomes an ideological subject and acts accordingly. This formulation of the problem does not allow for resistance against class ideology other than by means of a counter-ideology.

In his theoretic formulation of the ideological process, Althusser sets forth a universal conception of individual consciousness. He describes two psychological processes at work in the functioning of ideology. The first of these is recognition and the second is misrecognition:

> ...when we recognize somebody of our (previous) acquaintance ((re)-connaisance) in the street, we show him that we have recognized him (and have recognized that he has recognized us) by saying to him 'Hello, my friend', and shaking his hand (a material ritual practice of ideological recognition in everyday life -- in France, at least; elsewhere, there are other rituals). (Althusser, 1971:172)

> At work in this reaction is the ideological recognition function which is one of the two functions of ideology as such (its inverse being the function of misrecognition-méconnaissance). Althusser, 1971:172)

This formulation has an ironic twist. In recognizing ourselves and others, we, at the same time, misrecognize our real relations within the relations of production. According to Althusser, our recognition is itself a misrecognition

brought about by the successful functioning of the ideological apparatuses in their recruitment of individuals as ideological subjects.

Althusser has asserted the eternal nature of individual consciousness, which makes the ideological process both possible and necessary. Although different ideological apparatuses function within different social formations (feudalism, capitalism, and socialism), ideology is itself eternal. There is no possibility of a society surpassing its need for the ideological control of individuals. Concerning the necessity for ideology within even a socialist society, consider the following assertions on this question which Althusser made in For Marx:

> So ideology is as such an organic part of every social totality. It is as if human societies could not survive without these specific formations, these systems of representations (at various levels), their ideologies. (Althusser, 1977:232)

> ...it is clear that ideology (as a system of mass representations) is indispensable in any society if men are to be formed, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence. (Althusser, 1977:235)

> And I am not going to steer clear of the crucial question: historical materialism cannot conceive that even a communist society could ever do without ideology, be it ethics, art or 'world outlook'. (Althusser, 1977:232)

Althusser went on to argue that any theory that suggested that ideology would not be a necessary component in even a socialist society is both utopian and ideological.

The eternal nature and necessity of ideology is an

assertion made by Althusser. It is stated by him as an unsurpassable fact of human society. This conclusion results from his attempt to integrate the "science" of psychoanalysis into the Marxist problematic. For Althusser, the scientific object which psychoanalysis studies is the unconscious. His theory of ideology attempts to situate the unconscious within Marxism's analysis of the mode of production.

This integration between psychoanalysis and Marxism is not formally stated by Althusser as the project he has set himself. Instead, he attempts to develop a theory of ideology which is based upon a notion of the relationship between the unconscious and the conscious ego:

> If eternal means, not transcendant to all (temporal) history, but omnipresent, trans-historical and therefore immutable in form throughout the extent of history, I shall adopt Freud's expression word for word, and write ideology is eternal, exactly like the unconscious. And I add that I find this comparison theoretically justified by the fact that the eternity of the unconscious is not unrelated to the eternity of ideology in general. (Althusser, 1971:161)

In this manner Althusser attempts to ground his assertions concerning the nature of ideology upon Freud's discovery of the unconscious.

In an earlier essay on Lacan's contribution to psychoanalysis, Althusser had suggested that the secret underlying the functioning of ideology (in terms of recognition and misrecognition) is to be found in Freud's discovery of the relationship between the conscious ego and the

unconscious:

> In turn, Freud has discovered for us that the real subject, the individual in his unique, essence, has not the form of an ego, centered on the 'ego', on 'consciousness' or on 'existence' -- whether this is the existence of the for-itself, of the body-proper or of 'behavior' -- that the human subject is de-centered, constituted by a structure which has no 'centre' either, except in the imaginary misrecognition of the 'ego', i.e. in the ideological formations in which it 'recognizes' itself.
>
> It must be clear that this has opened up one of the ways which may perhaps lead us someday to a better understanding of this structure of misrecognition, which is of particular concern for all investigations into ideology. (Althusser, 1971:218-219)

Of central importance here is Althusser's attempt to explain the ideological processes of recognition and misrecognition in terms of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. He does this by means of Lacan's linguistic interpretation of Freud, which avoids some of the epistemological problems in Freud's own formulation. For example, the linguistic interpretation avoids getting bogged down in controversies over the validity of Freud's instinctual or energy theories.

Althusser's theory of ideology is dependent upon a conception of the universal nature of individual consciousness, which I would argue is an ontological conception. His theory of ideology makes no sense without this conception. Although Althusser attempts to justify his own conception of ideological subjects by means of connecting his theory of ideology with Freud's theory of the unconscious, this seems to me not to be a sufficient explanation. His use of psychoanalysis as a means of legitimating his own conception of

the nature of consciousness seems arbitrary. He justifies his own assertion of the eternal nature of ideology by comparing it with Freud's assertion as to the eternal nature of the unconscious. He attempts to justify an ontological conception in terms of translating this very conception into a scientific concept: namely the unconscious as the scientific object of psychoanalysis.

In his attempt to account for the eternal nature of ideology, Althusser has not been explicit in his integration of the Freudian unconscious into Marxism. This integration is not stated in clear terms. Instead, he suggests that the secret for the understanding of ideology may be found in Freud's discovery of the unconscious. This is a rather cautious formulation of the solution to a fundamental theoretic problem. Althusser is nowhere near as cautious when he asserts the eternal nature od ideology. As to the validity of this assertion, he is certain.

According to Althusser, the ego (through the process of identification) accounts for the recognition and misrecognition by ideological subjects. This ego is, itself, not the true subject, or "centre," of human existence. Behind the temporal and historical development of the ego, there exists the unconscious, which is eternal. Accordingly, the false and fragmentary Being of the ego is dependent, and arises out of, the trans-historical Being of the unconscious. My argument here is that in Althusser's formulation,

the conception of the unconscious takes the form of an eternal essence, or Being, outside of history. It is this formulation which constitutes the ontological nature of his conception of individual consciousness and the ideological subject.

There is a sense of resignation and despair contained in this formulation. On one hand, Althusser formulates ideology as an eternal and integral aspect of human nature which can not be surpassed. On the other hand, he wants to cling to the distinction between ideology and science. For him, science is subjectless and consequently free from ideological distortion. This is a difficult position to justify and sustain.

The separation between ideology and science, which Althusser asserts, is dependent upon two ontological conceptions: the eternal nature of ideology as the human condition and the trans-historic nature of science as free from ideological distortion and personal interest. This split of social Being into the Being of ideology and the Being of science is a difficult position to maintain. Consider the following remark by Althusser: "It is necessary to be outside ideology, i.e. in scientific knowledge, to be able to say: I am in ideology..." (Althusser, 1971:175) This formulation asserts the separation between science and ideology as distinguished by science as knowledge and ideology as subjective interest.

Accordingly, only science can recognize the existence of ideology in the world. The individual scientist is in ideology when he or she is not engaged in scientific practice. Presumably, when involved in scientific investigation, the scientist is free from ideological distortion. However, Althusser is unable to explain how this freedom from distortion is possible if individuals are by nature ideological subjects. He asserts the separation between the Being of science and the Being of ideology without demonstrating the possibility of this very separation.

Conclusion

Both Althusser and Sartre have attempted to grasp the concrete reality of everyday life in contemporary capitalist society. Althusser has formulated the problem of everyday life in terms of the problematic of ideology, while Sartre has formulated his conception of everyday life in terms of his theory of the "project." Both authors begin with the analysis of the concrete and end up analyzing this concrete praxis in terms of a trans-historical category of Being. I have argued that Sartre's conception of "freedom" and Althusser's conception of the "unconscious" are both ontological categories. In both cases, historical practice is explained in terms of universal categories of analysis.

Both Sartre and Althusser have attempted to analyze the concrete practices of daily life. In doing so, both

authors have attempted to integrate the theoretic perspectives of psychoanalysis and sociology within Marxism. From differing points of view, they have each stressed the importance of individual consciousness and social practice. They have also articulated the importance of analyzing social institutions such as the family, education, and workplace. In addition, they have stressed the importance of childhood and the processes of institutional socialization.

The theoretic perspectives of psychoanalysis and sociology provide Sartre and Althusser with conceptual instruments for the comprehension of everyday life. This is most evident in their attempt to analyze both individual consciousness and collective practice. Both authors have attempted to extend the domain of Marxism to include an analysis of individual consciousness. The integration of the theoretic perspectives of psychoanalysis and sociology within Marxism is an attempt to formulate a theory of socialization in relation to the Marxist problematic of class struggle.

In terms of this theoretic integration of psychoanalysis and sociology within Marxism, Sartre has been more explicit than has Althusser. For example, Sartre tells the reader that the perspectives of psychoanalysis and sociology can be helpful in terms of developing a theoretical understanding of individual biography and the influence of social institutions upon consciousness and praxis. This formulation

is unambiguous. Its eclecticism is at least clearly stated. What unifies his approach is a proposed dialectical method.

In contrast, Althusser's own eclecticism is not clearly stated. He begins with the problematic of reproduction and then introduces a theory of ideology which is based upon a theory of institutional socialization and a conception of personality development. He attempts to build upon the Marxist theory of ideology, but in doing so he introduce conceptions which are borrowed from sociology and psychoanalysis. These borrowings are not explicitly formulated for the reader. Instead, Althusser's conclusions are stated in terms of the unity of scientific knowledge. The principle of integration is his conception of science. For Althusser, both the "mode of production" and the "unconscious" are, properly speaking, objects of scientific knowledge.

As I have argued, after Sartre and Althusser have constituted the concrete reality of everyday life in relation to the problematic of class struggle and class consciousness, they then proceed to explain both consciousness and praxis in terms of ontological conceptions of human existence. Both Sartre's conception of "freedom" and Althusser's formulation of the "unconscious" are eternal categories of analysis. According to these formulations, neither "freedom" nor the "unconscious" are themselves transformed by historical conditions. Individual

consciousness and praxis are shaped by specific historical conditions but not the eternal nature of either "freedom" or the "unconscious." Consequently, historical practice is always, in part, determined by the eternal nature of human existence.

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Chapter Four

EVERYDAY LIFE AS SUBJECTIVITY

Introduction

E. P. Thompson and Harry Braverman have developed concrete analyses of everyday life in capitalist society. Thompson's analysis is set forth in the context of his historical studies of the English working class. Braverman's analysis is formulated in his study of monopoly capitalism.

Thompson's fundamental concern is with the development of working class culture and community life. He analyzes the historical development of the English working class in relation to the rise of industrial capitalism. He focuses upon the changes which have taken place within the work process and within communal life. His conception of everyday life makes reference to the lived experience of working class people in the context of historical change.

Thompson is fundamentally concerned with the development of class consciousness and working class institutions. His concept of class consciousness focuses primarily upon the day to day struggles of working class people. He does not attempt to develop a theory of the grand revolution. Instead, his emphasis is upon common values and a sense of community.

Braverman's central concern is with the division of

labor in capitalist society. He analyzes both work and communal life. His focus upon community and everday life occurs in the context of his analysis of the universalization of the market relations. According to this analysis, the fragmentation of work tasks and the universalization of commodity relations create the condition of total degradation.

Unlike Thompson, Braverman is not fundamentally concerned with the forms of working class resistance which take place in everyday life. Instead, he focuses upon the objective conditions of human degradation in monopoly capitalist society. These objective conditions include both working life and social relations external to the workplace.

Underlying Thompson's theory of everyday life is a conception of self-formative activity. According to this conception, men and women are both the subjects and objects of history. This conception of self-formative activity is an ontological conception of human nature. According to Thompson, self-formative activity is not conditioned by the historical situation of the working class.

Thompson's declaration that men and women are both the subjects and objects of history is a formal assertion. This assertion allows him to formulate and emphasize the subjectivity of the working class as an eternal presence. He does not deny objective historical conditions. Instead, he describes and analyzes the capitalist mode of production

in addition to asserting the eternal nature of human subjectivity. The subjective and objective historical elements of his theory are not integrated. They rather exist in an ambiguous relationship.

Braverman's conception of subjectivity differs from that of Thompson. Braverman does not formulate a theoretic conception of working class resistance in everyday life against capitalism. Instead, he offers a theory of total domination. As a result of this formulation, the only possible form of resistance is the grand refusal. Braverman's conception of domination and the grand refusal is dependent upon an ontological conception of human subjectivity, which necessitates revolt against this very domination.

Everyday Life as Working Class Culture

The Making of the English Working Class by E. P. Thompson has become one of the modern classics in Marxist social analysis. My particular interest in Thompson's work is in terms of his formulation of the subjectivity of the working class in relation to the development of industrial capitalism. For the most part, this formulation takes the form of a discussion of the development of working class culture. The concept of working class culture is set forth by Thompson as an historical process.

Although Thompson's work can be understood as an empirical study in "social history," my analysis attempts

to situate his empirical descriptions within the context of a theoretic formulation. I treat Thompson as a social theorist who attempts to illustrate the complexity of historical phenomena in relation to basic theoretic conceptions. Concepts such as social class, mode of production, and working class culture are central to his discussion. They serve to organize and make intelligible a wide range of historical facts and events, which would otherwise be little more than a collection of details and accounts.

Thompson attempts to describe the emergence of the English working class in relation to the emergence of the capitalist mode of production. In doing so, he formulates the concept of class in terms of both common interests and opposition to opposing interests:

> And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves. and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs. The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born -- or enter involuntarily. (Thompson, 1963:9)

The concept of "interest" contained in this formulation is somewhat problematic. On one hand, interest is defined by objective relationships such as the existing relations of production. In capitalist society these relations involve the economic exploitation of the working class. On the other hand, Thompson formulates the concept of interest in terms of experience, feelings, and the articulation of class

consciousness.

The concept of class expressed by Thompson contains an internal analytic distinction. Class is determined both by existing relations of production and by the existence of class consciousness. This formulation parallels the distinction within classical Marxism between "class in itself" and "class for itself." It is still necessary to attempt to understand what Thompson means by "class consciousness" and the relationship he develops between class consciousness and "the relations of production."

I will argue that when he speaks of class experience and the articulation of interests, Thompson is not formulating a psychological notion of either experience or interest. Interest is not a designation of the concept of motivation. At the same time, Thompson does insist that class consciousness is a lived experience. It is lived as a collective enterprise.

Thompson's formulation of class consciousness is less abstract than the Marxist notion of a "class for itself." It makes reference to concrete experiences, social institutions, and cultural traditions:

> Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms.(Thompson, 1963:10)

This definition embodies a series of criteria defining the social Being of a class. However, Thompson's purpose here

is not merely to set forth criteria for the definition of class consciousness. His intention is rather to stress that a class is never a thing, but an ongoing relationship. This relationship is lived by the members of a class.

In his analysis of the formation of the English working class, Thompson interprets events and organizational developments in terms of a theoretic problem. His interpretations are formulated in relation to his conception of class consciousness and political struggle. This struggle is understood in terms of the existence of social classes as "class struggle." In other words, the concept of social class is never merely an empirical description, but always presupposes conflict and struggle:

> Nevertheless, when every caution has been made, the outstanding fact of the period between 1790 and 1830 is the formation of the "working class". This is revealed, first in the growth of class-consciousness: the consciousness of an identity of interests as between all these diverse groups of working people and as against the interests of other classes. And second, in the growth of corresponding forms of political and industrial organization. By 1832 there were strongly-based and self-conscious working-class institutions -- trade unions, friendly societies, educational and religious movements, political organizations, periodicals -- working-class intellectual traditions, working-class community-patterns, and a working-class structure of feeling. (Thompson, 1963:194)

The connections elaborated here are not simply available as fact. The connections made by Thompson result from the careful investigation and interpretation of an historical situation in the process of development. These various

elements are intelligible within his analysis. It is the analysis which draws them out and defines their contours and significance.

Thompson's theoretic formulations sometimes lack systematic coherence. Concepts are set forth without being clearly defined. Illustrations of these concepts are then offered to the reader as demonstrations of the validity of the concepts. The relationship between the analysis undertaken and the historical process analyzed is not made clear for the reader.

For example, Thompson introduces the concept of the "sub-political" without clearly defining this term. This is a significant limitation, since this particular concept is central to his entire argument. The sub-political is intelligible in relation to his formulation of the concept of "class consciousness." Both of these concepts are constituted in his analysis as a means of making sense of a complex historical process.

The relationship between the sub-political and class consciousness is not clearly developed by Thompson. Instead, this relationship is presupposed in his analysis. The sub-political is formulated in relationship to the development of class consciousness. It is a moment in the history of this development. In his analysis, the concept of the sub-political is set forth as an attempt to provide origins for the development of a higher stage of political consciousness

to the English working class.

The sub-political is formulated as both the development of a sense of community (defined by collective values and a way of life) and as an unfulfilled potential for political action. These practices and events offer a resistance against the emerging order of capitalist society, but lack a developed political consciousness. In Thompson's analysis the sub-political is expressed in two general areas of social practice:

> We may isolate two ways in which these "sub-political" traditions affect the early working-class movement: the phenomena of riot and of the mob, and the popular notions of an Englishman's "birthright." (Thompson, 1963:59)

On the one hand, sub-political practices express resistance against the emerging capitalist mode of production and market relations, and on the other hand, they appear as demands for democratic political rights.

Resistance against capitalist market relations often took the form of public demonstrations and riots. Thompson analyzes these forms of collective protest in terms of a resistance against the emergence of market relations:

> (The God-provided "laws" of supply and demand, whereby scarcity inevitably led to soaring prices, had by no means won acceptance in the popular mind, where older notions of face-to-face bargaining still persisted.) Any sharp rise in prices precipitated riot. (Thompson, 1963:63)

Referring to such riots Thompson remarks:

> It was legitimised by the assumptions of an older moral economy, which taught the immorality of any unfair method of forcing up the price of provisions

> by profiteering upon the necessities of the people. (Thompson, 1963:63)

These forms of resistance were grounded in the cultural patterns and values of pre-capitalist society. They were an attempt to reassert an older moral economy against the economy of the free market.

During the same period (from 1780 to 1800), political demands for the extension of democratic rights were expressed in popular protests. In part, these forms of protest expressed the popular ideology of the French Revolution. Jacobin ideas concerning the rights of citizens were publicly expressed through political pamphlets, public meetings, and through the activities of political organizations such as the London Correspondence Society. In this context, Thompson spends a good deal of time discussing the popularity of political writings such as The Rights of Man by Thomas Paine.

These political protests and "revolutionary ideas" did not for the most part express an opposition to the emergence of capitalist society. They can be more correctly understood as protests against the English aristocracy and the monarchy. Instead of rejecting the capitalist social order, they were demands for the democratic rights of citizens. They did not express antagonism against the existence of either private property or wage labor.

Neither the food riots nor the political demands for the extension of democratic rights discussed by Thompson

were expressions of the class consciousness of the English working class. The food riots arose out of an earlier form of life and do not express the interests of the industrial working class. The political protests express the demands of citizens, which bridge class distinctions. In both of these forms of the sub-political, the class conscious interests of the working class are marginal to the collective social practices analyzed. A separation between economic and political protest is also demonstrated in these two versions of sub-political practice.

The concept of the sub-political helps Thompson account for the emergence of class consciousness and a distinctive working class culture. In this context, class consciousness is not merely an abstract conception of the objectively determined interests of an exploited class. In his analysis, class consciousness and class interests are expressed in the everyday lives of workers and their families. They are expressed through commonly held values, social institutions, and modes of interaction. It is still necessary to account for the common thread uniting the multiplicity of events, circumstances, and practices which constitute working class culture.

The presupposition in Thompson's formulation of working class culture and class consciousness is both in terms of an opposition and a principle of unity. The English working class develops as a class in opposition to the

capitalist class. At the same time, its own unity and internal logic is based upon common interests and a common situation:

> There were, indeed, two cultures in England. In the heartlands of the Industrial Revolution, new institutions, new attitudes, new community-patterns, were emerging which were, consciously and unconsciously, designed to resist the intrusion of the magistrate, the employer, the parson or the spy. The new solidarity was not only a solidarity with; it was also a solidarity against. (Thompson, 1963:487)

Thompson is insistent that the concept of social class be understood as co-determined by both unity and opposition.

Thompson's discussion of class consciousness and working class culture often appears to be a description of facts and events. At least this is one possible interpretation of his discussion. Given this reading of at least parts of his text, it is still necessary to account for the translation of such facts and events into theoretic conceptions such as class consciousness, the sub-political, and working class culture. It is necessary to account for the analytic practice involved in the formulation of these concepts.

These concepts are not determined by the events they attempt to explain. These concepts are formulated in relation to a project. This project is the intelligibility of the historic process of the development of capitalist society. Only within the context of this project (as a political and scientific enterprise) can any particular study make sense. The intention expressed in Thompson's

various historical studies is, in the most general sense, an attempt to make sense of historical events.

Thompson attempts to understand the variety of social and poltical factors involved in the transformation resulting in the development of the capitalist mode of production. His historical studies attempt to go beyond the formal character of concepts such as "forces of production" and "relations of production." He does not attempt to deny the validity of such concepts; instead, he attempts to develop areas of analysis which further enrich these fundamental concepts. In doing so, he directs a shift in emphasis from a narrow conception of the productive process to a conception which is broader in focus.

In discussing the historical transformation of capitalist society, Thompson emphasizes the ways in which the everyday lives of working people are transformed by and, in turn, transform the social totality:

> ...there has never been any single type of "the transition". The stress of the transition falls upon the whole culture: resistance to change and assent to change arise from the whole culture. And this culture includes the systems of power, property-relations, religious institutions, etc., inattention to which merely flattens phenomena and trivializes analysis. (Thompson, 1967:80)

Here, Thompson attempts to articulate the variety of social relationships involved in the historical transformation. His emphasis is not merely upon the emergence of patterns of communal life external to the workplace. He attempts to

elaborate the historical transitions taking place in both of these domains. In his analysis, work and everyday life are in no sense separable.

Thompson's study of the relationship between the development of industrial capitalism and changing conceptions of time is a good exaample of his attempt to bridge the apparent separation between work and communal life. The emerging methods of production required a drastic shift in time-sense and work discipline:

> If the transition to mature industrial society entailed a severe restricting of working habits -- new discipline, new incentives, and a new human nature, upon which these incentives could bite effectively -- how far is this related to changes in the inward notation of time? (Thompson, 1967:57)

The time-sense required by the capitalist organization of production could not merely be restricted to the workplace. Instead, such changes occurred throughout the social Being of the working class:

> What we are examining here are not only changes in manufacturing technique which demand greater synchronization of labour and a greater exactitude in time-routines in <u>any</u> soicety; but also these changes as they were lived through in the society of nascent industrial capitalism. (Thompson, 1967:80)

It is clear from his discussion that changes within working class culture (values, customs, and behavior) were directly related to the internal logic of capitalist development. The new economic system required labor to be performed in terms of a particular organization of tasks and a particular division of labor. This economic system

needed workers who possessed specific psychological characteristics. These workers had to be able to perform efficiently within the organization of factory production. Of central importance was the synchronization of work tasks.

In Thompson's discussion, changes within working class culture are not simply determined by the requirements of the capitalist mode of production. Instead, a complicated interaction unfolds within the relationship between the organization of production and this existing culture. Although Thompson is somewhat ambiguous on this point, he analyzes both the adaptation and resistance to the emergence of industrial capitalism. On one hand, the work force required by capital is produced. At the same time, this work force is never merely a passive object, a mere factor in production like the machine. It both adapts and resists this very adaptation.

Thompson describes the internalization of the values and norms required of workers by industrial capitalism. This discussion takes the form of both processes of institutional socialization and general shifts within culture. For example, he discusses the socialization function of schools and religious teachings in relation to the development of work discipline. From the early years of childhood, children internalized habits and values necessary for their future performance as workers.

In addition to the socialization functions of

institutions, changes in values and behavior were experienced throughout the society. According to Thompson, changes were brought about within institutional settings such as schools, churches, and the workplace. For the most part, workers did develop work patterns and discipline in line with factory work. At the same time, Thompson argues that the cultural changes brought about could not be fully explained by institutional socialization practices alone.

According to Thompson, the cultural changes brought about were all pervasive:

> In all these ways -- by the division of labour; the supervision of labour; fines; bells and clocks; money incentives; preachings and schoolings; the suppression of fairs and sports -- new labour habits were formed, and a new time-discipline was imposed. (Thompson, 1967:90)

Transformations within working class culture occurred within a context of general repression. Values of spontaneity were replaced by time and work discipline. Such changes occurred throughout society and, in turn, brought about new standards within the workplace and community. However, this cultural repression did not take place without a measure of working class resistance.

This resistance was most visible in struggles between capital and labor over issues such as wages and the length of the working day:

> The onslaught, from so many directions, upon the people's old working habits was not, of course, uncontested. In the first stage, we find simple

> resistance. But in the next stage, as the new time-discipline is imposed, so the workers begin to fight, not against time, but about it...The first generation of factory workers were taught by their masters the importance of time, the second generation formed their short-time committees in the ten-hour movement; the third generation struck for overtime or time-and-a-half. They had accepted the categories of their employers and learned to fight back within them. They had learned their lesson that time is money, only too well. (Thompson, 1967:85-86)

According to this description, workers came to accept the logic of industrial production and the capitalist organization of work. As they adapted their own lives to this new rationality, they learned how to resist it on its own terms. They adopted a means and strategy of resistance. Admittedly, this resistance is only, in part, an opposition, since it grants legitimacy to the existing relations of production and opposes exploitation by struggling over the degree of exploitation they were willing to tolerate.

Thompson discusses another way in which resistance took place. Granting that workers had internalized the Puritan ethic and character structure, he then argues that they were able to appropriate these cultural transitions for their own practice of class conscious resistance:

> The Puritan character-structure, moreover, was not something which could be confiscated solely for the service of the Church and the employer. Once the transference was made, the same dedication which enable men to serve in these roles, will be seen in the men who officered trade unions and Hampden Clubs, educated themselves far into the night and had the responsibility to conduct working-class organizations. (Thompson, 1963:380)

According to this line of thinking, the possibility for the

political organization of the working class was to be found within cultural transformations of a predominantly repressive nature. It was within these very transformations that the formation of an organized opposition arose.

Although he does not state it in precise theoretic terms, his formulation of resistance may be understood as the central tenet of his substantive argument. It is in the concerete process of historical transformation that Thompson finds the basis for his theoretic conclusions. It is by analyzing concrete events and circumstances that his theoretic conceptions appear as plausible. The unity of these conceptions is to be found in the way in which they help to explain the concrete historical process. In this context, his empirical studies serve as illustrations for his much wider ranging conclusions.

The forms of working class resistance were not restricted to trade unionism. Specific demands and struggles arose out of common conditions and situations. Consequently, Thompson attempts to explain working class political practice as originating in broader historical developments:

> But by the early years of the 19th century it is possible to say that collectivist values are dominant in many industrial communities; there is a definite moral code, with sanctions against the blackleg, the "tools" of the employer or the unneighborly, and with an intolerance towards the eccentric individualist. Collective values are consciously held and are propagated in political theory, trade union ceremonial, moral rhetoric. It is, indeed, this collective self-consciousness, with its corresponding theory, institutions,

> discipline and community values which distinguishes the 19th century working class from the 18th century mob. (Thompson, 1963:424)

In Thompson's formulation, the unity of the conscious political practice of the working class arises out of developments in working class culture and community.

This political practice is directly linked with transformations of norms and values. It is dependent upon a new moral order within the working class. Newly established traditions and beliefs are expressed throughout the community and have the power of negative and positive sanctions. It is within this cultural setting that forms of political organization develop.

In Thompson's analysis, a great deal of importance is placed upon the day to day experiences of working class people. It is not that cultural developments determine political organization and political practice. Instead, for Thompson, both working class culture and working class political organization arise out of common experiences:

> Friendly societies did not "proceed from" an idea; both the ideas and the institutions arose in response to certain common experiences. But the distinction is important. In the simple cellular structure of the friendly society, with its workaday ethos of mutual aid, we can see many features which were reproduced in more sophisticated and complex forms in trade unions, co-operatives, Hampden Clubs, Political Unions, and Chartists lodges. (Thompson, 1963:432)

Thompson is emphatic as to the relationship between the concrete experience of the working class and the process of historical change.

Such change arises out of the collective conditions of a class. These conditions are not merely formal categories within an historical analysis. They are conditions lived and transformed by day to day practices. For Thompson, men and women are the subjects of history. They make history not as individuals but as members of a collectivity. Historical transformation results from the collective practices of a class within given conditions and circumstances.

Thompson's major problem is the difficulty of uniting, in theoretic terms, the relationship between historical transformation and the everyday lives of working class men and women. This difficulty is manifested when he attempts to formulate categories which will express these two levels of analysis. It is not merely that concrete experiences determine historical transformation. Nor can it be true that concrete experiences are merely determined by historical forces. The unity between these levels is to be found in the central categories of his analysis.

For example, his formulation of the relationship between "working class culture" and "class consciousness" can be best understood as an attempt to account for both the experiences of everyday life and larger historical structures. The objective conditions of class interest (exploitation and alienation) are not separable from the subjective Being of class consciousness manifested in social relations, behavior, and collective values. These two

points of focus constitute an attempt to formulate the totality of the Being of a class. The problem Thompson is faced with is how to grasp not only some aspect, or series of aspects, but how to grasp the historical process as a whole.

The historical process he attempts to grasp is united by the existence of antagonistic social classes. This condition, and the forms of struggle arising out of it, define the overall picture for the social theorist:

> Thus working men formed a picture of the organization of society, out of their own experience and with the help of their hard-won and erratic education, which was above all a political picture. They learned to see their own lives as part of a general history of conflict between the loosely defined "industrious classes" on the one hand, and the unreformed House of Commons on the other. From 1830 onwards a more clearly-defined class consciousness, in the customary Marxist sense, was maturing, in which working people were aware of continuing both old and new battles on their own. (Thompson, 1963:712)

For Thompson's, or any other Marxist analysis, class struggle is the principle which unites the historical process.

The principle of class struggle is never, in itself, a sufficient explanation of historical change. Class struggle is an abstract formulation of class relations. This concept presupposes specific forms of active resistance in addition to the objective relations of economic exploitation. The theoretic formulation of these objective conditions provide the logic of class interest They serve to clarify a concrete political relationship.

Thompson does not fail to go beyond the formal conception of class struggle. He attempts to elaborate concrete forms of resistance against the hegemony of capital within both industry and communal life. In fact, there is no real distinction in his analysis between work and community. His analysis moves back and forth across the analytic distinction between these two domains of working class experience.

Thompson's analysis can be criticized on the grounds that he exaggerates the quality and degree of working class resistance against capitalist society. In his constant emphasis upon forms of resistance, he often fails to take into account forms of working class adaptation to the capitalist mode of production. The working class he analyzes demonstrated both a capacity for resistance and adaptation. Their revolutionary potential was counterbalanced by conservative tendencies to adapt to the new mode of production and way of life. Consequently, the reader is left with a somewhat romantic conception of the English working class.

Thompson's analysis attempts to formulate the development of capitalist society as a continuing relationship between domination and resistance. Even when there is no apparent political struggle taking place, Thompson argues that some form of working class resistance is, in fact, going on. Given this particular emphasis, the image of politics expressed is not one which is dependent upon

either acute crisis or the grand revolution. It rather focuses upon the day to day struggles of working people. For Thompson, these day to day struggles are the real substance of political practice.

Given this conception of politics, Thompson is able to consider a wide range of events and practices as expressions of class consciousness. For example, the activities of working class organizations such as friendly societies and trade unions express working class resistance, along with more militant forms of political contestation such as Luddism. The broadness of Thompson's conception of politics allows him to include many forms of political practice which a more restricted conception would force him to exclude. The problem he is ultimately faced with is that of defining realistic boundaries for political practice. Since this has not been a central concern for Thompson, he has not been very rigorous in the formulation of such boundaries. Although he does make the distinction between the "sub-political" and a political practice expressing working class consciousness, the criteria for making this distinction is never clearly defined.

Of central importance in Thompson's theoretic formulation is the concept of experience. A certain amount of ambiguity results from his use of this term. In his analysis, experience is both a theoretic concept and a common sense notion. It is theoretic in the sense that experience

designates a moment of mediation; it is a common sense notion in the sense that the reader is forced to reflect upon the specific meaning of this concept. The reader knows what the common sense meaning of experience implies, but at the same time he or she is aware that Thompson means more than this.

For Thompson, the everyday experiences of men and women both result from and, in turn, bring about historical change. In accordance with this forumlation, working class people are both the subjects and objects of history. They both make and are made by the history they live:

> What we have found out (in my view) lies within a missing term: "human experience."...Men and women also return as subjects, within this term -- not as autonomous subjects, "free individuals", but as persons experiencing their determinate productive situations and relationships, as needs and interests and as antagonisms, and then "handling" this experience within consciousness and their culture... (Thompson, 1978:164)

This formulation of experience serves to unite large historical structures with concrete everyday practices. The concept of experience can be understood as the necessary mediation between history and political practice.

It is possible to interpret the concept of experience as a formulation of individual psychology. However, the overall focus of Thompson's argument should persuade the reader that such an interpretation is outside the scope of his investigation. He is, after all, interested in the making of a class. His conception of class is clearly not a

mere collection of individuals occupying a similar position in society. His interest is rather with the relationship of unity within, and opposition between, antagonistic social classes.

The ambiguity concerning the concept of experience results from the fact that Thompson does not sufficiently define this term for the reader. Experience is used almost metaphorically as a means of making reference to the subjectivity of the working class. Given the focus of his enterprise of making the historical process of the development of industrial capitalism intelligible, a more rigorous formulation of theoretic concepts would have greatly assisted this project. A greater theoretic clarity would save the reader from having to complete, or fill in, incomplete formulations.

Everyday Life as Degradation

Unlike E. P. Thompson, Harry Braverman expresses no particular interest in community, working class culture, or experience. These categories are not central to his analysis. Instead, he focuses upon the division of labor and the organization of the capitalist mode of production. In accordance with this line of reasoning, particular attention is paid to changes within the organization of work, the division of tasks, and the separation between "conception" and "execution."

This particular approach takes on the appearance of one-sidedness. The reader is presented with the objective conditions of class relations within the capitalist mode of production. No particular attention is directed toward the development of working class consciousness; in fact, the notion of working class consciousness is entirely ignored. In Classical Marxist terms, Braverman analyzes the conditions determining "class in itself and not "class for itself."

In the introduction to Labor and Monopoly Capital, Braverman offers the reader a conception of class consciousness. This formulation is for the most part a formal definition:

> Class consciousness is that state of social cohesion reflected in the understanding and activities of a class or a portion of a class. Its absolute expression is a pervasive and durable attitude on the part of a class toward its position in society. Its long-term relative expression is found in the slowly changing traditions, experiences, education, and organization of the class. Its short-term relative expression is a dynamic complex of moods and sentiments affected by circumstances and changing with them, sometimes, in periods of stress and conflict, almost from day to day...Thus a class cannot exist in society without in some degree manifesting a consciousness of itself as a group with common problems, interests, and prospects -- although this manifestation may for long periods be weak, confused, and subject to manipulation by other classes. (Braverman, 1974:29-30)

The development of this conception of class consciousness would seem to be a necessary part of the analysis of the development of monopoly capitalism. However, Braverman does

not pursue this dimension of social analysis. He defines class consciousness and then moves on to the elaboration of the objective conditions determining class relations.

Braverman offers the reader both a description and an analysis of the development of the capitalist mode of production. It is the structure of this mode of production which is the object of his analysis. His central concern is with the ways in which this particular structure determines social relations. These social relations are, in the Marxist sense, equivalent to the relations of production. They are class relations.

Braverman begins his analysis on a quite abstract level. He begins with the analytic distinction between conception and execution:

> The unity of conception and execution may be dissolved. The conception must still precede and govern execution, but the idea as conceived by one may be executed by another. The driving force of labor remains human consciousness, but the unity between the two may be broken in the individual and reasserted in the group, the workshop, the community, the society as a whole. (Braverman, 1974:50-51)

This formulation attempts to articulate historically specific conditions in terms of social relations. In setting forth the distinction between conception and execution, Braverman attempts to make the specific characteristics of the capitalist mode of production intelligible to the reader.

In his discussion of the development of capitalism,

Braverman formulates the relationship between conception and execution in terms of a separation. The unity of these moments of a total process are split off and disjointed. From a separation between conception and execution within the labor process, there occurs a more fundamental separation between consciousness and social practice. For Braverman, this separation occurs not only within the organization of the work process, but throughout society as a whole. It includes relations within community, the family, and everyday life.

Braverman attempts to concretize the abstract level of his formulation by making reference to the distinction between the "social division of labor" and the "detailed division of labor," which had originally been formulated by Marx in volume one of Capital:

> The division of labor in society is characteristic of all known societies; the division of labor in the workshop is the special product of capitalist society. The social division of labor divides society among occupations, each adequate to a branch of production; the detailed division of labor destroys occupations considered in this sense, and renders the worker inadequate to carry through any complete production process. (Braverman, 1974:72-73)

According to Braverman, the detailed division of labor is a specific instance of the separation between conception and execution. Under these conditions of production, the worker neither understands nor exercises control over his own labor. His activity takes place under the direction and

control of some Other.

If we follow the logic of this analysis, it is apparent that the detailed division of labor in capitalist society, in addition to altering the relationship between knowledge and the carrying out of tasks within the work place, determines a more general relationship between consciousness and social practice throughout the society. According to this reasoning, there is no fundamental separation between social relations within the organization of work and within the more general organization of community and society. Factors which determine the relationship between consciousness and social practice within the workplace gradually extend into all aspects of human relations.

The relationship between the division of labor within the production process and its influence upon social transformations within society as a whole is not formulated in terms of the sub-structure/super-structure dichotomy. Braverman might have formulated the problem in these terms, but he did not do so. Instead, he describes a process of transformation beginning with the detailed division of labor and extending throughout the entire society. The fragmentation of activity and the destruction of knowledge are not confined to the workplace. These transformations gradually radiate throughout society, engulfing the domains of family and interpersonal experience.

His central focus is still upon the relations of production and the division of labor. In these terms, he formulates the transformation of the work force as a transformation of society in general:

> Every step in the labor process is divorced, so far as possible, from special knowledge and training and reduced to simple labor...This might even be called the general law of the capitalist division of labor. It is not the sole force acting upon the organization of work, but it is certainly the most powerful and general. Its results, more or less advanced in every industry and occupation, give massive testimony to its validity. It shapes not only work, but populations as well, because over the long run it creates that mass of simple labor which is the primary feature of populations in developed capitalist countries. (Braverman, 1974:82-83)

In the preceding passage, I understand "populations" as being more than a mere collection of individuals. The notion of population always presupposes specific social institutions and concrete social relations. In this context, I understand Braverman's formulation as an attempt to articulate historical transformations influencing all aspects of social life.

Braverman's emphasis upon transformations within the work force does not, in itself, explain the ways in which capitalism transforms everyday life. The transformations taking place within the working population establish the framework for such explanations. At the same time, this framework allows him to continue his exploration of the capitalist mode of production. It allows him to move from an abstract formulation of the separation between conception

and execution toward the historical development of specific forms of the organization of labor. It allows him to move from the origins of the capitalist organization of work through scientific management and the organization of the modern corporation. He then arrives at monopoly capitalism as a specific form of the capitalist mode of production. It is at this point that the notion of everyday life within capitalist society takes on a concrete reality.

We have not yet arrived at this moment of intelligibility. Before discussing the way in which monopoly capitalism invents everyday life as we know it, we must first examine the developmental logic of the capitalist mode of production. It is by tracing the historical transformations within the mode of production that both monopoly capitalism and everyday life make sense. The logic of Braverman's exposition points toward this very development.

For Braverman, the capitalist management of production is not simply an empirical fact that arises at a certain point in history. Management is rather a principle of organization which becomes intelligibile if its underlying logic is examined:

> The capitalist, however, working with hired labor, which represents a cost for every nonproducing hour, in a setting of rapidly revolutionizing technology to which his own efforts perforce contributed, and goaded by the need to show a surplus and accumulate capital, brought into being a wholly new art of management, which even in its early manifestations was far more complete, self-conscious, painstaking, and calculating than anything that had gone before. (Braverman, 1974:65)

Of central interest here is the relationship between calculation and the production of profit. Within the capitalist mode of production, profit does not signify greed; it rather expresses the logic of accumulation. It is in this context that the management of the labor process and the division of labor entailed in this relationship are intelligible.

Management exists as a relationship of control. Within the capitalist organization of production, efficiency and the profit motive require the rationalization of activity. A prior condition for the rationalization and control of labor is the centralization of the labor process:

> Control without centralization of employment was, if not impossible, certainly very difficult, and so the precondition for management was the gathering of workers under a single roof. The first effect of such a move was to enforce upon the workers regular hours of work, in contrast to the self-imposed pace which included many interruptions, short days and holidays, and in general prevented a prolongation of the working day for the purpose of producing a surplus under then-existing technical conditions. (Braverman, 1974:65-66)

Of central concern in the logic of capitalist production is the production of surplus-value. Conditions such as control, rationalization, and centralization of production are necessary for the accumulation of capital and the production of profit.

Braverman's initial formulation of the separation between conception and execution loses some of its abstractness as he develops his conception of the capitalist mode of production. In the light of this conception, capitalism is

formulated as a particular type of social relationship. The continual fragmentation of the labor process is situated within the separation between conception and execution. This separation is set forth as the relationship between management and the control of alienated labor. The logic of these relationships is the accumulation of capital.

Further developments within the techniques of management and the organization of work (such as Taylorism and scientific management) do not alter the quality of these basic relationships. Such changes only serve to intensify the degree of control and exploitation. According to Braverman, the rationalization of the production process gradually extends to all forms of labor. The capitalist organization of work begins with productive labor (that labor producing surplus-value) and extends to the sphere of nonproductive labor. Here, nonproductive labor is formulated as necessary for the production of surplus-value, but not directly involved in this production. The distinction between blue collar and white collar work gradually fades as the degradation of labor comes to include office work as well as factory work:

> Thus, contrary to the past opinion of many that office work was unlike factory work in that its complexities rendered it more difficult to rationalize, it proved easier to do so once the volume of work grew large enough, and once a search for methods of rationalization was seriously undertaken. (Braverman, 1974:315)

The transitions within the capitalist mode of

production described here are still one-sided. They describe the rationalization of the labor process, but do not explain the rationalization of society as a whole. It is only through the examination of the development of corporate capitalism and the universalization of market relations that the domains of human experience and interaction external to the labor process appear as transparent. These relations are brought into focus when Braverman examines the transition from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism.

The transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism is defined both in terms of the centralization of capital within the newly emerging corporate structure and the extension of market relations. The extension of market relations involves the transformation of society into the universalization of commodity exchange:

> The first great integrated corporations, which began to appear in the United States in the 1880s and 1890s, were constructed on the basis of a new approach to the marketing problem, and it is not too much to say that after the assurance of basic engineering requirements it was this revolutionary marketing approach that served as the basis for the monopolistic corporation. The earlier pattern had been one of buying and selling through commission agents, wholesalers, and the like. The growing scope of the market, based upon improvements in transport and communications as well as upon the rapid increase in the size of cities created by the growth of industry, showed itself not only through increases in volume but also in geographical dispersion. The fundamental corporate innovation in this area was the national marketing organizations they established as part of their own structures, organizations which were soon to become international. (Braverman, 1974:261)

For Braverman, there is no autonomous domain of community or culture external to the labor process and market relations. These very market relations serve to unify all aspects of capitalist society.

In retrospect, Braverman reflects upon the gradual development of the capitalist mode of production and the ways in which this development transformed social relations, such as those of family and community:

> In this earliest stage of industrial capitalism, the role of the family remained central in the productive processes of society. While capitalism was preparing the destruction of that role, it had not yet penetrated into the daily life of the family and the community. (Braverman, 1974:272)

Within his analysis the transformations within such social relations are determined by changes within the capitalist mode of production. Such changes involve the separation between family and production and the dependence upon market relations for the satisfaction of human needs.

The dependence of the family upon market relations increased as capitalism expanded its productive power. The economic and social functioning of the family was transformed, as was its self-sufficiency:

> Before the present stage of capitalism, food processing was the province on the one side of the farm family, and on the other of the household. The role of industrial capital was minimal, except in transportation. But during the last hundred years industrial capital has thrust itself between farm and household, and appropriated all the processing functions of both, thus extending the commodity form to food in its semi-prepared or even fully prepared forms...As with food, so with clothing,

> shelter, household articles of all sorts: the range of commodity production extended itself rapidly. (Braverman, 1974:274-275)

Consequently, the ability to obtain the necessities of life was dependent upon the exchange of labor power for money to purchase commodities. Money became the universal mediation between production and consumption:

> It is only in its era of monopoly that the capitalist mode of production takes over the totality of individual, family, and social needs and, in subordinating them to the market, also reshapes them to serve the needs of capital. (Braverman, 1974: 271)

Capitalism not only produces, but reproduces market relations on an ever increasing scale.

As the separation between conception and execution within the detailed division of labor results in a diminution in skill and knowledge for workers, the universalization of market relations results in a similar loss of competence and independence:

> In the period of monopoly capitalism, the first step in the creation of the universal market is the conquest of all goods production by the commodity form, the second step is the conquest of an increasing range of services and their conversion into commodities, and the third step is a "product cycle" which invents new products and services, some of which become indispensable as the conditions of modern life change to destroy alternatives. (Braverman, 1974:281)

Along with the destruction of community and commonly held traditions, there occurs a dependence upon market relations and a simultaneous loss of competence on the level of mutual aid. This transition can be thought of as the expropriation

of self-reliance. The market now appears as all powerful and provides the means of satisfaction for all human needs.

The historical transformation resulting in the universalization of market relations and the establishment of monopoly capitalism as the unifying principle of social life involves more than a dependence upon commodity production and exchange. It involves a major restructuring of social relations. In addition to the provision of commodities, the market also provides human services which had once been an aspect of community life. These services are now provided and at a profit. Impersonal institutions now replace what were once personal relations. Medical care is as much a commodity as is an automobile.

The productive capacity of monopoly capitalism is accompanied by the destruction of old social relations and the establishment of new social relations. The class relations of monopoly capitalism involve the separation between conception and execution throughout all aspects of social life. The activity of labor is reduced to "mere activity." It is activity separate from purpose. Conception is the domain of capital, and execution is the domain of labor. The conclusion of Braverman's analysis is that degradation is all pervasive and not limited to the organization of work.

Braverman provides the reader with a detailed account of the degradation of everyday life in monopoly capitalist society. This degradation extends from the domain of work to

interpersonal and family relations. In fact, it appears to have no limits. It is based upon the logic of the capitalist mode of production. It is this mode of production which ultimately determines the quality of life and the meaning of experience.

Braverman presents the objective conditions of class relations. These conditions constitute the objective relations of class struggle in terms of the exploitation and alienation of the working class. He does not analyze "class struggle" and "exploitation" as they are lived or experienced. Instead, he presents only objective class relations. This is as true in his discussion of family and community life as it is in his discussion of the detailed division of labor.

Unlike E. P. Thompson, he does not formulate the bonds of culture and community as a necessary moment in the formation of a class. Nor does he concern himself with the ways in which the working class handle their exploitation and oppression. Braverman is not concerned in his analysis with concrete forms of working class resistance or with their organization as a class. Working class experience of the conditions of life in capitalist society is not a category central to his analysis.

In a response to his critics, written shortly before his death. Braverman attempts to defend the scope of his analysis and his exclusion of class consciousness:

> It seems to me that a fruitful discussion of the working class as a class conscious of and struggling in behalf of its own interests will begin to revive as two conditions begin to be satisfied: first, as a clear picture of the class in its present conditions of existence is formed by patient and realistic investigation; and second, as experience begins to accumulate of the sort which will teach us to better understand the state of mind and modes of struggle of this class. (Braverman, 1976:123)

In addition to asserting the necessity of understanding the objective conditions of class relations, Braverman goes on to argue for the importance of understanding class struggle as it develops. By experience, I understand him to mean not only class struggle as it is lived by the working class, but also the relationship between the development of class struggle and the theoretic work of Marxist intellectuals. According to his formulation, the separation between theory and practice will be surpassed by the development and intensification of class struggle.

According to Braverman's evaluation, monopoly capitalism has not been strongly opposed by a class conscious working class:

> ...while social conditions have been changing rapidly over the past half century, and the working class along with them, the class struggle has been in a state of relative quiescence in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan -- the countries of developed capitalism for which the analysis must be made. We are therefore lacking in concrete experience, for the most part, of the sort which will predominate in the new social conditions which characterize the epoch of monopoly capital -- although we do have some interesting indications from the sixties, of which the French events of 1968 are perhaps the most suggestive. (Braverman, 1976:123)

The reader can either agree or disagree with Braverman's conclusion as to the absence of class struggle over the last fifty years. Such judgments are dependent upon a theory of politics which allows a distinction to be made between class conscious struggle and relative quiescence. The presupposition behind this judgment is the analyst's ability to define instances of political struggle.

A distinction is made by Braverman between social practices which are instances of class struggle and those which are not. For example, he suggests that the events in France in May of 1968 could be understood as the expression of class struggle. Accordingly, we might conclude that a general strike is a sufficiently class conscious event to express the political consciousness of the working class against the capitalist mode of production. What is of interest here is Braverman's definition of class struggle, which determines the inclusion or exclusion of social practices as forms of political resistance.

Braverman is not systematic in his formulation of a political theory. Nor does he state in precise terms the criteria which his political assessments are based upon. What is clear is that his notion of politics differs from that of E. P. Thompson. For example, various types of working class resistance and organization which Thompson formulates as instances of class struggle are ignored by Braverman. Instead of seeing class struggle in various forms of working

class culture, community life, and social interaction, Braverman sees class struggle only in the mass strike or the seizure of state power.

Conclusion

E. P. Thompson's analysis of everyday life is situated within the development of industrial capitalism. He attempts to analyze working class life and social institutions in relation to the development of the capitalist mode of production. He emphasizes the everyday experiences of working class people and the development of class consciousness. These are his fundamental concerns.

In Thompson's analysis, the mode of production of capitalist society possesses a definite historical character. However, his discussion of everyday life is based upon an eternal conception of human subjectivity. He attempts to integrate the historical with the eternal by describing and analyzing the concrete practices of working class life. Underlying this analysis of the concrete is his ontological conception of self-formative activity. Both the historical character of the mode of production and his conception of the essence of human subjectivity appear in his analysis without ever being integrated.

According to Thompson, self-formative activity is not historically conditioned. This subjective factor of human agency is itself eternal. He attempts to unite this

conception with his historical analysis by offering the formal equation that men and women both make and are made by the history they live. They are both the subjects and objects of history.

Thompson's analysis of everyday life is based upon both historical and ontological conceptions of social life. These two divergent conceptions are formally united by means of stating their relationship in the form of an equation. The result of basing his analysis upon both ontological and historical grounds is that his conclusions concerning working class consciousness and everyday life appear as either arbitrary or contrived. His conclusions do not result from his historical analysis, but are rather determined by his ontological presuppositions as to the nature of human subjectivity.

Harry Braverman's analysis of everyday life is situated within the development of monopoly capitalism. His primary concerns focus upon the analysis of changing relations of production and the detailed division of labor. Of central theoretic concern is his analysis of the separation between conception and execution in the workplace and throughout all aspects of daily life. He offers the reader a detailed analysis of the mode of production of monopoly capitalist society.

Braverman's analysis of everyday life is based upon a theory of domination. Working class life is degraded and

fragmented. According to his analysis, working class men and women suffer from the alienation of capitalist society. They have lost control over both work and communal life. His analysis describes this loss of self-control and the transformation of men and women from subjects into mere objects of domination. According to him, this process results from the logic of capitalist accumulation.

Underlying Braverman's analysis is an eternal conception of human subjectivity. This conception of subjectivity is ontological rather than historical. According to Braverman, both work and community are degraded in capitalist society, but human subjectivity escapes this degradation. At some future period of crisis, this subjectivity will revolt against capitalist domination and reclaim self-control over work and community. For Braverman, this revolt is inevitable.

Like Thompson, Braverman's analysis is based upon both ontological and historical grounds. Braverman's concrete analysis of the mode of production under monopoly capitalism describes the historical process of capitalist control over workplace and community life. This analysis is absolute in its depiction of domination. Braverman does not analyze the concrete forms of resistance which take place within everyday life. Instead, he projects a future revolt against capitalist domination. His conception of the inevitability of the revolt against capitalist society is dependent upon his

ontological conception of human subjectivity.

Both Thompson and Braverman have developed analyses of everyday life in capitalist society. In each analysis, the historical character of the capitalist mode of production appears alongside of an ontological conception of human subjectivity. The historical and the ontological components of each analysis lack integration. In their analyses, Thompson and Braverman impose an ontological conception of human subjectivity upon their concrete historical analyses. Their conceptions of human subjectivity are not derived from their analysis of the mode of production, but precede the analysis. Consequently, their conclusions as to the subjectivity of the working class appear as arbitrary.

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Chapter Five

CONCLUSION: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF WESTERN MARXISM

This present study of Western Marxism versus Classical Marxism rests on two theoretical projects: the systematic interpretation of Western Marxism since World War II and its critique in terms of Classical Marxism. At each step, I have tried to keep in mind both projects, and I have tried to distinguish between the two projects as well as integrate them. Such an interplay of systematic interpretation and critique has yet to be offered for this notable current in present-day social theory. Combining analysis and critique of Western Marxism thus constitutes this work's potential significance for the field of sociology.

The concluding chapter displays analysis and critique in two sections. First I will pinpoint the shared grounds and the internal divergence of Western Marxism. Then I will discuss the changing historical context of Western Marxism. I will argue that the progressive role of Western Marxism (as a language of resistance) has been surpassed by the economic crisis of the 1970's and 1980's. I will argue that only a return to the historical perspective of Classical Marxism can make these new social conditions intelligible.

Western Marxism: Shared Grounds and Internal Divergence

I have attempted to show how the social theory of Western Marxism has abandoned the centrality of the mode of production. It has replaced the mode of production with the domain of culture and everyday life. The grounds for this substitution are articulated in terms of an ontological conception of language, consciousness and subjectivity. Everyday life has become an eternal category of human existence independent of social determination by the mode of production.

The shared grounds of the new theory should not be overstated. The six authors treated in the body of this work all express a shift of focus from mode of production to ontology. At the same time, I have shown that their formulations of the nature of late capitalism also express less homogeneous perspectives. What is true, in general, concerning their theoretical formulations is not universally true.

All of this work brings out divergence as well as commonality. In conclusion, I will begin by underlining internal divergence.

In one case, I would conclude that the abandonment of the mode of production for ontology is less extreme. I have in mind the work of Thompson and Braverman. There we find less of it than occurs in the work of Lefebvre and Habermas or Sartre and Althusser. Though both stress subjectivity, Thompson and Braverman develop an analysis of everyday life without completely losing sight of the mode of production. Braverman's analysis of the division of labor and Thompson's

analysis of working class culture are both concretely situated within the mode of production. For Thompson, working class culture arises in relation to the development of industrial capitalism. For Braverman, the degraded forms of work and social life develop in an internal connection with the universalization of market relations and the rise of monopoly capitalism.

In the case of Lefebvre and Habermas, the mode of production is essentially abandoned. The domain of language takes its place. In their formulations the mode of production of late capitalism is presupposed, but not treated as possessing central importance. This mode of production is ambiguously stated and then relegated to the status of a given historical fact. The reader is made aware that late capitalism is the historical period which is being analyzed. At the same time, a shift of focus has taken place from the mode of production to the quality of life.

This "quality of life" is theorized in terms of an autonomous domain of social Being. This ontological domain is not grounded within a determinant mode of production. Instead, the autonomy of everyday life and communication constitute the grounds for analysis. However, the imputed centrality of everyday life and communication still requires explanation. It is necessary to question what reasoning can explain this new beginning for the analysis of late capitalism.

Lefebvre and Habermas do not provide the reader with this reasoning. Instead, they make reference to a series of qualitative changes within social life. These include the development of consumerism, mass communication, mass education, and the extension of leisure activity. In their formulations, there is also a presupposition that economic scarcity and economic crises have somehow been abolished in the western capitalist countries. In other words, they presuppose relative economic stabilization. They presuppose that the arena for political struggle has shifted from class exploitation to that of cultural domination and psychological manipulation.

From these conclusions, Lefebvre and Habermas then formulate human need as the principle of emancipation. According to this formulation, the human potential for social and psychological emancipation is denied by the existing institutional order of late capitalism. The realization of Reason is prevented by the irrational organization of society. They also conclude that the subject of social emancipation is not the exploited working class, but rather the alienation of Being. This alienation is not that of Marx's "alienated labor," but rather that of the alienation of human essence. For Lefebvre, this alienation takes the form of our inability to grasp totality; for Habermas, it takes the form of distorted communication.

Like Lefebvre and Habermas, Sartre and Althusser also

deny that the working class is the subject of historical transformation. For each of these four authors, the analysis of class relations is relegated to secondary significance, being replaced by the critique of domination. The politics of everyday life replaces the politics of class struggle. Both Sartre and Althusser do formulate the existence of classes and class struggle. Yet this does not mean that the working class is the subject of history. Instead, for Sartre this subject takes the form of an ontological conception. Sartre posits human freedom as a timeless feature of human existence. In the final analysis, it is this freedom objectified in the praxis of men and women that brings about historical change.

For Althusser, there is no subject in history. The only subject for Althusser is the ideological subject who is, in fact, a false subject. According to his theory of ideology, men and women are manipulated by ideological apparatuses and misrecognize their true social position. Accordingly, ideology is both an aspect of class struggle and an eternal condition of human existence. The only feasible means of combating class ideology is through scientific discovery and the application of science to politics.

Both Sartre and Althusser analyze late capitalism by beginning with an ontological conception of the individual. This conception is external to actual class relations. Both

authors formulate a conception of the nature of consciousness, which is neither determined nor transformed by the historical mode of production. This consciousness is, instead, conceived of as eternal and trans-historical. Their formulations have moved from the analysis of the mode of production to the analysis of the nature of human consciousness.

A central contradiction within their formulations is the fact that while they formally state the existence of class struggle as central to the analysis of late capitalism, they constitute a conception of the nature of consciousness which is independent of the mode of production. It is from this ontological conception of the nature of consciousness that the analysis of everyday life proceeds.

In contrast to the other four authors, the starting point for Thompson and Braverman is the mode of production. On the descriptive level, both authors illustrate historical changes within the capitalist mode of production. These changes within the mode of production are formulated in relation to cultural and social transformations. These transformations within working class life are central to each author's overall analysis of capitalist society.

For Thompson, the relationship between work and working class community life is central. In his analysis, this relationship is never static, but always in the process of further development. The problematic which his analysis

addresses is the formulation of the working class. His discussion of this historical process involves both an historical description of events, institutions, and modes of social practice and interaction, and a theoretic conception of consciousness and self-formative activity.

Thompson constantly reminds the reader that the working class both makes itself and is made. For Thompson, the formative process of the social Being of the working class is never simply that the working class is formed by the mode of production. This class is both the subject and the object of history. We are told that it makes itself as much as it is made. The central mediation involved here is the lived experience of the working class as it both adapts to and resists the new conditions of daily life.

This is not so much a theoretic formulation as it is an insistence upon a conception of human agency in the process of historical transformation. It is this conception of subjectivity which is central to Thompson's analysis. His conception of self-formative activity is formulated in relation to a concrete mode of production. However, it is this conception of human subjectivity which is primary to his analysis; the mode of production is reduced to secondary significance, constituting the field for human action. In this context, his formulation of self-formative activity is very similar to Sartre's notion of the project. Both formulations presuppose an ontological conception of the essence

of the human subject.

Unlike Thompson, Braverman does not stress the importance of either self-formative activity or the mediating role of experience. Instead, he focuses upon the division of labor and the extension of market relations to include all aspects of human social life. For Braverman, both work and social life are degraded by the monopoly capitalist mode of production. Within his analysis, the working class is formulated as fundamentally determined by the rise of capitalism and by transformations within the mode of production.

Braverman's analysis of degradation presupposes a subject who is degraded. This subject is the working class. This underlying conception takes the form of a potential for emancipation from alienation and degraded life. The separation between "conception" and "execution" presupposes the possibility of their unification. This unification of conception and execution is prevented by the particular social organization of capitalist society, by the existing relations of production. The necessity of emancipation which Braverman offers the reader is grounded in a conception of human need. According to this conception, the working class will emancipate itself when its conditions of life become intolerable.

Underlying his conception of the working class as a dehumanized object, there is a conception of the working class as the human subject. It is this subject which

embodies the potential for emancipation. What is of central interest here is Braverman's formulation of subjectivity and the need for emancipation. According to Braverman, both work and social life are degraded, but the working class (although suffering from degradation) is not itself degraded. The human potential for emancipation lives on.

Although Thompson and Braverman ground their analysis of culture and everyday life within the capitalist mode of production, they also develop a conception of social class in terms of human essence. They formulate the working class as a social Being which is both exploited and dehumanized by existing relations of production. This class also possesses the potential for emancipation. Yet class struggle does not ground subjectivity. It's the other way around. According to their analysis, the human need for emancipation and self-formation is the subjective factor underlying class struggle. This subjectivity is itself eternal.

Here internal divergence gives way, once more, to shared grounds. These shared grounds center, of course, on the same tendency: to abandon the mode of production as the grounds of analysis. Although this tendency is expressed from divergent theoretical perspectives, its presence is evident as a central component throughout. Concretely, we can see these shared grounds in the realm of politics. The shared grounds stand out in contemporary political debate on the nature of late capitalism.

Here we see an emphasis on culture and everyday life. Or, in the terms used, working class culture and the politics of everyday life. According to this theory, the immediacy of everyday life has replaced the mediations of social class within the mode of production. Everyday life is constituted as an autonomous domain with mediations of its own.

This theoretic formulation of the problematic of human emancipation is dependent upon ontological necessity. In the realm of politics, the project of human emancipation depends on a conception of human essence as requiring emancipation.

The social theory of Western Marxism views socialism as resulting from the nature of Being. The theoretic formulation of the politics of everyday life and culture is merely a mask for the ontological presuppositions of Western Marxism. The concrete reality of everyday life is never anything more than a pseudo-object. The real object lurking beneath this conception is an ontological conception of human essence.

The Changing Historical Context: From Resistance to Revolution?

As I have argued throughout this work, there is a fundamental contradiction between the social theory of Classical Marxism and that of Western Marxism. This

contradiction is in terms of the opposition between historical and ontological grounds. It is on the level of this opposition that the two theories are distinguished from each other. It is also on this level that the two theories are irreconcilable. Ontology can not merely be integrated into an historical perspective.

Classical Marxism is grounded in an historical perspective. It begins its analysis with an historical object, the mode of production, and seeks to disclose its underlying logic and motion. Central to its analysis is its conception of development. The mode of production not only exists; it has a history which is knowable.

Classical Marxism does not explain the process of social transformation in terms of an ontological conception of human nature. Instead, it develops categories of analysis which are historically grounded. For example, it formulates the contradiction between the forces of production and the existing relations of production as the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist mode of production. In doing so, it attempts to analyze the contradictions of capitalist society in terms of a social totality. Accordingly, these contradictions are internal to the mode of production.

Classical Marxism does not introduce an eternal conception of the human need for emancipation as an explanation of social transformation. Instead, it attempts to analyze class relations and the existence of class struggle. Here,

class struggle is not an act of the will but rather expresses the objective conditions of social life in capitalist society. For Classical Marxism, the concept of need is, itself, the result of historical development. Social needs develop within a determinant mode of production.

Concepts such as the alienation of labor and the fetishism of commodities are historically grounded and situated within the capitalist mode of production. Both alienation and fetishism express objective conditions of social life. They result from commodity production and the relations of production of capitalist society. The concrete determinations of the alienation of labor and the fetishism of commodities are to be found in the separation between use-value and exchange-value and in the separation between concrete labor and abstract labor. The secret of their existence is to be found in the exchange of labor power as a commodity.

Classical Marxism attempts to develop an objective conception of human subjectivity. This is in direct opposition to Western Marxism's subjective conception of subjectivity. The former is based on historical grounds; the latter is based on ontological grounds. The former attempts to analyze the capitalist mode of production in terms of its internal relations. It treats the capitalist mode of production as a social totality. The latter theory attempts to analyze capitalist society by means of the introduction

of categories which are external to the mode of production.

The notion of ontology is external to the perspective of Classical Marxism. Ontology can only be introduced into Classical Marxism externally. Since ontology is external to the historical perspective of Classical Marxism, it can never be integrated into the theory. In other words, it is merely appended or attached to the theory.

The progressive aspect of Western Marxism has been in its formulation of a language of resistance. This role should not be underestimated. By means of its ontological presuppositions concerning human nature, it has articulated a protest against human domination and coercion. It has formulated a conception of resistance and human emancipation. Without abandoning its own ontological presuppositions, it can not do more than this. At a certain point in historical development, its own ontological presuppositions become a barrier to its further development as a social theory capable of comprehending late capitalism. My argument is that only a return to the historical perspective of Classical Marxism can make the comprehension of late capitalism possible.

What we find in the social theory of Western Marxism is an eternal conception of the human subject. Social transformation is grounded within an abstract conception of human possibility. This conception is eternal and not conditioned by the capitalist mode of production. It offers a

utopian vision of the future. This vision is utopian because it abandons an historical and class perspective for an ontological one.

The social theory of Western Marxism, after constituting the given reality of everyday life, then offers an analysis of the possibility of social transformation which is based upon ontological presuppositions. This analysis involves the positing of a realm of Being which grounds everyday life. Western Marxism interprets everyday life and the possibility of social transformation in terms of its ontological foundations. Accordingly, the present reality of everyday life is merely a moment in a history not yet realized. According to the social theory of Western Marxism, the future realization of human potential is ontologically given.

The problem we are faced with is how to evaluate the social theory of Western Marxism since World War II. One possibility would be to discard the theory as representing nothing more than an idealist mystification. However, this option seems to me to overlook the fundamental relationship between social theory and history. The utopian vision of Western Marxism was developed in relation to the circumstances and historical conditions of the post-war period. The social theory of Western Marxism is, itself, a product of late capitalism.

The social theory of Western Marxism has been a

theoretic intervention within the context of the post-war period. It has passed judgment upon the political practice of capitalist governments and the ideological defenders of late capitalism. It has refused to consent to the necessity of political and psychological repression. In theoretic terms, it has opposed both the repressive state apparatus and the ideological hegemony of late capitalism.

The social theory of Western Marxism has sustained the possibility of human emancipation. Its theory of late capitalism constantly reasserts a utopian conception of human possibility. In order to make sense of the utopian image of human nature, it is necessary to situate the discourse of Western Marxism within the political and ideological contexts of the post-war period. Otherwise, its theoretic productions would be mere idealism.

The social theory of Western Marxism developed within an historical context. This context was that of the cold war, which intensified during the post-World War II period. The ideological battleground of the cold war was the historical context in which the social theory of Western Marxism intervened.

This theoretic intervention opposed both the liberal defenders of late capitalism and the official Marxism of the Soviet Union. This opposition was based upon Western Marxism's conception of Reason and human emancipation. In other words, its theoretic formulations attempted to map

out a third course. Its ontological theory attempted to transcend history. Western Marxism was in constant search of a new subject of history to replace the working class.

The social theory of Western Marxism can not be understood outside of this context. Its development and formulation of an analysis of late capitalism was embedded within cold war ideology. It attempted to transcend this dilemma and its own limited political situation by means of an ontologically grounded theory. The separation between its theory and the political practice of the working class could not be immediately transcended by a theoretic intervention. Instead, the relationship between theory and practice was dependent upon forces over which it had very little control. These forces included both political repression and the integration of large sectors of the working class into the new social order.

As a result of the economic crisis of the 1970's, the integration of large sectors of the working class can no longer be considered a given fact. Instead of relative affluence, the working class has been offered the ideology of austerity. This did not signal the end of the cold war. Nor did it bring about a decline in political repression. The new economic crisis has been accompanied by a revival of cold war ideology and militarism.

The economic crisis of the 1970's brings out more clearly the limits of the social theory of Western Marxism.

Since its theory is based upon an eternalized conception of the human subject, it can not grasp the historical dynamics of the new conditions. These changing conditions bring out more clearly the limits of the Western Marxist approach.

Like the changing historical context, the progressive aspect of Western Marxism also designates its limits as a social theory. Since its social theory is based upon an eternalized conception of human existence, it is unable to concretely grasp historical transformation. Instead, it can only offer a language of resistance.

To be sure, the formulation of a language of resistance had a progressive role in the context of the period from 1945 to 1970. However, the economic crisis of the 1970's has placed the progressive nature of Western Marxism in grave doubt. The new social conditions of this latter period force us to analyze the class nature of the crisis. They turn our attention away from an ontological theory, which can not explain historical transformation.

The social theory of Western Marxism has drawn our attention to the domain of culture and everyday life. Although its analysis has been based upon ontological presuppositions, this does not mean that the analysis of culture is, itself, irrelevant to the present situation. The social theory of Western Marxism has formulated culture and everyday life as a domain of political struggle. It has argued that language, consciousness, and subjectivity are

central components of this domain and require serious analysis. The theorists of Western Marxism have specified the mediating role of intersubjectivity in the development of political struggle. Their focus upon the domain of everyday life has stimulated further analysis and debate.

The present problem is how an analysis of culture and everyday life might be grounded within the capitalist mode of production and not based upon an ontology. Such an analysis would have to take into account transformations within the mode of production, as well as those occurring within community and personal life. Admittedly, this task still remains to be done. The first step in the development of such an analysis would have to be an examination of the existing class relations. This analysis would have to avoid arbitrarily introducing ontological conceptions of human nature as explanatory factors.

In order to develop an analysis of culture and everyday life which is grounded within the historical perspective of Classical Marxism, it will first be necessary to break with the traditions of Western Marxism. It will be necessary to consciously avoid the use of ontological explanations. Such a break with the social theory of Western Marxism will not be easy to achieve, since many theorists still accept the philosophical presuppositions of Western Marxism as unquestioned truth. My aim has been to put these very presuppositions into question. It is only

through such a critical re-evaluation of the social theory of Western Marxism that further progress in the analysis of our present conditions of social life will become possible.

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