

GRAMSCI'S CONCEPT OF NATIONAL-POPULAR WILL

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DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation entitled, 'Gramsci's concept of national-popular will,' submitted by Ms. ASEEMA SINHA in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University and is her own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

(Citations from Gramsci's writings have been given in the following abbreviations)

- H.P.C. History, Philosophy, and Culture in the Young Gramsci, trans. and ed. P. Cavalcanti and P. Piccone.
- L.F.P. Letters from Prison, trans. L. Lawner.
- M.P. The Modern Prince and Other Writings, ed. L. Marks.
- O.N. L'Ordine Nuovo (1919-1920).
- Q.C. quaderni del Carcere, ed. V. Gerratana.
- SPN Selections from the Prison Notebooks, trans. and ed. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith.
- S.P.W. I Selections from Political Writings, 1910-1920, trns. and ed. Q. Hoare.
- S.P.W. II Selections from Political Writings, 1921-1926, trans, and ed. Q. Hoare.
- CW Selections from Cultural Writings. ed. Forgacs, D. & Nowell-Smith, tr. W. Boelhower

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The attempt to make sense of the world, that is the project of explaining, understanding & interpreting,¹ the social world as part of an attempt to intervene meaningfully in grappling with the problems it poses, involves, among other things, the theorizing of concepts.²

There is a tradition of philosophy which emphasise that human beings not only 'live' their lives but constitute them through their categories & concepts,³. The importance of language and therefore words & concepts as the medium through which political activity & hence historical understanding is constituted has recently become the focus of debates. It paradoxically began with analytical philosophy with its emphasis on words ^{and} meanings rather than theoretical formulations. From the philosophers of language it has now entered into debates in social & political theory. If we hope to acquire knowledge & awareness about our social world, it is imperative to understand ~~the~~ terms & concepts, which we use to describe & appraise it. Concepts can be decisive for understanding of historical processes or of socio-historical questions. They offer theoretical insights on historical as well as

1 *Interpreting* is part of the claims of a science of hermeneutic human sciences.

2 *A* Concept is the general notion about something. It denotes at a abstract, level on aspect of reality. Concepts are the 'idea' about something & hence are second order terms. They may be a generic name for a certain phenomenon.

3 German Philosophy notably Kant who is said to have brought about a "copernican revolution" in our understanding of the relationship between the social world & knowledge. He brought the insight against empiricism that reality is in part constituted by us in our acts of knowing.

political matters. They can cut across historical time & also through space i.e. across societies^{and} hence can lead to historical understanding & comparative historical sense of societies. Koselleck, defending the method of conceptual history argues that concepts no longer merely serve to define a given state of affairs from the past they reach into the future.¹ This belief is based on the conviction that speaking a language involves taking on a world and altering (or innovating) the concepts constitutive of that language involves nothing else than remaking the world.

The question arises as to what is the nature & status of concepts in a tradition of thought, what is their role in historical understanding, for the theory of that understanding & for an attempt to change it in practice.

corollary to this is the question of relation of concepts to the theory within which they are placed. Concepts acquire meaning through the theory in which they are embedded; they establish a particular horizon for potential experience & conceivable theory & in this way set limits. Concepts are never held or used in isolation but in constellations which make up entire belief systems or schemes i.e. theories.²

In the tradition of thought associated with *Marxism the theorizing of concepts has been a characteristically selfconscious exercise*. The utility & status of concepts have been significantly emphasized in Marxist theory, for Marxism gives special importance to the distinction between real processes & processes of thought, between being & knowledge while it also stresses their unity & the primacy of the real over the knowledge of the real; the

1. R. Koselleck, *Futures Past; On the Semantics of Historical Time*, MIT press, 1985, p., 78.

2. James Farr 'Understanding Conceptual Change Politically' in Farr & Hanson (ed.) *Political Innovation & Conceptual Change*, CUP, 1989 p. 33.

unity of the two processes is founded on the fact that they are distinct. It is important to highlight this fact for it is frequently neglected & hence the complex relationship between theory & practice, knowledge & society consciousness & being overlooked. Nicos Poulantzas highlights, this point "Theoretical work, then whatever the degree of abstraction, is always work bearing on real processes. Yet since this work produces knowledge it is wholly situated in the process of thought: no concepts are more real than others. Theoretical work proceeds from a raw material, which consists not of the 'real concrete', but of information, notions, etc., about this reality, & deals with it by means of certain conceptual tools. The result of this work is the knowledge of an object".¹

Aim of this Study:-

The aim of this study is to highlight a certain facet of Antonio Gramsci's thought hitherto unexplored and use it to illuminate whole of his theoretical vision as well as to employ it to understand key questions of Marxist theory & practice. Hence the aim is to analyse the kind of innovation represented by the political theoretical concept of national-popular will. What does it tell us about political historical change ^{and} hence the project of building a socialist civilization. The aim is to explore its theoretical potentialities & hence to show that it represented an innovation within the Marxist tradition.

The study is concerned with the location of the concept in the framework proposed by Gramsci. It is a reconstruction of Gramsci's attempts to theorize & hence point to the practical-political need of building a national-popular will. Gramsci's scheme seems to have a distinctiveness in the Marxist tradition, in focussing on the 'national-popular' - basis of the socialist vision.

1 . N. Poulantzas, Political Power & Social Classes, London, New Left Books, 1973, pp. 12-13.

It is the claim of this study that national-popular will is one of the key concepts in Gramsci's theoretical vision. Its politico-theoretical importance, nature & its location in the theoretical problematic elaborated by Gramsci would be the focus of study. National-popular will is one of those ideas of Gramsci which must be related to a whole series of theoretical processes & concepts in which it is implicitly the subject of analysis.

Thus this study intends to be engaged in two kinds of exercises carried on simultaneously. One is to elucidate the meaning & contours of the concept of national-popular will, to explore its nuances & the space of meaning around the concept. This would be a concern with the (i) *criteria* of applying the concept (ii) *the range of things* (circumstances) to which the concept refers in the political world & (iii) *the range of attitudes* (norms, values etc) which the concept expresses.

Secondly, the purpose is to explicate the function of the concept to explain its historical potential. The concept of national-popular will is decisive for understanding socio-political questions & historical processes. Hence the question guiding us is: what does the concept give to the historical understanding of the social world. This study then is concerned with the operation of the concept. That is, with the question of the carrying capacity or conceptual capital of the concept.

In order to explicate this, this study would engage in an analysis of the history of Indian nationalism, to see the application of this concept to a concrete historical process.

National-popular will As a Conceptual Innovation In Gramsci:-

Gramsci's concept of national-popular will is an entirely novel coinage and is his own invention. The concept of national-popular will as a theoretical unit is his own creation & he employs it for creative & a critical usage. Hence Gramsci may be regarded as the father of the concept.

It is noteworthy that the use of the compound hyphenated word 'national-popular' is deliberate. In terms of linguistic lineage, the word national-popular has no known antecedent. It goes to Gramsci's credit that he combined the two components together to give it another meaning & significance. The peculiar emphasis and connotation the word conveys in Gramsci's usage & operationalization has no place in any other writing on either nationalism or populism.

Gramsci joins national and popular as well as people & nation to form national-popular/people-nation, to connote people of the whole nation. Significantly each component should have the quality of the other. Each part of the term goes to emphasize the other. In Gramsci's usage it is not an accident but a deliberate joining. The concept is the fruit of a long process of intellectual elaboration & emerges as part of Gramsci's theoretical framework. The concept is significant for the problematic of building a socialist *civilization*.

This emphasizes that the ^{future} socialist society emerges from a change in production process & relations as well as a cultural reformation which precisely involves the whole people of the nation.

The concept of national-popular helps us to grasp the profound modifications in the forms of politics & culture appropriate to monopoly capitalism, yet, paradoxically it is also relevant for understanding some aspects of the Third World societies, for example the question of ^{the} peasantry & the trajectory of Indian nationalism.

National-popular will is a reflexive concept responding to ^{the} contradictions in Marxist theory & practice of the Second International & emerged from Gramsci's reconceptualization of Marxism faced with the problems of reductionism & economism as well as the political problems confronted in his political struggles in Italy. In response Gramsci's concern is to

restore politics to the center of the socialist project - which simultaneously emphasizes the importance of cultural politics on the agenda of socialist revolution. The center of gravity of the concept of national-popular will revolves around the 'political' & the 'cultural'.

Types of concepts

According to Koselleck's three fold classification of concepts from a temporal perspective,¹ national-popular will falls under the third category of a newly "emerging neologisms reacting to specific social or political circumstances that attempt to register or even provoke the novelty of such circumstances".²

National-popular will is a concept which involves "ideas & values" & these connote certain persuasive tendencies. It is crucial to see the 'ideas' it refers to, to understand the meaning of the phenomenon it describes. This is so because the concept gains its meaning from the place it occupies within an entire conceptual scheme. "Rather than the internal structure" of the particular word it is important to focus on their role in upholding complete social philosophies. This emerges forcefully in the analyses of national-popular will, ^{as} part of the ensemble of social theory of Gramsci. National-popular will is not an isolated concept but ^{is} found in a system of other concepts. ^{It is} integrated in a theory. ^{important} This is ^{is} for understanding the concept and its historical and political uses. It is a evaluative concept & it would be

1. The three types of concepts are: (i) traditional concepts whose meanings have persisted in part & retain an empirical validity (ii) concepts which have radically changed (iii) recurrently emerging concepts. Koselleck, Op. Cit., p. 82.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

instructive to see the direction of the concepts' evaluative force¹ and thus invests meaning on the historico-political processes it analyzes.

If the insight is ^{true a} that whole range of concepts owe their genesis to the phase of capitalism, then part of the task of socialist transformation should be a historically semantic one i.e. of theorizing new concepts.

This analysis of conceptual innovation by Gramsci is part of the belief (that emerges partly from this study itself) that for Gramsci the battle for a truly national-popular will was to be fought, in part, by changing & advancing the concept of national-popular will itself. Hence it carries a definite political message. For Gramsci, then to establish a socialist civilisation and the struggle for a new order is to be carried out ^{in part} by theorizing the concept of national-popular will. The conceptual innovation of national-popular will then is crucial to Gramsci's political struggle.

To paraphrase Farr,² this study is an attempt to focus on the conceptual dimension of political innovation of Gramsci & to see that conceptual innovation must be understood politically & political change conceptually. That is, conceptual theorization has ^a bearing on politics & aids our historical vision & moreover ^{political} & historical change can be understood through the ^{lens} of concepts.

1. Whether it has commendatory or condemnatory force.

2. Farr, Op. Cit., pp. 24-25.

"To understand conceptual change is in part to understand political change & vice-versa. And such understanding must of necessity be historical".

CHAPTER ONE :

**TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF
GRAMSCI'S CONCEPTION OF CULTURE &
CULTURAL REVOLUTION.**

INTRODUCTION :

... a powerful advance towards a comprehensive Marxist theory of cultural revolution, one that is among the most valuable that we have

Carl Boggs ¹

If you look closely at these four arguments² a common thread runs through them : the popular creative spirit, in its diverse phases of development is equally present in each

- Gramsci in Letters from prison³ March 19, 1927 Milan

One can deduce the importance of the "cultural aspect", even in practical (collective) activity. An historical act can only be performed by "collective man", and this presupposes the attainment of a "cultural-social" unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world, both general and particular, operating in transitory bursts (in emotional ways) or permanently (where the intellectual base is so well rooted, assimilated and experienced that it becomes passion). Since this is the way things happen, great importance is assumed by a general question of language, that is, *the question of collectively attaining a single cultural "climate"*.

- Gramsci in Prison Notebooks. ⁴

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1. Carl Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism, London, Pluto Press, 1976, p.9. 4th Impression 1980. Boggs sees in Gramsci's theory of a cultural revolution a definite thematic continuity underlying Gramsci's theoretical work from the early period to the SPN - a continuity that far outweighs the change in priorities and emphases of his life.
 2. In his early programmes Gramsci outlines four ideas for his work in the prison - history of Italian intellectuals and their relation to cultural currents; comparative linguistics; Pirandello and popular literature.
 3. Antonio Gramsci, Letters from Prison, ed.and trans. L. Lawner, London, Jonathan Cape, 1975, (Hereafter LFP), p.80.
 4. A Gramsci, Selections from Prison Notebooks, ed. and trans., Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, New York, International Publishers, 1971, p.349. (emphasis added) (Hereafter as SPN).

Gramsci is one of the first theorists of the Marxist tradition to have a self conscious, implicit as well as explicit conception of culture and cultural revolution. What is significant is that Gramsci's theoretical problematic places the notion of cultural revolution at the centre of his theory as a parallel but indispensable condition for the realization of the socialist civilization. In fact the central core of Gramscian analysis and theoretical framework is based on his notion of culture and cultural revolution. One central insight which emerges is that *Gramsci's Understanding of Marxism or Revolution gives central importance to a cultural revolution.*

One significant aspect is that Gramsci looks upon socialism as an *integral civilization* a whole new way of life a world view with its material life, customs, ideas, everyday practices, morality and new social relations.⁵ Gramsci identified the real central problem of revolution : the formation of a new man, with a new culture, a new intellectual dimension, for a new order.

"Socialists must not simply replace one order by another. Their task is to create order the only real order".⁶ In Gramsci is found the notion of 'civiltà'⁷ - often linked to 'culturà' which as a considerably more expanded sense than civilization, with its emphasis on customs and

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5. Buci-Glucksmann, Gramsci and the State, trans. David Fernbach, London, Lawrence and Wishart Ltd. 1980, p.80. Buci-Glucksmann quotes L. Paggi to show that Gramsci's approach to Marxist philosophy as an integral conception of life, an intellectual order' is drawn from Barbusse and the Clartè group in France.
 6. Quoted in G. Friori, A. Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary, trans. Tom Nairn, London, New Left Books, 1970 p.107.
 7. Buci-Glucksmann, discusses how Gramsci's notion of civiltà is more rich than the English translation 'Civilization' and points to Gramsci's distinctive concept which loses some of its reference to custom and mode of life when translated as civilization. Buci-Glucksmann, op. cit., (p.79).

mode of life. Gramsci frequently identified 'civiltà' with civiltà capitalista to oppose to it civiltà comunista.⁸

Hence what distinguished Gramsci's notion of socialism was a concept of 'total revolution'⁹ a concept that included not only the take-over of political power but an effort to create a new civilization (civiltà) embracing change in all aspects of man's life and culture.¹⁰ "The revolutionary working class was and is aware that it must found a new state that by its tenacious and patient labor it must elaborate a new economic structure and found a new civilization"¹¹

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8. As Buci-Glucksmann has noted, a noticeable repetition of the word civiltà can be seen, *ibid.*, p. 415, fn.28.
 9. This is what distinguishes Gramsci's account in Romano Giachetti's perception. cf. Romano Giachetti, Antonio Gramsci; The subjective revolution, in Dick Howard and Karl Klare, (eds.), The Unknown Dimension: European Marxism since Lenin. London, Basic books Inc., 1972.
 10. A. Gramsci in the Journal Avanti, under the title 'Questions of Culture' on 14th June, 1920 writes, "The proletarian revolution cannot but be a total revolution. It consists in the foundation of new modes of labour, new modes of production and distribution that are peculiar to the working class in its historical determination in the course of the capitalist process. The revolution also pre-supposes the formation of a new set of standards, new psychology, new ways of feeling, thinking and living that must be specific to the working class, that must be created by it, that will become 'dominant' when the whole class becomes the 'dominant' class." A. Gramsci, Selections from Cultural Writings, (eds.), D. Forgacs and G Nowell-Smith, trans. W.Boelhower, (Hereafter CW), (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1985), p.41.
This classic formation of a 'cultural' revolution is an effective response against interpretations of Gramsci's alleged idealism. Yet it points to the importance Gramsci attaches to 'questions of culture' in a revolution. It undermines arguments which claim that Gramsci replaced political economy by a kind of cultural anthropology (for e.g. Michael Walzer. 'The ambiguous legacy of A. Gramsci', Dissent, Fall 1988). Gramsci certainly integrated an anthropological sense of culture in his theory of historical materialism and hence moved towards a materialist theory of culture.
 11. Gramsci, CW, p.50. (L. Ordine Nuovo, 15th Jan. 1921).

Gramsci rejected a 'cultural' reformism¹² as much as the anti-culturalism of Bordiga. There could be no autonomous and organized working class without a struggle for an autonomous vision of the world, in every aspect of existence. It was because culture cannot be reduced to works of art, but has its roots in a critique of the prevailing civiltà, that every revolution is 'a great cultural fact' as well as being economic and political one.¹³

Secondly Gramsci's vision of historical and social change sees the necessity of waging a struggle on the terrain of culture. This follows from the insight of the specificity of each realm of social life.¹⁴ Moreover Gramsci realized that the battlefield for the creation of a new civilization is "absolutely mysterious characterised by the unforeseeable and the unexpected"¹⁵ and it has a rhythm of its own. In contrast, it is relatively easy to outline the shape of the new state and new economic structure.

Hence the necessity for a cultural revolution as a parallel prefigurative 'moment' to socialism.

In coming to grips with this question Gramsci formulated a distinctive revolutionary philosophy in confrontation with the Neo-Italian idealism, represented above all by B. Croce. Hence he came to Marxism through the trajectory of Idealist thought and was embedded

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12. Found in Italian socialist party debates of the time (1919-22) that ultimately subordinated the working class to a cultural aristocracy.
 13. A. Gramsci, *EP*, p.120 and p.122. From the French edition of Gramsci's political writings, quoted in Buci-Glucksmann, *op.cit.*, p.80. "The Russian revolution has replaced old habits with new ones", quoted in Buci-Glucksmann, *op.cit.*, p.416, fn. 31.
 14. Although it is true that what Gramsci means by culture, or political or economic would be different and hence change the notion of cultural struggle itself.
 15. Gramsci, *CW*, p.50, "... But in what way and under what forms will poetry, drama, the novel, music, painting and linguistic works be born".

in the national intellectual tradition of his time. This meant that he could carry on a dual critique against idealist revisionism on one hand and on the other against the “positivist encrustations” in Marxism¹⁶ (by confronting it with elements of Idealist thought).¹⁷

The confrontation with this ‘national’ intellectual and cultural tradition reveals itself most sharply when we look at Gramsci’s theory of cultural revolution.

It would be argued that Gramsci through his early idealist meanderings to his days of political praxis, when he came to Marxism-Leninism and finally in his prison writings was able to elaborate the elements for a materialist theory of culture.

Gramsci’s central concern with questions of ‘culture’ and the attempt to develop a comprehensive theory of a cultural revolution is evident throughout his writings. In his political writings Gramsci is seeking to integrate and raise questions of culture in confrontation with his political practice. In his ‘plan of Study’ in the prison¹⁸ he sets out predominantly cultural topics - (i) Italian intellectuals and their relation to cultural currents (ii) comparative linguistics (iii) Pirandello (iv) serial novels and popular taste. In a later reorganisation of plan literary and cultural topics occupy key place.¹⁹

It has sometime been suggested that Gramsci’s concentration on cultural topics came out of a sense of isolation from political life. Such psychological speculation, contains an element of truth but it does not account for the consistency with which cultural topics are in fact

16. In doing so Gramsci played a decisive role in shifting Italian culture from post-idealism to Marxism. Gramsci himself is of no small ‘cultural’ significance in the development of Italian intellectual and cultural life.

17. Croce’s anti-positivist spirit, an appreciation of the philosophical importance of subjectivity and the ‘ethico- political’, image of cultural totality etc.

18. 19th March 1927. Gramsci, LFP, p.79-80.

19. Gramsci, CW, p.11.

handled by Gramsci, nor does it do justice to the originality and specificity of his thinking about cultural issues. *These are integral to the very meaning Gramsci accords to Marxism and socialism and remarkable for its refusal to divide culture from history and politics.*

It is imperative to explore and raise the issue of Gramscian conception of culture and cultural revolution in an understanding of his concept of the national-popular will.

This is so because : National-popular will is a cultural concept. It has significant cultural pre-suppositions built into it and therefore it becomes important to understand what Gramsci means by 'culture'. Secondly, Gramsci's concept of National-popular will is conceptualized in terms of a collective 'national popular' *cultural revolution*. As Gramsci himself outlined in his early letters his project is to look into the popular creative spirit in its diverse phases, its translation into political action²⁰ and in context of historical developments²¹ of Italian cultural life.

Thus the concept of National Popular will is defined in cultural terms. Hence to fully grasp the notion of National Popular will it is important to understand the cultural roots of the concept as well as how socialism and 'cultural revolution' are related. Why Gramsci thought of National Popular will in this unusual manner is exemplified by his insight into cultural processes.²² In this connection the concept of National Popular will represented a

20. Gramsci, LFP, pp.79-80. The work outlined by Gramsci constitutes 'cultural' topics as the basis for understanding the popular creative spirit.

21. In a further elaboration of his plan Gramsci continued to stress the historical aspect of his analysis of cultural change, 'My attempts to extend my knowledge of certain aspects of Italian people's historical development'. 3rd August 1931. Gramsci, [^] a letter from prison translated in New Edinburgh review, quoted in Buci-Glucksmann, op.cit., p.403, fn.5.

22. Gramsci rejected the notion that economic crisis (or interests) by themselves lead to revolution (seen as capture of state power) Key factors were political and cultural rather than economic.

a theoretical breakthrough on three questions which united the understanding of cultural revolution. These are :

Whatever its claims, classical Marxism never gave sufficient weight to non-economic factors like ideology and culture in the reproduction of social relations. National Popular will in contrast is distinguished by being located on the terrain of culture.

Secondly, for the most part, Marx and Engels treated ideology narrowly as false consciousness. In contrast Gramsci's concept points to how ideologies contest for a 'National Popular will' in the social field.²³ Related to this is the fact that conventional Marxist accounts see ideology as a belief system without being sensitive to the full range of its cultural manifestations. Gramsci's concept is acutely conscious of this 'cultural' terrain on which class battles (for hegemony) are fought.

Thirdly, classical Marxist accounts lacked any depth or insight in their treatment of culture. Gramsci was able to surpass classical Marxism in all three respects. Not only did the concept call attention to a wide variety of cultural manifestations in which ideology appears but it also revived the idealist concern with culture and then superseded it by analyzing the complex interconnection between culture and politics which the idealist had suppressed.²⁴

Further and more significantly the attempt in this study is to show that the concept of

23. A remarkable insight against facile treatment of ideologies. S.Hall, 'Popular-Democratic vs Authoritarian Populism : Two Ways of Taking Democracy Seriously' has developed an analysis of British politics as authoritative populism, using these insights. S.Hall, 'Popular-Democratic vs Authoritarian Populism : Two Ways of Taking Democracy Seriously' in Alan Hunt, (ed.), Marxism and Democracy, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1980, pp.157-186.

24. Gramsci's concept of cultural revolution served as a point of intersection where many of his other conceptual commitments - culture, ideology, language, totality, intellectual, revolution and political education dialectic could be brought together.

National Popular will offers a distinctive articulation of the politics-culture relationship in a theory of socialism.

Gramsci's writings exemplify a definition of culture which attempts a creative break from the reductionist, objectivist reflection theories of orthodox Marxism represented by the second and third Internationals. An unsystematic and undeveloped, conception of culture at times implicit, at times explicit, can be found in his writings which can be seen to offer an alternative to the traditional understanding.

Gramsci's cultural theory and constitution (conception) of Marxism (which is also changed in the process of elaboration of the notion of culture) helps to break down the barriers of disciplines and to reconstitute the relationship between these objects of study. More significantly in Gramsci can be found an incipient attempt to theorize the place of culture in the larger social space and hence to reconstitute the relationship between culture, economy and politics.

CROCE AND GRAMSCI:

An important aspect of Gramsci's philosophy is its relation to the thought of B. Croce.

Gramsci's aesthetic worldview or system is formed in direct relation to B. Croce and Italian cultural experience. Gramsci's intellectual formation is heavily influenced by and indebted to Crocean influences. Placed in the Italian cultural tradition Gramsci's philosophical and political outlook was a response to the whole tradition of Neo-Hegelian idealist philosophies²⁵ of philosophers like Croce, Spaventa, Mondolfo, and G. Gentile and marked out the *distinctive nature of his Marxism*. Hence Gramsci came to Marxism through a peculiar trajectory, which involved immersion in Italian cultural and philosophic tradition - a tradition marked by its anti positivism and anti-empiricism.²⁶

25. In the Italian cultural tradition a revival of Hegelianism marked one of the crucial features. cf. H Marcuse, Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1969, Second edition, pp.402-409.

26. The Italian Neo-Idealism was from the outset associated with the movement for national unification and later with the drive to strengthen the nationalist state against its imperialist competitors. The fact that the ideology of the young state looked to Hegelian philosophy for its support is to be explained by the particular historical development in Italy. In its first phase Italian Nationalism had to contend with the Catholic Church which perceived it as a threat to Vatican interests. The protestant tendencies of German idealism were sought to be used as weapons for the justification of a secular authority. Also Italy's entry among the imperialist powers brought in an extremely backward nationalist economy to modern industry. The need for the state to assert its imperialist interests, under opposition from the middle class and the other positive tasks of the state made Italian new-idealism lean towards a Hegelian position. This Hegelian turn was also an ideological maneuver against the weakness of Italian Liberalism. H Marcuse, op.cit., pp.402-403. This also explains its later associations with fascism (although distinct from Hegelianism) which Gramsci criticizes. Hegelianism was not merely an academic movement but an element of the civil life of the nation at the time of Risorgimento.

In this section it would be my attempt to reconstruct Croce's aesthetic system so as to be able to note the nature of its relationship to Gramsci in its similarities as well as contrasts. This follows from the conviction that it helps us to understand Gramsci's theory of culture and allows us to pose the problem of aesthetics in the history of Marxism as well as its relation with Croc^eian philosophy. Gramsci position in the development of Italian culture in 1920 and 1930s requires a deeper analysis of his philosophy. This is evident at ^{two} _λ levels.

At one, Gramsci's theoretical positions are not the simple negation or overturning of Croce's philosophical system. What is involved instead is the complex questioning and the appropriation of key Croc^eian ideas. The relationship is of critical appropriation but what is significant is the continuity between key motifs of Croce's system and Gramsci's ideas. Gramsci's relation with Croce's thought is in reality a complex one of appropriation and transformation more often than one of simple rejection. Gramsci cultural writings as well as political and historiographical writings could be characterized as a sustained dialogue with Croce as well as an attempt to purge his own thought of Crocean influences. Simultaneously it is important to note the shifts in Gramsci's own position from the early Crocean idealist cast of his ideas²⁷ to a more critic^e _λ historical judgement of culture. These shifts are important aspects of an understanding of the relationship between Croce and Gramsci, for despite the continuity in Gramsci's intellectual evolution and the unity of his thought one can see more than one Gramsci. ²⁸

Hence what we find here is a *double movement*: one to use and transpose Crocean

27. Gramsci referred to himself in this period as "rather Crocean in tendency".

28. This, however, is not to defend the idea of an 'epistemological break' but to see the somewhat complex, and contradictory fertility of his thought which comes out most forcefully in Gramsci's confrontation (and use) of Croce.

ideas into a historical materialist framework, into a socialist key and another the attempt to move from a idealist understanding to a more materialist one, to try and extend the notion of the cultural revolution in a materialist direction. The result is not a totally unambiguous conceptual innovation, but it is one which offers certain fertile suggestions regarding the autonomy of **art** and the relation between culture and politics.

What is significant about Gramsci's critique of Croce is his coming to grips with him as a cultural force. Croce is representative of a certain cultural current. He links up the failure of the Italian intellectual life to pose the problem of the national-popular revolution in Italy in all its complexity, *with* the influence of aesthetic concepts deriving from Croce, particularly those concerning so called 'moralism' in art, the view that 'content is extrinsic to art and that the history of culture is not to be confused with the history of art, etc.

CROCE AND HEGEL

Crocean aesthetics is to a large extent formulated in its analysis of Hegelian philosophy.²⁹

Croce's general philosophical position is not completely Hegelian. It differs from it in many respects, one of which and certainly the most important is its application of Hegelian dialectics. Central to Hegel's system is his concept of the dialectics as the unity of contradictory or opposing moments or 'unity of opposites'.³⁰ Hegel took the view that philosophy arises from the all-embracing contradictions into which human existence has been plunged. Hence reality is structured by concepts and phenomena that are opposites,

29. Benedetto Croce, What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel, trans by D. Ainslie Russel & Russell, New York, 1969 (first published 1915) p. 120.

30. Dialectic in its entirety is linked to the conception that all forms of being are permeated by an essential negativity, reality as a structure of contradictions and that this negativity determines their content and movement.

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in contradiction i.e. one exists by its contradiction / negation in the other. Croce, however, argues that there are phenomenon that are not opposites but simply distinct, such as beauty and truth, useful and moral. Art and philosophy, for instance, are distinct and not opposites as Hegel claims. The conception of dialectics as a unity of opposites led Hegel to deny art. If instead as in Croce's system dialectics is understood as a unity of 'distincts'³¹ then art can be saved from the contingencies of history Hegelian dialectics results in a synthesis in which art is identified with and superseded by philosophy. Crocean dialectics, by contrast leads to a synthesis in which the two elements, qualitatively distinct, are not transcended but still retain their respective autonomy. Art, Croce writes, is independent of philosophy and exists independently of it but Hegel treats it as 'nothing but imperfect forms of philosophy.'³²

Gramsci's critique of Crocean dialectics is essentially this that Croce is employing a pure conceptual dialectic devoid of any concrete historical content.

ART AS INTUITIVE ACTIVITY

One of the significant aspects of Croce's aesthetics is his notion of art as intuitive activity.³³ Gramsci's relation to Croce comes forth in his complex attempt at the appropriation as well as transformation of the idea of art as intuitive activity. Croce distinguishes between intuitive and conceptual knowledge or logical.³⁴ Croce's defence of intuition (or imagination) over intellect proceeds hand in hand, with his defence of art against science

31. Marcuse, op.cit., p.78-99.

32. Croce, op.cit.

33. Croce "Art as Intuition" Selected Essays from Croce's 'Aesthetics' in Weitz Problems in Aesthetics.

34. Knowledge has two forms - One obtained through imagination and one through the intellect knowledge of the individual or universal, of individual things or relations between them productive either of images or concepts.



or philosophy. Despite the constant appeal to intuitive knowledge in everyday life there is not adequate acknowledgement in the field of theory and philosophy. Croce asserts that the total effect of the work of art is in terms of intuition. He goes on to assert the independence of intuition in relation to concept.

Croce defines intuition as the perception of the real as well as images "Intuition is the undifferentiated unity of the perception of the real and of the simple image of the possible". In defining intuition as 'pure intuitions' Croce freed intuitive knowledge from any suggestion of intellectualism.

He also defends it against the perception of it being sensation, formless matter. Intuition is not mechanical or passive as matter is but is a 'productive association' of sensation which is synthesis that is to say spiritual activity³⁵ It is impossible to distinguish intuition from expression in the cognitive process. The one appears with the other at the same, instant, because they are not two, but one.³⁶

According to this view, the feeling-emotion (actual, recollected or imagined) does not first emerge in the experience of the artist and then find expression in the work of art. The feeling attains concreteness in expression and is apprehended by the artist only in and through the process of expressing it. It is by the expression of his feeling in art forms, that an artist comes to terms with it, gives it contours and shape, actualises it for apprehension.³⁷

35. Weitz, op.cit. p. 97.

36. "Intuitive knowledge is expressive knowledge, independent and autonomous in respect to intellectual function; indifferent to later empirical discriminations to reality and to unreality, to formations and apperceptions of space and time, which are also later : Intuition or representation is distinguished as form from what is felt and suffered, from the flux, or wave of sensation or from psychic matter; and this form, this taking possession is expression. To intuite is to express; and nothing else (nothing more, but nothing less) than to express," *ibid.*, p. 100.

37. *See the next page.*

Croce had a profound influence in disseminating the doctrine of aesthetic value as the intuition of quality. He made the unusual identification of intuition with expression which split his influence in two ways : his emphasis on intuition as immediate qualitative sensitivity was highly contextualist and while his emphasis on expression led to a quite different expression theory.³⁸

What is significant for Croce aesthetic theory and an idea to which Gramsci is sympathetic - is the claim that the difference between intuitive activity and artistic intuition is quantitative.³⁹ Croce goes on to argue that "the principle reasons which have prevented aesthetic, the science of art from revealing the true nature of art, its real roots in human nature, has been its separation from the general spiritual life, the having made of it a sort of special function of aristocratic club...there is not a science of lesser intuition as distinct from a science of greater intuition, nor one of ordinary intuition as distinct from artistic intuition. There is but - one aesthetic the science of intuitive or expressive knowledge which is the aesthetic or artistic fact."⁴⁰

37. This views find a echo in the modern aesthetic theory that good art works achieve superior precision in the expression of emotions and the corollary that the 'content' of a work of art is so intimately linked to the form that it could be expressed in no other way. This claim of a particular kind of uniqueness came to the fore, with the Romantics and is found developed in a new way in the Aesthetics of Croce.

This theory was developed by R.G. Collingwood in England and Prof. J.M. Cameron in 'Poetry and Dialectic', Harold Osborne, Aesthetics and art theory : An Historical Introduction (Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., London 1968) .

38. Ibid.

39. The limits of the expression - intuitions that are called art; as opposed to those that are vulgarly called non-art are empirical and impossible to define. Weitz, op. cit., p.102.

40. Ibid.

Gramsci takes over the significance of intuitive activity which most 'rationalist' versions of everyday activity dismiss and transposes them into his theory of common sense, 'the philosophy of the folklore' and 'everyman is a philosopher'.

However he rejects the identification of art with purely intuitive activity. Gramsci is extremely critical of the Crocean idea that any pure aesthetic intuition must be completely drained of concepts (a dichotomy reminiscent of Kant). For Croce ultimately all things are intuitions and artistic judgement is thus attained only through intuition and not philosophically or scientifically. 'Intuition gives us the world, the phenomenon; the concept gives the noumenon.'⁴¹ Hence the priority of art over science.

Gramsci is extremely critical of this for while he recognizes the significance of intuitive activity, his theory of common sense also argues that every intuitive activity is a world view, with concepts however fragmentary.

Moreover the reduction of everything to intuitive activity is totally contradictory to Gramsci's framework which aims to transform ordinary common sense into philosophy and is critical of the bad elements in common sense.

Gramsci is critical of this false division which Croce imposes by driving a wedge between art and conceptual thought. Hence Croce's aesthetics was unable to accommodate a philosophical theatre. Unlike Croce, Gramsci does not treat the aesthetic as the only measure of a work's value or see its aesthetics and philosophical moments as irrevocably separated.

According to Gramsci's notion of aesthetics and culture, art is linked to its cultural

41. B.Croce, 'Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic,' trans. D.Ainslie, (London, Macmillan, 1922), P.31, quoted in L.Salamini, 'The Sociology of Political praxis,' (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p.203.

conditions and consequences. He is less concerned with why a work is beautiful in a fine art sense than with why it is read, what feeling it arouses and how it acts in an elaboration of a new culture. Nevertheless he is concerned not to relinquish the aesthetic as a distinct category. Hence he writes in his letter to his wife⁴² "Perhaps I made a distinction between aesthetic enjoyment and a positive value judgement of artistic beauty, i.e., between enthusiasm for a work of art in itself and moral enthusiasm, by which I mean a willing participation in the artist's ideological world - a distinction which seems to be just and necessary. I can admire Tolstoy's *War and Peace* from an aesthetic point of view without agreeing with the ideological contents of the book. If both factors coincided, Tolstoy would be my vade mecum, my *levre de chevet*. This holds also for Shakespeare, Goethe and Dante."

Thus while retaining a sense of the autonomy of art he is concerned not to overduly stress the theoretical separation between the 'artistic' and the 'cultural'. For building a national popular culture his emphasis would be on the cultural while attempting at the same time to uplift the artistic taste of the people. For him a national-popular cultural revolution would transform the purely intuitive activity into a higher conception of the world. Such a movement would have to take for its starting point the intuitive activity or common sense.

Gramsci is also critical of the Crocean idea that art as expression exists in the mind of the artist. For Croce works of art are produced in order to be remembered for themselves. (intrinsic value). Artists, Gramsci counters do not exist in a vacuum. They live in a historically contextual society. Their images are not simply 'expressed' so that the instant of their creation can be re-created. The artist is one who objectivizes and historicizes his

42. Gramsci, LFP, pp.245-246.

phantasms. "The more historical an artist is, the more objective and everlasting are his or her creations".⁴³ The value of art is extrinsic to it. It resides in the relationship of the artist to society, his time and general historical conditions. Art is not a product of itself but history.

The primary issue in the cultural dispute between Croce and Gramsci (involving critique as well as appropriation) was the role of politics versus the role of art.⁴⁴ Gramsci maintained that there was an intimate relation between art and politics. Art is a political statement, not because it contains a political message or because it deals with political or social topics but because it is produced in a cultural dimension situated within the complex of social and political relations between the artist and society. This context is modified by the artist's creative interaction with and dependence on the society around him. Croce, on the other hand, asserted that 'art has a life of its own', is universal rather than contemporary, and is the work of the spirit rather than a product of social necessities. For Croce art was the work of the suprahistorical 'spirit' expressing a beauty which has no reference to the contingent world of man's history. It is an emotional phenomenon with no connections to practical life "Croce's aesthetics are the conclusion, the extreme objectivization of the entire romantic approach to art which is now 'relaxed', no longer 'passionate'".⁴⁵

For Gramsci on the other hand, art contains "a vision of the world" an attitude toward life, a life-environment delimited by the work of art.

Gramsci's aesthetics are basically historical. In particular Italian culture was from the renaissance the "unilateral expression of a weak ruling class, unable to create an organic,

43. Gramsci, EC, Q.14, Vol.III, p.168, quoted in Salamani, *op. cit.*, p.205.

44. This includes everything that is creative, literature, architecture, poetry, music etc.

45. Armanda Guiducce quoted in Romand Giachetti, *op. cit.*

socio-national synthesis or bloc, the result of a fundamental socio-historical split between intellectual and the people.”

Thus Croce's approach to culture and politics was one which had produced fascism while Gramsci offered a new alternative of a truly national-popular cultural revolution.

II - THE EVOLUTION OF A CONCEPT : TOWARDS A MATERIALIST THEORY OF CULTURE

This section attempts to delineate the evolution of the concept of culture⁴⁶ in Gramsci. In Gramsci's works, two notions of culture may be found which do not constitute a break but the development of a complex, flexible, and open conception of culture. This movement is from an idealist version of the concept to the elements of a materialist theory of culture. This movement enables Gramsci to launch a critique on two fronts. The early writings reveal an idealist notion of culture but it is precisely this idealist rendering of culture which enables Gramsci to strike against and break out of the objectivism of positivist and productivist Marxism. Simultaneously his integration of the problematic of culture in a materialist theory of history allows him to criticize sharply the metaphysical idealism of philosophers like Croce and Sorel. Therein lies the distinctiveness of his dual critique.

46. Culture may be thought of as a process of individual or creativity and the products especially of a literary artistic sort, that result therefrom, ~~or~~ as a general way of life of a particular nation or people. This distinction is worked out in the work of Raymond Williams. It serves, among other things to separate the territory claimed by the humanistic interpreters of arts and that which pertains to the social science of anthropology. This distinction developed around the 18th century.

David Forgacs and G Nowell-Smith⁴⁷ have suggested that there are untheorized contradictions between his adoption of a Crocean cultural problematic⁴⁸ and a more socio-historical view of cultural change. However it is precisely these contradictions that show how Gramsci could develop an astute materialist analysis of cultural changes while remaining locked in an idealist aesthetic.⁴⁹ It would be the attempt to show that Gramsci is moving away from his idealist 'tendency' of the early years to a formulation which integrates certain key themes of the idealist worldview yet submitting it to a rigorous critique.⁵⁰ If it involves him in a contradiction then it is a fertile one allowing him to articulate the beginnings of a mature, complex, materialist theory of culture.

What follows is an attempt to analyse Gramsci's early writings on culture and note how this was to act as a lever against the determinist tenets in the current thinking on culture (esp of Second International and of Italian socialists like Bordiga).

Certain characteristic features of Gramsci's thinking on cultural questions emerge even in his early writings :

His thinking on cultural issues is remarkable for its refusal to divide culture from history and politics. Thus even in his early writings it is clear that he sets his discussion of culture in the historical terrain. His approach is historical seeking to relate culture to the historical

47. Gramsci, CW, p. 20.

48. Adoption of Croce's 'language-as-art' conception or between a materialist account of the degeneracy of the Turin theatre and the Crocean aesthetic notion of art as the creation of 'phantasms' of pure beauty that he invokes' against it.

49. Gramsci, CW, p.20.

50. Gramsci himself says that his intellectual formation has been one of a polemical nature; he must engage in an intense sharp dialogue with his opponents in LFP.

process which produced it and to which it contributes. Moreover it is also political to the extent that, running through out his reflections on literature and culture is the hidden thread of an unstated political question : What are the agencies by which culture is shaped and to what extent can culture be guided by conscious political agency. The notion of organisation is found centrally in his early conception which further goes to exemplify the later materialist conception. Some key themes running like a thread through his early writings are : culture and its diffusion (i.e. its ability to be popular), cultural change, organisation of culture, political education, workers' councils as cultural institutions, historical questions and lessons for political practice.

In one of his earliest and most interesting essays, Gramsci defines culture thus :

"We must break the habit of thinking that culture is encyclopedic knowledge whereby man is viewed as a mere container in which to pour and conserve empirical data or brute disconnected facts which he will have to subsequently pigeon hole in his brain as in the columns of a dictionary so as to be able to eventually respond to the varied stimuli of the external world. This form of culture is truly harmful especially to the proletariat. It only serves to create misfits, people who believe themselves superior to the rest of the humanity because they have accumulated in their memory a certain quantity of facts and dates which they cough up at every opportunity to almost raise a barrier between themselves and others. This form of culture seems to create that pale and broken-winded intellectualism. ...this is not culture it is pedantry. This is not intelligence, but mere intellect...

Culture is something entirely different. It is the organisation, the disciplining of one's inner self; it is the appropriation of one's own personality; it is the conquest of a superior consciousness whereby it becomes possible to understand one's historical value, function in life, rights and duties. But this cannot happen through spontaneous evolution".⁵¹

51. Pedro Cavalcanti and Paul Piccone (ed.), History, Philosophy & Culture in 'The Young Gramsci', (Hereafter HPC) (Saint Louis, Telos Press, 1975), P.20-21.

At another place Gramsci elaborates a similar notion criticising Mario Guarnieri.⁵² Gramsci argues “he believes that culture equals knowing a little of everything, that it equals the popular university.⁵³ “I give culture this meaning; exercise of thought, acquisition of general ideas, habit of connecting causes and effects. For me everything is already cultured because every body thinks. But they are empirically, primordially cultured not organically. They therefore waver, disband, soften or become violent, quarrelsome, according to ‘the occasion and the circumstances’. ...I have a Socratic idea of culture; *I believe that it means thinking well whatever one thinks and therefore acting well whatever one does.*”⁵⁴

Here it appears that Gramsci is concerned to strike against the generally prevalent notion that culture means cultivated mind or is to be associated with high civilization.⁵⁵ For him culture is essentially selfcontrol and discipline. It is not something which sets one section of people against another. His bringing together two passages from Novalis and

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52. Mario Guarnieri (1886-1974) had written an article in *Avanti* opposing Gramsci’s proposals for a cultural association : “Whoever wishes to be cultured be he a socialist or worker, already has the opportunity even though no organ of popular culture exist. According to his tastes and inclinations he can find books, newspapers, magazines...” (CW fn.3 on P.23).
53. Gramsci criticizes popular university for having a false, pedantic conception of culture in its relation to the people.
54. Gramsci, CW, p.25.(emphasis added) ‘Philanthropy, goodwill and organisation’ 24 Dec. 1917. *Avanti*. In the same passage Gramsci goes on to say : “Culture is the basic concept of socialism because it integrates and makes concrete the vague concept of freedom of thought. I would like it to be enlivened by the other concept, that of organisation.”
55. Raymond Williams has pointed this as one of the meanings of ‘culture’ in his keywords.

G.B. Vico⁵⁶ reveals that culture is not possession by the few but arises from a shared equality with men.

Gramsci is highlighting a basic humanism⁵⁷ underlying a 'correct understanding of culture'.⁵⁸ Here we have the beginnings of a formulation which goes on to define much of the mature writings on culture i.e. the notion that culture is not to be set against popular classes, is not at odds with the subaltern classes.⁵⁹

Gramsci links up his formulation of culture as the conquering of one's ego, self-understanding, with the historical nature of this enterprise. Such disciplining cannot be done by an individual will or spontaneously, for man is the product of historical processes. Here he evokes a Hegelian idea. "Man is above all spirit i.e., a creation of history and not of nature.". This self-consciousness of human being's historicity takes place. "...through intelligent reflection first on the part of a few and then by a whole class..."⁶⁰ It is only when this consciousness and the self-reflexive ability to think one's place in the historical process becomes part of everyday consciousness and of a whole class that any social rebellion is made possible. Beginning from defining culture with reference to individual persons and their self development, Gramsci goes on to talk of historical processes and

56. Both passages discuss the question of self discipline - Novalis "The Ego of One's Ego" & Vico stresses, the central idea of 'Know thyself' as well as puts forward the idea by Solon that 'All Men are Equal' - plebeians & Nobles, for they have a common human nature.

57. Humanism at the most general level refers to the basic human quality of all persons by virtue of which they have the right to equal treatment.

58. Gramsci, 'Socialism and Culture', HPC, p. 20.

59. "To be cultured is a privilege. To attend school is a privilege. We do not want it to be such. All young people should be equal vis-a-vis culture" Men or Machines? In *Il Grido Del Popolo*, August 18, 1917, HPC. p. 34.

60. Gramsci, HPC, p. 21.

of a class's historicity and historical self understanding. Again, and this bears on his notion of culture, he is concerned to show how this self understanding becomes part of the culture and prefigures any revolution.

This bears centrally on his notion of culture as cultural diffusion and penetration.

"... every revolution has been preceded by an intense critical effort of cultural penetration, of the infusion of ideas through groups of men who were initially unresponsive and thought only of resolving day by day, hour by hour their own political and social problems without creating links of solidarity with others who found themselves under the same conditions".⁶¹

This notion of cultural diffusion, i.e. struggle at the level of ideas and consciousness and the effort to make it part of a general widespread understanding of all the people is the key element for Gramsci. For him a revolution is not possible without such a cultural change. Thus in his early writings the notion of cultural diffusion of ideas, the preparation of states of mind plays an anticipatory role in ^{his theory of} a revolution. This cultural revolution is to be antecedent to any attempt to take over power. Drawing an example from the French revolution Gramsci attempts to show that the revolutionary outbreak cannot be understood "... without recognizing the cultural factors contributing to the creation of those states of mind prepared to explode for a cause considered to be common."⁶²

This relates to another crucial idea which Gramsci invokes in his conception of culture. For Gramsci 'the formation of a universal 'united consciousness' is possible through criticism. This is the hallmark of the revolutionary consciousness.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid. p. 22.

This for Gramsci, was the disintiguishing feature responsible for the preparation of the French revolution and repeats ^{itself} through socialism.

"It is through the criticism of capitalist civilization that the unified consciousness of the proletariat is formed and is forming. Here criticism signifies culture, not, spontaneous, naturalistic evolution. Criticism signifies precisely that consciousness of the ego which Novalis gave as the goal of culture".⁶³

Here Gramsci suggests one of the significant ideas that consciousness by the revolutionary class must be based on the criticism of the existing civilization. Expressed in a typically idealist mode, this feature of culture as criticism comes out forcefully.

"The ego that contrasts itself to others, that differentiates itself, and having created a purpose, judges facts and events not as they stand in themselves but also as value of propulsion or repulsion. To know oneself means to be oneself. It means to be master of oneself, to disintiguish oneself from others, to come out of chaos and become not only a principle of order but a principle of one's own order and self discipline in accordance with an ideal. And this cannot be attained without knowing others, their history and the sequence of efforts that they have made in order to be what they are, to create the civilisation they have created and which we substitute with our own. Culture means to have ideas about nature and its laws in order to understand the laws governing the spirit. It amounts to learning without losing sight of the final goals which is to best know oneself by way of others and others by way of oneself."⁶⁴

The idea that Gramsci is stressing is that man and the universal class's self consciousness must be accompanied and made necessary by the knowledge of the past history of that civilization, by what and how has preceded it and what benefit may be

63. *Ibid.*

64. Gramsci, HPC, p.23.

derived from it. This highlights at one level the significance which Gramsci attaches to critical thought and at another the unified effort to change history through collective action. He speaks of a self realisation which has become part of the consciousness of everybody. This is possible only when criticism becomes culture and prepares the ground for the necessary change. As the example of the French revolution shows.⁶⁵ This is not a natural phenomenon (i.e. occurs on its own arising from objective reasons).

What is significant is that Gramsci's elaboration of the notion of culture is that of a 'mode of living', culture in the anthropological sense of the term⁶⁶ - the whole set ways of living, feeling and acting. This has its roots in the young Gramsci's 'cultural' practice, and crucially his critique of capitalism as a *civiltà* Buci-Glucksmann⁶⁷ shows how this concept loses some of its reference to custom and mode of life when translated as 'civilization'

As a cultural editor of the *Grido del Popolo* (Aug 1917 to Sep 1918), Gramsci was to lead a veritable ideological and cultural battle for a culture that would be "an instrument and form need^{ed} for the political emancipation of a class."

This notion plays on key role in his work in the prison. The PN investigated this connection between politics and culture as the basis for a 'cultural revolution'. Culture is never to be separated from politics, even if it has a specific task of its own. Gramsci's formulation makes it possible to avoid the alternative of economism and culturalism that the workers' movement faced in the 1920s. (e.g *Bordiga v. Tasca*). Hence his originality vis-a-vis the various positions represented in the socialist party at that time Gramsci

65. The period of enlightenment fulfilled the task of rigorous critical activity, of dissemination of all kinds of ideas, of discussion etc.

66. Buci-Glucksmann, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

67. ^{ibid.} p.150, 'the Bolsh^{ev}iks civiltà', p.256, 'civiltà as proletarian culture'.

rejected a 'cultural' reformism that ultimately subordinated the working class to a cultural aristocracy, as much as he did the anti-culturalism of Bordega. There could be no *autonomous* and *organized* working class without a struggle for an autonomous vision of the world, in every aspect of existence. It was because culture cannot be reduced to works of art, but has its roots in a critique of the prevailing civiltà that *every, revolution is, 'a great cultural fact'* as well as being economic and political. "The Russian revolution has replaced, old habits by new ones".⁶⁸

Hence long before the Notebooks, Gramsci saw the struggle for culture as taking the form of a struggle for a mass philosophy able to make each party member an 'intellectual' in a model which has nothing in common with the traditional or university notion of intellectual. Hence culture as critique must penetrate in every individual as well as the whole society (i.e. national-popular) Since this is in no way a marginal activity, involving not just works of art but also modes of thinking, (including philosophy as acquisition of a coherent vision of the world) modes of living and of feeling cultural, for the young Gramsci it is the first form of proletarian emancipation : a form of self education for the masses.

Buci-Glucksmann has argued⁶⁹ that this dialectic of civiltà and cultura, a dialectic that was to enable Gramsci to elaborate in SPN the elements for a materialist theory of culture.

Several aspects important for understanding Gramsci at this early stage may be seen in this essay ('socialism and culture') Its idealist language, "history" as the creation of human spirit and man its progenitor "through intelligent reflection" announces a bold

68. Buci-Glucksmann, op. cit., p.416.

69. Ibid., p. 80.

activism intent upon invoking the subjective element against a mechanical or deterministic politics.

Revolutionaries seize history; they can never allow it simply to unfold. It is this active subjectivity which goes on to define the specificity of Gramsci's thinking on cultural questions. For it is precisely the terrain of culture where the need is for individual men to guide a 'make history'.

However here also lies the basis for the charge which would never be far from Gramsci's later Marxism that of voluntarism or idealism or Bergsonianism.⁷⁰

This voluntaristic strain in Gramsci's early reflections on culture is countered and developed systematically (into a materialistic theory) in his later works through his emphasis on *organisation of culture* and his *theory of the party* - the modern prince as the organiser of an "integral civilization."

Nonetheless Gramsci's is more or less Crocean in this period and rests on an idealism defined in Crocean terms⁷¹ Man is "above all, spirit" He is an historical creature who appropriates his personality through intellegent reflection" and he transforms society by means of "cultural penetration".

A year later he could still write. "Socialists must not replace order with order. They must bring about order itself. The juridical norm that they want to establish *is the possibility of the complete realization of one's human personality for every citizen.* With the realization

70. Walter Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A study of Gramsci's political and cultural theory*, Berkeley, university of california Press, 1980), p. 17.

71. The influence of Idealism was essentially due to Hegelian influences but it is important to stress that the Italian reception of Hegel was quite different than Germany. (Reason and Marcuse Revolution) Also Croce offered an independent system of idealism to tradition of Idealist thought in significant ways different from Hegel.

of this norm all established privileges collapse" 72

Again the emphasis is on men as makers of history, on the personal responsibility of each citizen to become concerned, on the moral and strategic importance of imposing one's will's on events and on the ability of men to transcend themselves through thought. To crown the argument Gramsci set forth as his ideal a very Crocean concept of liberty "maximum liberty with a minimum of (individual) constraints".

Hence Adamson is led to the conclusion that Gramsci poses the socialist mission entirely in personalist and Utopian terms. Thus it is not very surprising to find Gramsci later characterizing himself as "rather crocean in tendency"⁷³.

In addition Gramsci was much influenced esp in 1916-1917 by the romantic socialist but non-Marxist/nonorthodox sector of the French intelligent's Romain Rolland, Charles Peguy, Hence Barbusse and Georges Sorel. These writers had in common an emphasis on the category of "will" and a moralism aimed at renewing "consciousness" of the masses through education and culture.⁷⁴

72. Feb. 11, 1917, HPC, p. 75 (original emphasis).

73. Quoted in op. cit. p. 32.

Adamson. Gramsci was familiar with at least three of the four part system practice (1908) Aesthetics (1902) logic 1905 " and Historiography (1916).

74. Adamson, op. cit., p. 34. & p. 253 fn 80.

III. GRAMSCI AS A 'CULTURAL' (CRITIC)

Gramsci's analysis of culture has to be seen against a critique of idealist philosophy. Such a critique was not merely a debate with philosophers⁷⁵ but through his confrontation with B. Croce, Gramsci was coming to terms with a whole cultural style and the historical impact on Italian culture of Croce who was the "lay pope of Italy", the educator of the leading classes"⁷⁶.

On one hand he seizes on the importance, of Croce's focus on 'ethico-political history' and on culture, the historical function of the traditional intellectual Croce had criticized historical materialism for deifying the economy and treating the ethico-political sphere as merely phenomenal super structure reared up over it and Gramsci acknowledges the force of this critiques of vulgar materialism.

He however critiques Croce for identifying one stand of thinking in Marxism as Historical materialism and secondly criticizes the idealist nature of ethico-political realm and history.

Gramsci is concerned to give this a more materialist backing and to integrate into a materialist framework.

Gramsci approaches the problem of art by asking two sociological questions: What is beauty in the works of art? and What is the importance of art. To answer these questions it is necessary to establish why a certain type of art is only enjoyed by the receivers and why poets write or painters paint. Croce's answer was that works of art exist to be remembered. Gramsci counters that artist do not exist in a vacuum. The value of

75. Through his confrontation with Croce Gramsci was evolving a tragically different conception of the intellectuals and his relationship to culture and the state.

76. Quoted in Buci-Glucksmann op.cit., p.21.

art is extrinsic to it. It resides in the relationship of the artist with his society, his time and the general historical conditions. Art is not a product of itself but of history. When a new art develops, new social relations are created and with them a new culture and new images. Here Gramsci is not trying to establish a causal relationship but to argue for a complex relationship between the growth of new social relations, a new mentality, social attitudes and culture. Gramsci's concern is with the question. How is cultural change related to economic and political change and how can it be rationally organized and accelerated. Gramsci cites an important Crocean text "Poetry does not engender poetry; parthenogenesis does not take place; what is needed is the intervention of the masculine [sic!] element, that is, what is real, passionate, practical and moral Once man is renewed and the spirit refreshed, a new effective life is created than from it a new poetry will emerge"⁷⁷. Gramsci accepts Croce's assertion but gives to it a Marxist interpretation.

"Literature does not engender literature, etc. that is ideologies do not create ideologies, super structures do not engender super structure ... they are developed not through "parthenogenesis" but by the intervention of the masculine [sic] element, which is history, the every, revolutionary activity that creates a 'new man' that is new social relations".

Thus for Gramsci art is praxis and depends on historical praxis. Such dependence, however is not passive, static, unequivocal but dialectical and active. Art itself is a contradictory process tending towards an homogenization of meanings and expression of meanings. For Gramsci it is not sufficient to demonstrate the historicity of art but necessary to know which art best expresses the same socio-historical phase. Here Gramsci attempted to link his aesthetic worldview and view of culture with cultural and

77. EC, QQ, Vol 5, p. 732. quoted in Salamini, op. cit., p. 205.

historical change. This emerges in his critical analysis of the trend of Futurism⁷⁸ and Pirandello's poetry and other works.

Gramsci's analysis of Pirandello reveals the originality of his 'literary criticism'⁷⁹ and cultural analysis.

Broadly speaking three strands of interlinked argument may be found in G's consideration of Pirandello. Firstly In assessing⁸⁰ the respective weight and interaction of the aesthetic and philosophical in his work, Gramsci criticizes the Crocean idea that a line can be drawn between art and conceptual thought and hence Croce's aesthetics was unable to accommodate a philosophical theatre. However he rejects the idea of the philosophical significance of Pirandello's theater and hence dissents from Tilgher's definition of Pirandello's intellectualism and looks for where poetry and art to be found in his work.

Thus on one hand Gramsci focuses on the artistic personally of Pirandello, his role as a creator of theatre, his autonomous role as a *artist of theater* but argues that "it does not seem possible to attribute a coherent conception of the world to Pirandello, to extract a

78. Gramsci's early approach to Futurism found in texts written bet 1913-1922. Futurism is generally seen in a positive light, in revolutionary terms for it reflects the consciousness of the need to abolish, old rigid ways of thinking, behaving 'ocified tradition'. Futurists have grasped the need of new forms of art, philosophy, behaviour and language. Hence Futurism are in the field of culture revolutionary.

79. A. Pipa has called Gramsci as a (Non) literary critic for according to her he doesn't do what is meant by 'literary criticism' A Pipa, 'Gramsci as a (Non) Literary critic Telos, no. 57, Fall 1983, p. 83.

80. Italian cultural life of the time was witness to a critical debate between *Tilgher* and *Croce* on Pirandello's work. G interevenes and raises questions that open up an entirely different perspective on Pirandello.

81. CW, p. 140.

philosophy from his plays. Thus Pirandello's theatre cannot be said to be 'philosophy'.⁸¹

However and this relates to the second strand in his argument. Pirandello's significance seem to be more of an intellectual and moral i.e. cultural than an artistic kind.⁸² Thus the poetic values of Pirandello's plays be isolated from his prevalently intellectual-moral and cultural activity⁸³ "in a judgement, of Pirandello the history of 'culture' element must prevail over that of the 'history of art'. In other words, the cultural value of Pirandello's literary activity prevails over the aesthetic value. In the general picture of contemporary literature, Pirandello has been more effective as an 'innovator' of intellectual climate than as a creator of artistic works. He has done much more than the Futurists towards 'deprovincializing' the 'Italian man' and arousing a modern 'critical attitude in opposition to the traditional 19th cent melodramatic attitude"⁸⁴ Thus Pirandello's artistic originality was a simple cultural element one which should be kept subordinate and examined in cultural terms. While it can be granted that this cultural element is not the only one in Pirandello and also it is not always transformed artistically but it remains to be seen whether it has

(i) become art at certain moments and

(ii) Whether as a cultural element, it has not had a function and significance in changing the audience's taste by deprovincializing and modernising it, and whether it has not changed the psychological inclinations and the moral interests of other playwrights by joining with the best of futurism in the task of destroying the petty-bourgeoisie and philistine culture of late 19th cent "He has tried to introduce into popular culture the

82. *ibid.* p. 138.

83. CW, p. 139.

84. *ibid.*

'dialectic' of modern philosophy, in opposition to the Aristotelian. Catholic way of conceiving the 'objectivity of the real'⁸⁵.

Thus while Pirandello's plays do not have a 'philosophy' yet there are definitely points of view in Pirandello that can be generically connected to a conception of the world. This view assesses Pirandello to be forward looking and progressive.

The third fragment of G's argument about Pirandello relates to the progressive character of his cultural influence. Gramsci sees Pirandello as a progressive writer. However he regards him as a highly individualist writer as representing an abstract intellectualism.

"Pirandello" critically a Sicilian 'Villager' who has acquired certain national and European traits, but who feels these three elements 'of civilization to be juxtaposed and contradictory within himself'⁸⁶ Hence, for Gramsci, the cultural problem of Pirandello's theatre lies in the fact that he is a Sicilian writer who manages to conceive rural life in 'dialectical' and folklore terms and who is at the same time an 'Italian' and a 'European' writer. In Pirandello there is the critical awareness of being simultaneously 'Sicilian', 'Italian' and 'European'. For Gramsci herein lies his artistic weakness along with his great cultural significance.⁸⁷

"Pirandello has created his conception of life and man but it is 'individual' incapable of national-popular diffusion. It has however, had a great deal of 'critical' importance in corroding old theatrical customs"⁸⁸. "Hence Pirandello's critico-historical sense' may have

85. CW, p. 138.

86. CW, p. 145.

87. This contradiction is evident in his fiction (long story *Il turno*) CW, p. 142.

88. CW, p. 146.

led him, in the cultural field, to overcome and dissolve the old, traditional theatre. But it has not given rise to fully realized artistic creations.

“.... where is he really a poet, where has his critical attitude become artistic content form and not just an ‘intellectual polemic’, one of logic, albeit not that of a philosopher, but the polemic of a moralist’ in the superior sense”.⁸⁹

Thus Gramsci considers him a great artist precisely when he is a dialect writer, and many of his ‘fragments’ are very beautiful”, Moreover he is forward looking and revolutionary for his times. However his inability to resolve the tensions of his individualist vision and his attempt to be a ‘Italian and European at the same time render him incapable of national-popular diffusion.

What is significant in these writings on Pirandello is the concept of culture which Gramsci is working with. Pirandello’s plays are noted for the cultural significance they highlight. These his analysis of the artist in Pirandello is in terms of a barometer of cultural changes. He locates Pirandello’s works in the historical and cultural climate of the Italy of the time.

Further it is evident that one key question which Gramsci asks any cultural product is how far the points of view are necessarily bookish, erudite, taken from individual philosophical systems. Or how far are they present in life itself, in the culture of the time and even in the lowest level of popular culture, folklore.

And then how can they be integrated to truly national and collective perspective. And therefore become culture G infact offers an original perspective on culture by seeing it as aesthetically and culturally composite.

It is true that Gramsci is interested in differentiating the ideological world of the artist

89. CW, p. 142.

and the 'beauty as such'⁹⁰. Beauty or the aesthetic category however is not a static element in a dynamic historical process. It changes with history. The works of art acquire new meaning in the process of their re-creation. By transcending the intentions of their creators and the interests of their contemporaries, they transform themselves. For Gramsci, the reasons for the permanence of art history are not psychological,⁹¹ but sociological and historical.⁹²

He treats the problem of aesthetics in conjunction with the problem of hegemony and the creation of a new culture. Art is an aspect of culture. There can be no movement on struggle for a new art apart from a struggle for a new culture.⁹³

"To struggle for a new art would mean to struggle to create new individual artists, which is absurd, for artists cannot be created artificially. One has to speak of struggle for a new culture, that is for a new moral life, intimately connected with a new intuition of life, until it becomes a new way of experiencing and seeing reality ...".⁹⁴

Thus the problem of art, literary criticism and role of the artist cannot be isolated from the problem of the organisation of culture. These in crucial ways are linked to his general vision and socialist strategy to attain a new cultural hegemony.

There is little consensus among Gramscian scholars on how to characterize his notes on literary criticism or aesthetic criticism or even more broadly to assess him as a cultural

90. LFP, p. 245.

91. As in Marx who regards the value of greek art as remembrance of the social childhood of mankind.

92. Gramsci, however did not emphasize the problem of aestheticity of art and its permanence across time. This absent from Italian aesthetics before 2nd World War, P.Salamin p. 206.

93. EC, Q. 23, vol II p 2192 quoted in Salamini, op.ut. p. 206. Also CW, p. 98.

94. CW, p. 98.

theorist. The tug of war between those who want to claim G as a theoretician of Marxist aesthetics and those who deny him any such role lead to reductive positions. The attempt to assimilate Gramsci into one or another neat pigeon-holed labels makes a mockery of the fertility of his writings on culture and literature.

In fact little attention has been paid to Gramsci's cultural preoccupations. This lacuna is especially evident in the Anglo-saxon literature on Gramsci⁹⁵ scholars who have extolled G as a Marxist theoretician for his original ideas on the party, the state, fascism role of intellectuals etc. have ignored altogether his notes on literature. Gramsci admits that writing literature is an activity requiring a particular skill. But he also stresses that the language is a collective achievement. Language then is a social product with a political potential.⁹⁶

It could be claimed as does Salanini that despite the polemical tone of his aesthetic roles, he has been able to avoid the error of politicizing art, aesthetic criticism and aesthetics. Gramsci was aware of the tensions between artistic creation and politics but in his attempt to think out a relationship between the two, he refused to relinquish the aesthetic as a distinct category.

What is one supposed to look for in an analysis of aspects of culture what is aesthetic criticism & its relation to cultural politics.

Here again a comparison with Croce is useful. Starting from the premise that the

95. There is not even our independent study of Gramsci's cultural theory or notes on literatures. One exception is Adamson's work may be seem as an attempt but that work does not deal with culture fully. Few scattered articles may be found.

96. Neogrammarians and "neolatics" were both odious to Gramsci because the former disregarded the influence of society on the evolution of phonetic laws, whereas the latter ignored the social function of language as communication.

work of art is complete and perfect in the subject. Croce concluded that aesthetic criticism has no bearing on the content of art but only on its form. It follows that aesthetic criticism is formalist, technical and detached. In literature, for instance criticism aims at discriminating, what is poetry and nonnational-popularoetry. Criticism is for Croce not a criticism of aesthetic values, but a pronouncement on the existence of the artistic phenomenon.⁹⁷

This amounts to saying that the value of a work of art is in its existence. Aesthetic criticism discriminates between artistic and non-artistic phenomenon from the standpoint of the 'form'.

For Gramsci there are two senses of facts one of aesthetic character, the other of cultural politics. Hence an aesthetic and political criticism. Gramsci focuses on the latter and it is important to note that he fuses the two in a superior synthesis, that of cultural criticism.⁹⁸ Aesthetic criticism is ultimately political, Gramsci argues.⁹⁹

"The type of literary criticism proper to the philosophy of praxis must fuse the struggle for a new culture, (that is for a new humanism) the criticism of customs, feeling and conceptions of the world, with artistic criticism or merely aesthetic and it must do so with heat and passion in a passionate fervor, even in the form of sarcasm."¹

97. "When the entire aesthetic and externalizing process has been completed. When a beautiful expression has been produced, fixed in a definite physical material, what is meant by judging. It to reproduce it in oneself." B Croce 'Taste and the Reproduction of art' in Lambropoulis and David Neal Miller ed. 20th Cent literary theory (NY, State Unibersity of NY press, 1987), p. 437.

98. Salamini, op. ct. p. 208.

99. CW, p. 95.

1. G Nowell Smith and David Forgacs argue in the Selections from CW p 87 that in his notes on problems of criticism in the PN, the theoretical questions that Gramsci raises highlight his distinctive perspective on aesthetics and culture. These are: the preconditions of new art and culture relation between progressive tendencies in high culture and the formation of a new
(footnote cont. on next page...)

Gramsci sees Francesco De Sanctis as representing such a criticism. Gramsci writes "The criticism of the Sanitis is militant, not 'plainly' aesthetic. It is the criticism of a period of cultural struggles, of contrasts between antagonistic conceptions of the world. The analyses of the content, the criticism of the 'structure' of works that is of the logical and historical practical coherent of the feelings represented artistically, are linked to this cultural struggle".

Both Croce and De Sanctis are connected to an ideology but the latter offers a type of literary criticism superior to that of Croce because he does not have a narrow conception of art.

Gramsci recognized that a given historical period is full of contradictions. In it a fundamental activity and praxis predominates and represents a progressive moment. But it may be represented by other moments.

Gramsci writes: " ... there are those who represent 'progressive point', but how can one judge others who represent other activities or elements in the work of art? And these, are they also 'representative'? And those who depict 'reactionary' and anachronistic elements, are they also the symbolizers of that aspect of the work of art? Must it be said that only those artists who seize all forces and elements in their essential conflict, that is those who seize the contradictions of the socio-historical totally, are truly representative artists."²

(footnote 1 cont. from last page...)

culture. How is cultural change related to economic and political change and how can it be rationally organized and accelerated. What kind of criticism is best able to pose and resolve these problems. Gramsci in other words is not dealing with 'literary criticism' in *the narrow sense but with questions of cultural analysis and strategy*.

2. Quoted in L. Salamini, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

Aesthetic criticism is eminently historical in so far as it springs from the artist's relationship to the history which is unfolding. Gramsci insists that the artistic phenomenon be grounded within a socio-cultural world, but that aesthetic criticism be distinct from it. In one of his letters Gramsci made a distinction between aesthetic enjoyment and a positive value judgement of artistic beauty.³

Gramsci writes that 'Normal critical activity is merely "cultural" in character and it is a criticism of "tendencies".⁴ If criticism is limited to the form as in Croce, then it would be a negative activity, or plainly dull criticism. Positive criticism, instead is directed to both forms and content. Thus it is *social and cultural criticism*. It is not any criticism that Gramsci has in mind but a criticism that is eminently historical.

Gramsci distinguishes between the purely artistic from political criticism. For him political criticism is 'cultural' and 'historical' in the sense that it works at the broader cultural/political pre-suppositions of a work of art. Thus it places the cultural product within the larger cultural totality of the time.

"Two writers can represent (express) the same socio-historical moment, but one can be an artist the other an hypocrite. To limit oneself to describe what the two represent or express socially, that is, by synthetizing more or less well the characteristics of a certain socio-historical period, means to barely touch the aesthetic problem. All this can be useful and necessary, and indeed it is, but in another sphere, that of political criticism, the criticism of customs, the struggle to destroy and transcend certain currents of feelings and beliefs, certain attitudes toward life and the world"

3. LFP, p. 245.

4. Gramsci distinguishes a 'tendencies criticism' from a criticism of tendencies and the latter is the capacity to comprehend and characterize all forces in conflict among themselves and to encourage the development of progressive ones.

The political critic does not intervene to express a value judgement on the works of art, but to criticize its political pretensions. It does not demand a convergence and consonance of artistic and political goals. It expresses a judgement on the sincerity of artistic truths, not in the works of art per se.

For Gramsci the task of cultural (aesthetic and political) criticism is bound up with the effort at an intellectual, moral and cultural renewal or new culture and civilization.

“The politician's pressures for the art of his time to express a specific cultural world is political activity and not artistic criticism if the cultural world for which one fights is a living and necessary fact, its expansion will be inevitable and it will produce its own artists,”⁵

Political criticism does not aim at educating authoritatively the artist, but at clarifying his/her respective role in the process of cultural reconstruction of society. However given the dependence of art on culture and its practical importance in the organisation of culture tension between art and culture are inevitable and one cannot deduce one from the other.

He further argues

“as far as the relation between literature and politics is concerned, one must take into account this criterion: the literary man must have necessarily less precise and definite perspectives than the politician he should be less ‘partisan’ so to speak but in a ‘contradictory’ way. For the politician any priori ‘fixed’ image to reactionary, he conceives the whole movement *in its becoming*. The artist instead will have images ‘fixed’ and set in their definitive form.

5. CW, p. 109.

IV : PEOPLE, NATION AND CULTURE

What is distinctive about Gramsci's notion of culture (and this comes out in any comparative study of any cultural theorist) is the national popular character of culture which he sees as the basis for any successful revolution. In emphasizing on this aspect of culture Gramsci has hit upon one of the most creative and suggestive insights into the cultural processes. In reflecting and theorizing on art and culture and its national-popular nature Gramsci affects a extension of the concept of culture. Its changed meaning goes on to refashion the relationship between culture and politics in significant ways.

The political force of his writings on aesthetics, literature and culture and the theoretical insights relate to its cultural and soial effects. Apart from asking what is beautiful in art, he is interested in knowing why a certain art is enjoyed by the public. Taking the example of literature, Gramsci notes that its popularity, is not determined by beauty only but rather by a specific content which is able to touch the lives and feelings of the masses.

"Beauty is not sufficient what is needed is a certain intellectual and moral content which is the elaborate and complete expression of the deepest aspirations of a certain public, that is the people-nation in a certain phase of its historical development".⁶

For Gramsci the national popular character of literature is linked to a whole range of historical and political problem regarding the Italian nation and by implication the socialist project.

Gramsci pronounced a negative judgement on Italian literature, for its failure to be

6. Quoted in Salamini, op.cit p. 212.

national-popular.⁷ The crucial question regarding literature in particular and culture in general is the non-national popular character of Italian literature and the implication it has for a national cultural formation.⁸

Gramsci poses the question in this way:

Why is Italian literature not popular in Italy?⁹ The non-existence of a popular literature (serial novels, adventure stories, scientific novels, detective stories and children's literature) is, contrasted with the persistent 'popularity' of this type of novel translated from foreign languages esp from the French. Hence there, is a separation between what is 'national' and what is 'popular'. What is 'popular' in Italy, is not national. And the 'national' literary tradition is not popular in Italy. The question of why should this be so that Italians prefer to read foreign writers and that too of 70-80 years back ¹⁰ is the crucial cultural question with serious political and historical implications.

The popularity of French literature in Italy shows the need for such popular or

7. The notion of popular in Gramsci always associated with that of national and refers to the most advanced modern conception of the world. Literature must adhere to culture and 'national feelings' in continuous development as well as be popular.
8. Hence national popular points to a lack, a chronic absence in Italy the product of centuries cosmopolitan rule by the Roman empire and the Papacy and the cultural dominance of cosmopolitan traditional intellectuals. For e.g. Dumas - Count of Monte Cristo, Joseph Balsano, Paul Fontenay Another's calvary dominance of cosmopolitan trade intellectuals.
9. Taking up Ruggero Bonghi's question Gramsci develops his distinctive and original response to the issue. Bonghi solution worked on the assumption that reform 'from above' by writers could change this situation an answer which completely missed the division between intellectual and popular.
10. For eg. Dumas - Count of Monte Cristo, Joseph, Balsano, Paul Fontenay - A mother's calvary. Another's calvary dominance of cosmopolitan trade intellectuals.

national-popular literature. Its absence makes people undergo the moral and intellectual hegemony of foreign intellectuals.¹¹

The answer lies in the inability of Italian intellectuals to articulate and express the worldview, the taste and ideology of the people-nation.

“... Neither a popular artistic literature nor a local production of ‘popular’ literature exists because writers’ and ‘people’ do not have the same conception of the world. The feelings of the people are not lived by the writers as their own, nor do the writers have a ‘national educative’ function: they have not and do not set themselves the problem of elaborating popular feelings after having, relived them and made them their own”¹²

Various important strands of thought are woven into Gramsci’s elaboration of this argument. Firstly he is concerned about the relationship between the intellectuals and the people which is ‘external’ and artificial.¹³ Hence ‘the intellectuals output is elitist and cosmopolitan and not of the people’s world.’

The literacy culture which Gramsci speaks of, the ‘high’ culture of these elite ‘writers’ cannot meet with those of the people or subaltern classes.

Moreover the intellectuals do not perform their national educative function i.e. of cultured diffusion of popular feelings of trying to meet the high ‘so called artistic’ national literature with that of the ‘public’.

The question as why is there no ‘national’ literature of this type in Italy even if the ‘need’ is there.¹⁴ Is it the fault of the public. Which does not read. But why does the public

11. CW.

12. *ibid.*, pp. 206-7.

13. ‘Feelings of people are not lived by the writers as their own’.

14. Gramsci notes that in many languages national and popular are synonymous as in German, Russian, Slavonic and French. Although this also has a history. In Italy however the term national has an ideologically very restricted meaning and does not coincide with popular because in Italy the intellectuals are distant from the people i.e. from the nation.

not read in Italy. So it not that the Italian public reads foreign literature popular or nonational-popularopular. This means that the people undergo the moral and intellectual hegemony of foreign intellectuals.

There is no national intellectual and moral bloc, either hierarchieal or still less egalitarian.

Gramsci goes on to argue that the intellectuals remain separated from the people. The intellectuals do not come from the people, they do not feel tied to them, they do not know or sense their needs, aspirations and feelings. In relation to the people they are something detached, without foundation, a casle and not an articulation with organic functions of the people themselves.¹⁵

Two Key ideas of Gramsci's thought are coalesced here: the need for and intellectual group to articulate and express a conception of the world that leads the contradictory folklore conception into a united, higher worldview i.e. the intellectuals are indispensable for this task. Yet they must be 'popular' embedded in the everyday life and practices of the nation.¹⁶ The notion of 'popular' is in Gramsci always associated with that of 'national'

15. CW, p. 209, p. 210.

16. The concept of organic intellectuals and they must be 'national-popular.'

The premise of the new literature cannot but be historical political and popular. It must tend to develop what already exists polemically or otherwise what is important is that it is rooted in the humus of popular culture as is, with its, tastes, its tendenacies, etc. with its moral and intellectual world, be they backward on conventional." Salamini Op. Cit. This relates to a very important segment of Gramsci's thought and philosophy - his notion of culture. (From common sense to philosophy). He is against the particularistic provincial, anachronistic conception of the world. This Gramsci contrast cosmopolitanism with universal and national-popular. Simultaneously he is against attempts to glorify popular and hence also contrast national popular to populist in the bad way. Hence Gramsci on I hand employs national-popular to attack intellectualism and on the other populism.

and is opposed to the incoherent components of folk and common sense. He is against the particularistic provincial, anachronistic conception of the world. Thus, Gramsci contrasts cosmopolitanism with universal and national-popular. Simultaneously, he is against attempts to glorify popular and hence also contrasts national-popular to populist in the bad way. Hence Gramsci on one hand employs national-popular to attack intellectualism and on the other populism. Gramsci considers it to be primarily a failure of the intellectual class.

“This means that the entire ‘educated class’, with its intellectual activity is detached from the people nation, not because the latter has not shown and does not show itself to be interested in this activity at all levels, from the lowest (dreadful serial novels) to the highest—indeed it seeks out foreign books for this purpose but because in relation to the people-nation the indigenous intellectual element, is more *‘foreign than the foreigner’s’*. The intellectuals are tied to a caste tradition, bookish, abstract and closed. Which has not been challenged by strong popular or national political movement from below.

Gramsci argues that the educated class is a cosmopolitan one not a national one. This is one of central ideas about the intellectual moral national-popular cultural revolution which Gramsci highlights.

The failure of the intellectual class to be national popular points to a historical lack, a chronic absence in Italy, the product of centuries of ‘cosmopolitan’ rule by the Roman empire of papacy of the cultural dominance of cosmopolitan tradition¹⁷.

17. Thus the non-national-popular character of the Italian intellectuals is related to their historical formation. Italian historical development by having Rome in her territory became the crucible of the educated classes of all the imperial countries. The ruling class became cosmopolitan. CW. p. 217.

This means that the educated class feels more with foreign life - it is separated foreign, in its style of life, in its social thoughts in its self understanding. It sees itself as a International, cosmopolitan culture which is elitist.

"The lay forces have failed in their historical task as educators elaborators of the Intellect & Moral awareness of the people-nation. They have been incapable of satisfying the Intellectual needs of the people precisely because they have failed to represent a lay culture, because they have not known how to elaborate the modern 'humanism' able to reach right to the simple]st & most uneducated classes, as was necessary from the national point of view, & because they have been tied to an antiquated world, narrow, abstract, too Individualistic or caste like.¹⁸

The Intellectuals are distinct from the Indigeneous, national life, from the people i.e. the nation. Their Worldview, living, language, their culture is alien to the national-popular life.¹⁹ Thus the terms national, & popular do not coincide and what is national is not popular & vice versa.²⁰

It is important to note that its analysis into the non-national popular character of Italian culture does not only ave a 'cultural' interest. It is linked centrally & crucially to his argument regarding the failure of the Italian nation to come in to its own.²¹ That is the

18. CW, P. 211.

Gramsci sees French popular literature as having succeeded in representing this Modern humanism, Modern secularism. Another example is the popular sense of great Russian novelist.

19. 'National' in Italy is connected to this Intellectual & bookish tradition & the extremely dangerous practice of referring as 'anti-national' whoever does not have this "moth-eaten conception of the country's interest.

20. "Writers & `people' do not have the same conception of the world.

21. "The sum of these problems reflects the laborious emergence of the modern Italian nation impeded by a balance of interest & international forces." C.W. p. 199

failure of a active national-popular bourgeoisie revolution to be carried through in Italy. The formation of the Italian nation & of the struggle for territorial & political unity had been the key question on the agenda of political action ever since the 19th century.

Hence the purely 'cultural' appearance of many of Gramsci's reflections on the 'national-popular should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the same historical & political preoccupations are at work at them Gramsci theory of the national-popular cultural - transformation is intimately linked to the historical concerns. This in-turn enables Gramsci to reach important theoretical insights regarding the nature of political revolutions - bourgeoisie & socialist & its integral connection with cultural questions. This reveals important insights into Gramsci theory of culture & the cultural revolution. The cultural aspects of the national popular question are not simply 'reflections, cultural 'doubles' of its political aspects but indicate that the question is organically rooted deep in Italian history with links & ramnification at many levels. Infact Gramsci is particularly concerned to stress the Inter-relationship between these key problems.²² These are "the unity of the language; the relationship between art and life; the question of popular novel; the question of an Intellectual & moral reformation i.e. a popular revolution having the same function as the protestant reformation in Germanic countries & as the French revolution; the question of the 'popularity' of the Risorgimento,²³ Most significantly Gramsci goes on to link the

22. According to Gramsci the Intellectual & leading classes have been unaware of the connection between problems of the Italian nation, language, popular culture, protestantism & Renaissance etc. These have never been presented as coherent & connected whole. Therefore they have always been treated in an abstractly cultural & intellectualistic form, without a precise historical perspective & hence without a coherent & concrete socio-political solution to them ever emerging.

23. C.W., pp. 199-200

emergence of fascism with these thus Gramsci links up the question of national-popular literature with the larger historical processes.

What is interesting & relevant is that Gramsci traces the failure of the national-popular most in Italy to the failure of its Intellectual & Political class to pose the question of its unity in a coherent & connected manner.²⁴ This is in a sense a Metalevel enquiry about the historical perspective of its leaders. It reveals the integrated conception which any socio-politic analysis & its Political solution must auditor. This historical angle must seek a connection not only bet its past-present future but also 'cultural' 'political' & 'historical questions what this points to is that, there is nothing strictly 'cultural' or 'acsthetic' or for that Matter 'Political'. Each of these issues work in & through others. In addition they imply a complex sense (thus there can be politics of culture as well as culture of politics) of history his historiography²⁵

Gramsci then has a conception of culture which refuses to divide culture from politics or from history. Culture is not a third realm but there is culture in everything.

Another reason why such problems have not been given explicit & critical attention can be discovered in the historical prejudice (Originating in literature) according to which

24. Intrestingly Gransce feels te need to explion this 'timidity' on the part of many intellectuals as it is characterstic of Italian national life.

25. This finds expression in Gramcsi reflections on 'history'. He Wrote :

"To be history, not merely graphic marks, or source Material, or aids to memory, past events must be thought up again, & this rethinking brings them up to date since the evalnation or ordering of those, facts necessarely depends on the 'contemporary' knowledge of the person rethinking the past event about who makes history, & who made it in the past". (Davidson OP. Cit. p. 147. The historographical underpinings have sercious political implications. The question is not only of real istory but the collective self understanding of that history.

the Italian nation has always existed from ancient Rome to the present day.²⁶ This according to Gramsci leads to a sort of fatalism & passive expectation of a future which is supposedly pre-determined completely by the past.²⁷

The Italian nation had in this way been more a historical or 'legal' entirety than a felt cultural reality existing at most for the Intellectual & ruling elites but not for the people.

To break the grip of these elites which meant also braking with their Intellectualistic way of posing questions of national culture in forms of a merely Ideal or high cultural 'nation', Gramsci poses national-popular as opposed to nation - rhetoric. Hence part of the problem is that the problem is not understood or posed in adequate terms.

The failure of a successful national-popular revolution in Italy is linked in Gramsci's account to the nature & mode of Humanism & Renaissance in Italy. The nature of the religious movement & the religious order in Italy which emerged is another aspect of the historical process which has implications for the development of the Italian nation - state.

Firstly The 19th cent culture of France, which had undergone both a bourgeois revolution & a much earlier process of cultural & linguistic unification provides a constant pole of comparison with Gramsci's analysis of Italy.

(Also compares it with Americanism cultural history See p. 278.)

Two important and inter-related arguments are central to Gramsci analysis. They reveal a more complex perspective of the historical process.

Firstly is picture or account of the Renaissance is not a linear one of a straight progression of ideas from Medieval obscurantism to a rational, secular modern Worldview.

26. "The 'nation' is not the people, or the past that continues in the 'People', but the set of material things that recall the past." CW, p. 250.

27. CW, p. 198.

He identifies many levels or phases in the historical trajectory of the Renaissance, it reveals to him contradictory moments which were at times historically regressive and at other times progressive. Gramsci's historical analysis reveals a complex sense of the historical transformation that took place in Europe & its²⁸ varying trajectories in Italy & France (& other European countries)

Gramsci highlights the twin aspects of the Renaissance - twin moments of which one was forward looking & the other regressive.

The Renaissance begins after 1000 can be considered the cultural expression of a general historical process of which humanism & Renaissance (In the strict sense) are two conclusive moments which have Italy as their principal seat, while the more general historical process is European. But the progressive movement after 1000 deteriorated precisely in Italy & precisely with humanism & renaissance which were regressive in Italy.²⁹

The second step in the argument is: for Gramsci, the contradictory moments of the general historical trends of Renaissance one seen from the perspective of a national-popular movement. This he writes:

"Every Intellectual Movement becomes or returns to being national if a 'going to the people' has taken place, if there has been a phase of 'Reformation' & not just a phase of 'Renaissance' & if these two phases 'Reformation - Renaissance follow one another organically instead of coinciding with distinct historical phases (as was the case in Italy where, from the viewpoint of popular participation in public life, there was a

28. Conventional Marxist accounts have seen this process as unambiguously progressive inaugurating the modern world. These views are necessarily teleological & positivist accounts of history.

29. CW p. 275.

historical hiatus between the commune movement - reformation & the movement of the Renaissance.³⁰

Hence 'Reformation' & Renaissance are seen as representing a certain trends & not empirical facts.

He then connects it to the question of national-popular literature.

"Even if one had to begin with writing serial novels & operatic rhymes, without a period of going to the people there can be no 'Renaissance & no national literature'.³¹

We noted in the section on Gramsci's understanding of culture that Gramsci's meaning of culture is a complex notion of ways of life. In early writings Gramsci reveals an idealist understanding but his notion of culture is historical, & Political & less the crucial irreducibility of culture as critique to penetrate & diffuse in society. The dialectic of culture as critique of civilta, the theory of organisation of culture with that of practical learning is integrated with a theory of political organisation.

Gramsci progressively moves towards a theory of cultural revolution which integrates his concerns as a 'cultural' theorist and solidifies his interest in national-popular literature culture & language. What emerges is a complex understanding which refuses to see art as but also refuses to reduce it to a reflection of the 'reality'.

30. CW, p. 275.

31. *Ibid.*

SECTION B CULTURE & POLITICS

The last section elaborated Gramsci's notion of culture; this section is concerned to see the relationship between the cultural realm & politics as well as economic relations. What is attempted is a theoretical study of how culture is located within the larger social space & how its relations with what is referred to as 'politics' or economics are articulated. Gramsci attributes to culture & politics charges the way their reciprocal determination is effected. More significantly this changed relationship means that the place of culture in the longer social space is not one of a super-structural third level (apart from politics & economics) but embedded in & through the other processes. The project envisaged is not on idealist culturalism, which would shift Marxism & Leninism from the field of the historical dialectic into 'culture' but rather a new examination of economic, political & cultural relations that rules out any economism or productivism. Whether liberal or "Marxist". In this way it opens a new approach to the complex social whole (of social practices). On these conditions alone culture depends on a materialist' theory. It must be admitted that the attempt is implicit & not developed but they offer the first glimmerings of the attempt to pose the question & offer a response albeit fragmentary. There are certain latent contradictions in dealing with the question as Gramsci continues to be part of the world communist movement of the time. The inability to get away from the principle of universality of the working class and all the theoretical questions that poses.

Yet Gramsci's ambivalence remains valuable in challenging us to think through the implications of the question he raises

In order to understand the theoretical problems raised by this question it is necessary to locate his theory in the historic context of the different European cultural movements

of the time particularly the Leninist moment. Gramsci's theoretical position would be compared with Lenin's & it would be shown that G's thought reveals an unorthodox innovative perspective on the question which differs in significant ways from that of Lenin.

The dialectic of theory and practice In Lenin and Gramsci:

This section takes as its starting point, the question of the relation between theory and practice. This is with reference to the status of theory in relation to praxis. That is, the influence of theory on practice and the influence of practice on theory (mass movements); the relationship of theory to the reality it seeks to change; the question of theory as science and the problem of the organisational form.

Lenin's perspective on the question of theory and practice can be referred to as the representative of the directive view of the theory-practice relationship. This understanding (of theory in its relation to praxis) entails a number of theoretical premises. *These are linked to our argument regarding what it implies for their distinct views of culture and its relationship to politics and production.* It must be stressed as a cautionary point, that just as there are multiple roads leading from Marx, Leninism can also have many paths from it. It is to a particular reading of Lenin embodied in Stalinism and the Comintern in its Stalinist phase that the Gramscian understanding poses a distinctive alternative. The complexity of Lenin's work³² is such as to render monolithic or reductive understandings difficult. This point needs to be stressed, for to over emphasize schematically the gap between Lenin and Gramsci is as futile as stressing their identification. There can be no doubt that Gramsci and Lenin inhabit the same universe, and are the inheritors of Marxism

32. To name one: Scholars have emphasized as a lucid contribution to the elaboration of the theory of mass democracy. Lenin, "On cooperation", *Collected works*, 4th Ed., vol 3, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1966

and the world critical movement. It would be more appropriate to see his work as “a creative and cultural development”³³ of classical Leninism. That would help to appreciate the true complexity of Gramsci’s relation to Lenin.

The model of theory practice relationship found in Gramsci can be referred to as the “pragmatological dialectic”³⁴. It entails that practice is the guiding moment. For Gramsci, “a man of politics writes about philosophy: it could be that his true philosophy should be looked for rather in his writing on politics”.³⁵ This image of theory-practice insists on the practical origins of theory its origin in “reality”. The form of education³⁶ envisaged is that bound up with revolution, with history itself. Practice may not be immediately transparent to itself, but it comes to know itself without any *external*, intervention by theory. Other theses found in Gramsci which support this interpretation: “Truth” can be known only insofar as practice (history) reveals it. Hence any historical judgement must always be understood in terms of the political source for which it serves as a mediation. Gramsci

33. Quoted in W. Adamson, Hegemony and Revolution. A study of Gramsci’s political and cultural theory. California, Univ. of California Press. 1980, p. 60.

34. The description of this dialectic is taken from Adamson’s analysis. For a fuller discussion of how Gramsci came to it through his appropriation of Croce, engagement with Marx and the Russian revolution. See Adamson.

W. Adamson, Hegemony and Revolution. A study of Gramsci’s political and cultural theory. California, University of California Press, 1980, pp. 130-39.

35. SPN, p.403.

36. This relates to the insight by Marx in the third theses on Feuerbach declares :
“The materialistic doctrine concerning the change of circumstances and education forgets that the educator must himself be educated. Hence this doctrine must divide society into two parts. One of which towers above,” Marx in ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ found in K Marx and F. Engles, Selected Works, vol.1, Moscow, Progress, 1977, 4th Printing, p. 13.

called his philosophy “absolute historicism” or “absolute secularization and earthliness of thought”³⁷. The most crucial dimension of social life: the practical and the only theory that does not lead into mysticism is one that conceives itself as comprehension of practice.³⁸

The important elements entailed by this “pragmatological dialectic war were :” the grounding in subjectivity and inter subjectivity namely that whatever political innovations may occur in future history will be products of individuals joined together as a collective will engaged in collective action; the pragmatic conception of prediction;³⁹ the concept of necessity as the need made conscious; the repudiation of all transcendental and speculative notions, including traditional metaphysical materialism; the concept of history’s contemporaneity; of the non-definitiveness of philosophy and of philosophy as a collective activity pursued for practical historical ends. Gramsci’s philosophical outlook resulted from his taking the radical assertions of the theses on Feuerbach with the utmost seriousness: circumstances are changed by men; men are the ensemble of their social relations tips, truth is neither abstract nor timeless and must be proved in practice. His position entailed a categorical denial of the separation of subject and object, of being and thought; one cannot know reality independently of man.

The general picture of social life which emerges in Gramsci’s reappropriation of Marx is that of concrete individuals transforming the natural world in a collective process of social labour. The praxis is not entirely open but there is an implied openness in the historical results of this praxis which, at the very least, seems to preclude any notion that history will necessarily turn out in a particular way.

37. SPN, p. 465.

38. Eight thesis on Feuerbach. Marx. ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ op.cit., p. 15.

39. SPN, p. 438.

Gramsci's estimation of philosophy of praxis itself - "non-definitive philosophy" situated in a particular historical epoch is entirely consistent with this view. A dialectical openness is also consistent with the philosophical mode that he extracted from Croce; the anti-positivism and the critique of commodity fetishism, which led him to distrust historical prediction and the absolute historicism that ruled out transcendental subjects altogether.⁴⁰

What is the image of the theory *practice relationship found in Lenin* ? It is possible to pose the issues raised by Lenin's understanding of the relation, either from the side of theory or from that of practice. From the side of theory, this understanding of theory is: An historically oriented form of political economy that can reveal what practice semi-consciously strives to be because it is able to complete the picture of the social totality by gaining access to those aspects of it that remain hidden to ordinary consciousness.⁴¹ Lenin represents a moment of praxis which sees its role as of conscious political practical organisation and guidance. This view shares with Gramsci's notion of practice an extremely practical realist view of praxis which while accepting the movement of larger historical forces tries to plan and organise at the ground level. Nonetheless this view is marked by a certain understanding of practice which theory must strive to lead, guide and correct. Hence it is the role of theory which is underlined and accorded a privileged position. Practice is seen to some extent secondary, passive. This is related to a central tenet of Marxist-Leninist theory, that of theory as the scientific truth. When theory becomes science claiming for itself absolute knowledge and truth it entails a certain view of practice, and certain consequences for practice. This premise lying latent in Lenin's account means that theory as science necessarily becomes accessible only to the

40. Adamson, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 134-135.

41. The definition is drawn from Adamson's analysis of the directive view of theory and practice.

"leaders of the working class". For Gramsci such an objectification of method leads Marxism to "become an ideology in the worst sense of the word, that is to say, a dogmatic system of eternal and absolute truths"⁴² What is most significant for Gramsci and for his notion of politics, is that this view contributes to widening the social gap between those who know and those who do not know precisely what the revolution is meant to bridge makes it into the opposite of what Gramsci sought. This view of theory is hence necessarily elitist. The directive view in contrast to the Marxist understanding of theory as linked to changing historical circumstances places theory to the level of a scientific truth.

The epistemological basis of the theory-practice relationships found in *Gramsci* offers a radical new departure. His originality lies in viewing truth or knowledge not in conventional terms as rationalist thought looks at it. His is a different conception of truth, knowledge, science, philosophy. Truth or knowledge are absolute having infallible claim.

Gramsci offers a radically different perspective on philosophy, and science and hence the dialectic of theory and practice. This reformulates epistemic foundations of his theory. It is this which serves as a foundation for his innovative view on culture and politics. Gramsci precludes the establishment of an absolute truth for all time. Rather the beginnings of a genuine philosophy must be sought in an attitude already existing and *not imposed externally*⁴³ G makes it quite clear that the philosophy of praxis does not seek to construct its own 'rigorous science' (like a mathematical theory) but rather to make critical an already existing worldview. For Gramsci philosophy of praxis offers such a "critical" but systematic, coherent philosophy. It must be able to come to grips with the problem of

42. Gramsci SPN, p. 395.

43. In this respect Gramsci is closer to Hegel who also proceeds by means of a critique of forms of consciousness.

fusing the systematic worldview to the naive, unreflective and incoherent view of the masses. Hence it is important to start with philosophy and that attitude which is so much a part of everyday life. Gramsci is concerned to elaborate the phenomenological movement which makes its point of beginning from a 'critique of common sense' to a 'philosophy of praxis'. That is, the 'good sense' in the common sense must fuse with philosophy to form a radically different perspective⁴⁴. This different conception of philosophy and truth has built into itself a continuity between science, knowledge and practice (or culture).

In Gramsci's view the only conception of philosophy which is concretely, historicist is one that leads to correct practice. This is critical emerging from history. It does not believe infallibly in the truth claim about itself. In formulating this idea Gramsci showed himself to be sensitive to an extremely neglected area in Marxist political and cultural theory: the phenomenological and historical basis of philosophy of praxis.

The embodiment of this revolutionary theory into a particular political and organisational form of politics is important for our argument. The directive strategy entails a particular organisational form. While Lenin oscillated between a more elitist forms⁴⁵ and a more democratic form⁴⁶

He eventually embraces a centralized party vanguardism. The vision of a party which is centralized and concentrated committed group of revolutionaries follows directly from the conception of a directive theory practice relationship. The party is seen as a sole

44. For detailed analysis of this new perspective and of the movement from common sense to philosophy see the Section entitled political education in this chapter.

45. What is to be done (1902)

46. State and revolution 1917.

political force in possession of the Marxist truth as guidance for politics.

From the side of practice this view regards practice or reality as a passive object to be acted upon by a leading theory. This view is marked by an understanding of practice which theory must strive to lead, guide and correct. Practice cannot know itself Lenin does reveal a healthy respect for the active moment in practice but his work is also marked by a view of practice as essentially to be led. At the least this presumption implies a temporal dimension of looking at practice as post facto after the theoretical act. At worst the logical relationship between the two is one of prioritising theory over practice. Thus in contrast to the Marxist tenet of the dialectical inseparability of theory and practice. One aspect of the relationship appears in a relationship of hierarchy. One of the crucial planks of the Leninist view of theory-practice relationship is its conception of the historical agent as the carriers of collective historical progress. The Leninist directive view sees individuals or groups as objects of its theoretical activity. The activity of individuals and groups in this political action is necessarily one of acting out a role assigned to them. The doctrine necessarily divides society into two parts one of which towers above. The image is of a led proletariat. The view is of two social processes "reality" and "thought" separable and meeting in *an externally determined relationships*. For Lenin the role of the radical intellectual is a vanguardist one.

Lenin's understanding has its basis in an extremely pessimistic analysis of worker's "consciousness". It sees the gap between empirical and imputed consciousness to be won by an external relationship. Lenin's solution is an organisational one. It is a matter of "consciousness" overcoming popular "spontaneity" by a political pedagogical process led by the party-state. Lenin's theory of the theory-practice relationship is one of intense pedagogical activity guided under the vanguardist party. This view is monist not only in

its denial of pluralist forms of organisation, association on even the structure and form of organisation but also in its conception of politics and praxis. This takes us to Lenin's notion of the political what *his theorization of the 'autonomy of political'* amounted to.

It could be argued that Lenin's notion of the political and the revolutionary process entails a certain conception of the state.

The Leninist view point held to a theory of a state which conceived it in terms of an exploitative instrument of the dominant classes. This view was not sensitive to the varying forms of state power. In this sense all states were essentially dictatorships despite their varying constitutional forms. The dictatorship of the proletariat was no different from any other state except for its preparatory role in human emancipation.

This economistic view of the class-state relationship embodied in the Second International was criticized by Lenin. Lenin's concept of revolutionary crisis⁴⁷ was adopted by Gramsci as a critique of economism. Revolutionary crisis as a 'unity of rapture' required as its condition the entry of the masses, a crisis at the political level and a serious economic situation. This broke with the *catastrophic conception of the crisis*.⁴⁸ as well as the revisionist answer of a gradualist transition.

It is significant that Gramsci, went beyond Lenin in theorizing the notion of an extended state and the complex organisation of super-structures in a crisis. The state is not just an instrument in the hands of a class that 'Wields' it. It extends beyond the class or fraction bringing into play mechanisms that are infinitely more complex.⁴⁹ (cultural institutions)

47. Found in Buci-Glucksmann's account. Buci-Glucksmann, Gramsci and the State, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

48. That is an economic crisis producing the collapse of Capitalism, the transition to socialism.

49. This expansion in the State concept in no way can be reduced to a mere shift towards super-structural (or cultural) field alone as many interpretations have maintained. For an deep in discussion see the section on 'Hegemony' in this study.

Lenin's anti-economistic thesis continued to be reductionist i.e. regard the state instrumentally. It was a state-ist conception which conceived state in an one-dimensional way.

The implications for their respective theories of revolution are: Lenin's view is marked by a 'centralism' which sees the capture of state power as the final goal of revolutionary transformation.⁵⁰ Gramsci saw the revolution as a continuous movement which linked the 'before' and 'after' of the revolution.⁵¹ Lenin conceives power instrumentally as capture of state power was enough.⁵²

This view fails to see the complexity of a counter-hegemonic struggle, and its national popular basis.⁵³ Above all "... Destruction is concerned mechanically not as destruction/construction".⁵⁴

This has two important consequences for Lenin's notion of the 'political'.

Lenin's *theory of the party* reproduces the character of the state. The revolutionary party is the anti-state of the working class. The form of organisation reconstitutes the same level of homogeneity and centralism.⁵⁵

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50. Lenin's view tended to be caught in the Luxemborgian dichotomy 'reform' or 'revolution' which failed precisely to see the complexity of the social process.
 51. For Gramsci, the struggle to overthrow capitalism and build socialism is essentially a continuum, in which the actual transfer of power is only one moment.
 52. Lenin, later in his life came to realize that there is more to revolution than the 'moment' of overthrow.
 53. If the state is juridico-political apparatus expressing a class subject the state would simply have to be destroyed. According to the Statinized-Leninist problematic, the proletaran revolution is already there, like a fruit which falls from a tree when it gets ripe.
 54. SPN, p. 168.
 55. This argument is suggested by Biagio de Giovanni in his essay 'Lenin and Gramsci: State, Politics and Party' in Monffe (ed.), *Gramsci and Marxist theory*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p. 264.

Secondly consequence relates to the *Site(s) of the political*. The domain of the political is conceived in terms of the State and the 'practices' of the working class represented by the party.

In Gramsci, the *sites of the political* are the institutions of civil society which are the arena of national popular contestation. Gramsci, hence expands the meaning of 'political' into cultural politico institutions.⁵⁶ The terrain of political struggle is extended to encompass the 'cultural field'. Significantly the struggle for statepower must be simultaneously a 'cultural revolution' which institutes a national-popular collective will.

(2) POLITICAL EDUCATION IN GRAMSCI, MARX AND LENIN.

Gramsci's perspective on theory-practice is one that can be referred to as the pragmatological one in which practice is the guiding moment. This view insists on the practical origins of theory, its origins in 'reality'. Practice may not be immediately transparent to itself but it comes to know itself without any *external* intervention by theory. Rather than an external, and leading relationship being posited Gramsci would insist on the historical continuity of theory and practice and of revolutionary experience.

In Gramsci we find an attempt to develop a deeper and future pragmatological Marxism (in his prison writings) by coming to grips with the central questions *regarding the nature of practical political learning* on political education.

In this section we shall try to show that this is what distinguishes Gramsci from the theoretical inseparability of theory and practice posed in Marx on one hand⁵⁷ and the directive approach of Lenin on the other. Gramsci notion of politics of practical learning

56. That is the Church, School, Parties, press etc.

57. One important strand in Marx's account is also pragmatological. However Marx did little to probe what can be called the *politics of practical learning* found in Gramsci.

forms the Key fulcrum of his theory practice dialectic. It brings together certain central ideas of Gramsci's thought which serve to highlight what is really novel in his thought.

It may be argued that Marx's entire epistemological and anthropological understanding lies in the *concept of social labour*. As the first and third thesis on Feuerbach suggest, only a pedagogical theory grounded in the self activity of social labour is able to explain the formation of class consciousness. Marx here avoids the dilemma of "who shall educate the educator. Similarly in the Holy family Marx referred to the source of proletarian consciousness as the "harsh but hardening school of labour"⁵⁸ Which the worker does not go through "in vain"⁵⁹. Yet he also recognized that the worker's "powers" under capitalism - including those of logical inference, moral and aesthetic judgement even of perception - are so, depleted as to render the worker hardly more than "an appendage of the machine" he operates⁶⁰. The problem implied by this contrast is not that the pedagogy of the school of labour is counter productive simply because its pupils emerge from it so ill equipped. As Hegel had suggested in the master/slave dialectic the slave (worker) needs to be stripped of every human determination in order to achieve a consciousness of himself as pure humanity and therefore a breakthrough to consciousness.

The problem is that once this break through has been achieved *it is unclear* how the workers in capitalist society can then build a personality complete with "powers" necessary for revolution in a labour process which continues to deprive him of embodied subjectivity. Marx never offered a systematic discussion aimed at overcoming this perplexity. Marx did

58. Robert Tucker (ed), *The Marx-Engels Reader* NY, Norton, 1972, p. 105.

59. The dehumanization of the worker did not render him (her) passive. It was a source of strength, even of wisdom.

60. Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

not spell out precisely how the need to revolt is learned and subjectively comprehended.⁶¹ In Marx's writings and especially the Holy Family only this much is clear: the "school of labour", coupled to the revolutionary process does makes the proletariat active and critically aware. *The proletariat, then is schooled by the double praxis of labour and revolution educates the theorist or is the theorist-who is then in a position to clarify the nature of practice to itself.* This should not imply however that the meaning of practice is immediately transparent. Practice comes to understand itself through itself alone but only in the long run. It does so, in large part because of the "school of praxis"..⁶² (labour and revolution). Precisely how this will be experienced in a concrete situation is never convincingly elaborated. At various other places in his writings Marx's response is: the school of labour came to be supplemented on a theoretical level with conceptions of proletarian pedagogy which relied to some degree on outside "educators"⁶³ Marx worked

61. The answer proposed is the contention that when the worker achieves self recognition of his pure humanity through being deprived of all concrete determinations, he thereby acquires powers of concentration, perception and self-understanding which, though remains latent because inactive, may become manifest during on economic crisis or even simply when the worker qua objective commodity is re-united with his embodied subjectivity. Marx, *writings of the Y Marx on Philosophy and society* (ed.): and tr. LD Easton and KH Guddat, NY, Garden City, 1967.
62. Because the abstraction of all humanity and even the semblance of humanity is practically complete in the fully developed proletariat, because the conditions of life of the, proletariat bring all the conditions of present society into a most inhuman focus because man is lost in the proletariat but at the same time has won a theoretical awareness of that loss and is driven to revolt against this inhumanity by urgent, patient and absolutely compelling need (the practical expression of necessity) therefore the proletariat can and must emancipate itself". Marx, *ibid.*, p. 368.
63. Adamson hints at these conceptions of worker's education in his account of intellectual evolution of Marx. Adamson, 'Hegemony and Revolution, *op.cit*, ch.3.

with atleast two images of won key education. The first of these might be termed the "therapeutic image". Since the role is that of a non-directive therapist who is wakening the world from its own dreams, only facilitates but does not impose a new and correct praxis⁶⁴. Sometimes however he advocated a "directive image" in which bourgeois intellectuals would play an active educative role in bringing the proletariat to critical consciousness. However as Adamson has shown⁶⁵ this relationship came painfully close to dividing the proletariat "into two parts - one of which towers above". Hence, what is clear is that there are certain ambiguities in the Marxist corpus over political education and proletarian culture. In his more 'pragmatological' works he sees the answer in a fusion of school of labour with school of revolution without explaining how it is to be brought about. In his more 'directive' writings the image is of a directive educator.

Gramsci who in contrast came to Marxism through the trajectory of Croce, Salvemuni (on the question of political education) and the practice of Russian revolution - stressed and worked out in some detail a comprehensive theory of political education. It is true to say that Gramsci's collective perspective on political education represents a conceptual revolution in the history of thinking on the subject which grasped the revolution beyond the "school of labour" or "school of revolution" terms. It represented a conceptual revolution for it embodies the central idea indicated in the Third theses on Feuerbach that political education prior to revolution was instrinsically connected to the possibility of a future society and was a unity of self activity of citizens and the educator (who too needs

64. This may be found in Marx's early writings contribution to the critique of Hegel's philos of Law (1844), On the Jewish question (1843), EPM (1844).

65. Adamson, op.cit, Ch3.

educating). Gramsci made the idea a central theoretical motif of his theory. Practice dialectic as well as his theory of cultural change i.e. his philosophy of praxis". He expanded and clarified the idea at many levels and gave it an institutional form. It is important for it helped Gramsci to rearticulate the relationship between culture and politics.

At the other pole of comparison Gramsci's theory of political education offers an alternative conception to the dichotomies of Luxembiergian "either/or" - reform or revolution. A brief comparison of Gramsci with Lenin should help to define this view and to indicate how it transcends any "reform or revolution" dichotomy.

Revolution seen as a polar opposite strategy to 'reform' is seen as the violent conquest of political power by the workers. Central to this view is the expectation that "objective historical forces" will produce a "crisis of capitalism" in which a well organized working class will seize a momentary opportunity to gain control of the state consolidate its power and only then proceed to the creation of appropriate social relations.

Leninist revolution entails seizure of the organized political power of the state which is made possible by the proper organization of a professional vanguard and a breakdown in the economic viability of the capitalist state power is conceived instrumentally. Political education in this perspective is seen to be either irrelevant or a question of raising the consciousness of the people through a directive strategic practice, military technique and through propaganda.

In Gramsci's case where the concept of revolution is not instrumentalist political education is needed to come to grips with questions concerning how an "alternative hegemony" or "historical bloc" is to be built. Gramsci values his theory of practical learning

experience at 3 levels the phenomenological/psychological one, institutional one and the societal level.

Gramsci's theory of revolution must incorporate a theory of political education, encompassing at the phenomenological level a psychology of education, but also a theory of political organisation and a theory of the "public" and (the state Political education is concerned with these interrelated levels. In brief.

— at the psychological level Gramsci is concerned with the character of "ordinary consciousness" or "common sense" and how it is to be developed through primary and secondary socialization and how is it to be internalized and what soul of pedagogy best serves the development of a politically "critical consciousness" and how is this process to be grasped theoretically.

All the institutional level Gramsci identifies the institutions - schools community organisations, work counsels etc) to facilitate the transformation of a "commonsense" into politically "critical consciousness. Gramsci is concerned to think out the proper relationship between the "teacher-pupil" or "leaders-masses" and how can a political pedagogy be organized and promoted democratically without being imposed in a "totalitarian fashion".

At the societal level Gramsci's thought is marked by an attempt to conceive of the practical learning as a social process. The question with which he is concerned is how such institutions be infused with a reinforced by a general cultural creation as well as by the social activities of everyday life. How can social order be holistically and practically understood in pedagogical terms?

(3) LENIN ON 'CULTURE':-

It is important to bear in mind that despite the use of similar terms, the different meaning which thinkers attribute to those words changes the structure of their theoretical

understanding. It would be argued in this section that Lenin's understanding of culture and the meaning he assigns to it changes the way he conceives the relationship between culture and politics. The dominant view in Lenin on culture *reveals a strongly instrumentalist vision*. In Gramsci, too is found a close association between art, politics and socialism. However he distinguishes history of art from that of culture and theorized the autonomy of the 'cultural'. *Culture is not understood narrowly or instrumentally*. Culture for Lenin must serve the party spirit. In one of the most controversial texts Lenin puts the point thus:

"What is the principle of party literature Literature must become part of the common cause, of the proletariat, 'a cog and a screw' of one single great social democratic mechanism set in motion by the entire politically conscious vanguard of the entire working class. Literature must become a component of organised planned and integrated social-democratic party work.⁶⁶

Literature must be by all means an element of party work. Lenin's image is of total control by the party.⁶⁷ Literature must be linked to the proletarian cause.⁶⁸

In Bolsheviks thinking propaganda is closely identified with agitation and class conflict⁶⁹. Clearly the instrumental view of art no longer distinguishes between agitation

66. Lenin, On Literature and art, Moscow, Progress, 1978, 4th Printing, p. 26. article written in 1905.

67. "... from the beginning to end, without any exception in it the life stream of the living proletarian cause ..."

68. "Every newspaper, journal, publishing house etc. must immediately set about reorganizing its work, leading up to a situation in which it well in one form or another be integrated in one party organisation or another". Ibid. p. 29.

69. This point is made sharply in Richard Taylor, 'The Spark that Became a Flame; The Bolsheviks, Propaganda and the Cinema' In TH Rigby, Brown and P Reddaway (eds), Authority, Power and policy in the USSR, Macmillan, 1983, Second Reprint.

and propaganda on one hand and artistic creativity on the other Art has a social responsibility and a social function nothing more, nothing else. Lenin combines the view of art for socialist ends with his idea that party would play a leading and dominant role in the proletariat's struggle to achieve socialism: an assumption of political elitism combined with a narrow conception of art. Significantly a curious ambivalence marks Leninist views on art and culture which has been subject to much criticism. Despite his claim to build on entirely new social order, on questions of art and culture he is against those (Futurists, the Proletkult movt) who wished to create from scratch a new proletarian culture, destroying all remnants of the old'. "We are far too 'iconoclastic'. We must preserve the beautiful take it as a model proceed from it even if it is 'old'. Why should we turn away from the truly beautiful, rejecting it as the standing point for further development, merely, because it is 'old'. Why should we bow down before the new, as if before a God to which we have to submit merely because 'it is new' Nonsense utter nonsense".

The view of culture which emerges is that of a 'high' culture, cultivation⁷⁰ and of making people enlightened⁷¹ Gramsci in contrast starts from the cultural life of the people taking that as the basis which is the distinguishing characteristic of Gramsci's ideas on culture. For him it is not so much a question of old or new but whether it arises from and feels one with the national-popular element.

In a draft resolution for the Proletariat Congress that Lenin drew up in Oct 1970 he reiterated this view:

"Marxism has won its historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois

70. the 'old' which he seeks to preserve.

71. "on cooperation", vol 33, pp 467-75.

epoch, it has on the contrary, assimilated and refashioned everything of value in the more than 2000 years of the development of human thought and culture.

Nevertheless, Lenin's assessment of the proper role of art in Soviet Russia is made quite explicit in this resolution. Art is seen as part of the process of education which in this case means political education or indoctrination.

"All educational work in the Soviet Republic of workers and peasants, in the field of political education in general and in the field of art in particular should be endued with the spirit of the class struggle".⁷²

Another distinguishing feature of Lenin. View on culture and 'cultural tasks' of the revolution⁷³ is that he viewed these to be ex-post-fact i.e. to be engaged in after the revolution in social relations had been completed. This rendered his view of culture essentially secondary and narrow. The task of diffusion of ideas after class consciousness achieved.

Lenin saw a linear progression from agitation, propaganda to organisation. He was not sensitive to the specificity and the special logic of the cultural struggle. The most important aspect of Lenin's conception of 'cultural revolution' to which he returned time and again was the full appropriation of bourgeoisie culture itself.

"We must take the entire culture tat capitalism left behind and build socialism with it we must take all its science, technology, knowledge and art"⁷⁴. The basic question is 'how to unite the victorious proletarian revolution with bourgeois culture, with bourgeois science

72. Lenin, Collected Works, vol XXXI, pp 316-17.

73. It could be argued that Lenin does not have a conception of a cultural revolution; rather he has a notion of certain cultural tasks of the revolution.

74. Lenin, collected works, vol 29, p. 70.

and technology, which up to now has been the property of the few"⁷⁵. Bourgeoisie culture had to be completely appropriated and simultaneously democratized.⁷⁶ Contrary to prescribed theory, the political and social revolution in Russia preceded the cultural revolution, preceded the normal development of bourgeois civilization. But this should not deter us from the task of socialist construction, for we can now achieve 'the pre-requisites for that definite level'⁷⁷ of culture in a revolutionary way'.

One of the problems with Lenin's formulation is that the critical moment in the appropriation of bourgeois culture almost always remains vague and unstated.⁷⁸ It is the argument of Claudin-Urrundo⁷⁹ that Lenin tends to see the problem as one of linear acquisition of culture rather than a simultaneous transformation. The ideological elements of bourgeois culture are played down in favour of the neutral or historically progressive ones.

Lenin's post 1917 writings suggest that he would have seen no need for a cultural revolution if socialist transformation had begun in the more developed Western capitalist countries or had Russia itself advanced further along the Capitalist road.⁸⁰

75. Quoted in Alfred Meyer, *Leninism*, New York 1962, p. 212.

76. For Lenin as well as for Trotsky and Bukharen democratization of existing culture was a cornerstone in the struggle against bureaucracy against Michel's Iron law of oligarchy.

77. Lenin, CW vol 33, pp. 274-75, 478-79 quoted in Carmen Siriani.

78. (Siriani takes up Claudin - Urrundo's argument on this point but nonetheless criticizes her for ignoring some of the more critical moments in Lenin work.

79. Claudin-Urrundo, Lenin and the cultural revolution, trans Brian Pearce Suxxes, Harvestic Press, 1977.

80. For Lenin, learning communism meant acquiring the skills needed for the economic revival of Russia, along modern technical lines. This argument is also found in Robert C Tucker 'Lenin's Bolshevism as a Culture in the Making' in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenoz and Richard Stites, (eds.), Bolshevik Culture, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985, p. 33.

Nothing brings out the contrast with Gramsci's theory of cultural revolution more clearly. Gramsci offered a radical new theory of cultural revolution specifically for conditions of advanced capitalism where modern forms of civil society changed the relationship of culture and politics.

Lenin's views reveal a highly evolutionist and objectivist conception of development in Russia. Siriani⁸¹ has developed a more nuanced account of Lenin's 'cultural revolution' by arguing that he did not ignore the transformative or critical moments of cultural acquisition.⁸²

But Siriani notes that this critical position was never well developed and after 1917 tended to become submerged beneath the dominant conception of cultural revolution as the mere appropriation of bourgeois culture.

The two components—proletarian State power and bourgeois knowledge and technique⁸³—must simply be brought together into the happy union for which they were destined.

This betrays a highly productivist or evolutionist logic which established the theoretical horizon for debates on question of culture and politics.⁸⁴ Lenin spoke as if there were

81. Siriani, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

82. Lenin's slogan of 'the international culture of democracy' took from each national culture only its democratic and socialist elements. In his dispute with Prolektult (movement for proletarian culture) in 1920 his position was again critical. "the best elements of the existing culture must be developed from the point of view of the Marxist world outlook ..." in CW, vol 42, p. 217, and pp. 297-298., found in Siriani., *ibid.* p. 297-298.

83. Lenin's definition of what constituted culture and administrative, technical approach.

84. It could be argued that a productivist and evolutionist problematic lay at the heart of Leninist theory even as he tried to challenge it, perceiving its problems and hence shifting emphasis to mass action and emancipatory critique.

a set of neatly pre-determined stages through which people must go in their cultural liberation first at the school of the bourgeoisie.”⁸⁵ Whatever new socialist culture was to arise “must be the logical development of the store of Knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, landowner, and bureaucratic society”.⁸⁶

Significant and-at this point a crucial contrast with Gramsci emerges - this kind of conception precluded a specific revolutionary struggle on the terrain of culture (or ideology understood widely) as was propounded by prolecult movement. Gramsci conception of cultural revolution proposed a struggle on the terrain of culture, a ‘cultural politics’ where culture is understood broadly. This followed from the theoretical insight that the political economic and cultural spheres were relatively autonomous and a distinct movement of conscious intervention and transformation in cultural - a cultural struggle was made imperative in every area of daily life.

Hence, a real theoretical difference lay in Lenin's rejection of the meet for a specific struggle in the domain of culture to create a new socialist culture and civilization⁸⁷

One important distinguishing premise of Lenin's theoretical understanding is the lack of sensitivity to the culture of the people or folk culture and necessity of starting from that basis to move towards a philosophy of praxis. It is this respect that Gramsci's phenomenological conception of culture which takes as its starting point the everyday practices of the people nation, the national popular common sense of the nation offers a distinctive and novel alternative.

85. Siriani, *op.cit.*, p. 298.

86. Lenin, CW, vol 31 p. 287 quoted in Simiani, *ibid.* p. 298.

87. This was again because questions of culture were seen to be of administrative, organisation and technical control. Capitalism, Lenin held had already provided the elements required for socialist construction discipline and organisation.

For Lenin culture is seen in its narrow manifestations and not a question of way of life or mode of living.

Hence in Lenin's theoretical position not only is Marxism a truth" a science which the party vanguard comes to realize but this leads him to have a narrow conception of other aspect of social practice namely culture.

The meaning attributed to culture reveals itself in marked contrast to Gramsci's understanding.⁸⁸

(4) CULTURE AND POLITICS IN GRAMSCI:-

Gramsci represents what has been referred to as the pragmatological dimensions of Marxism which emphasizes the practice as part of social activity. What is the conception of base and super structure entailed by this model. An analysis of that would offer an understanding of how he relates culture to other aspects of social life.

Against those orthodox Marxists for whom the "base" stood for what was material in life and super structure its more reflection, Gramsci always visited that ideology must be understood as a cultural product and culture in turn is the central feature of civil society. Gramsci theorization of civil society enabled him to reconstitute the relationship between base and super structure which had direct implications for his views on culture, politics and production. Rather than transform ideological super-structure into culture took civil society and made it the site of cultural-social processes and called it ambiguously a social space between state and economy. Adamsan has argued that Gramsci relocated civil

88. Lenin came to view culture as "cultivation and hence to be acquisition of knowledge and skill. For him culture is essentially a question of literacy and propaganda.

society, to the level of super-structure.⁸⁹ It is apparently so, but a much more suggestive operation lies at the heart of this theoretical reconstitution. The proletariat must gain control of the means of collective violence as the foundation for its political dominance. Such a view of political power is related to a theory of the state as a mere exploitative instrument of the dominant classes. We have seen this in Lenin's conception of the theory-practice dialectic and his notion of the political⁹⁰

By marking out civil society from the state and economy on the one hand and the private family etc. on the other Gramsci is able to point to *a social space* that is neither 'base' nor 'super-structure' as conventionally understood. It in fact breaks down the dichotomous boundaries of base and super-structure.

It would be instructive to briefly trace the genesis of the concept in Gramsci.

As he freely acknowledged Gramsci used civil society in a fundamentally Hegelian sense.⁹¹

I also pointed to Croce as the essential inspiration for these moves⁹² but as Bobbio

89. Adamson, Hegemony and Revolution CH. 7 to put it another way : According to Adamson what Gramsci did was to reconstitute the economic structure - the core elements of the productive forces and then to take the relation of production together with Government and culture as civil society. Adamson, Op. Cit. Ch. 7 see also Gramsci SPN p. 208 and pp. 234-235

90. This reformulation, it is our intention to show, enables G to have a different concept of culture, politics and production and distinguishes it from not only Lenin, Italian Marxists and also Marx.

91. "One must distinguish civil society, as Hegel understood it and as it has frequently been used in these notes (that is, in the sense of the cultural and political hegemony of a social group within the whole of society as the ethical content of the state) from the sense which the Catholics give it where civil society is in stead political society or the state, confronting the society of family and church" cited in Adamson p 218.

92. QC. 858(1130) cited in Adamson p. 218.

points out both owed considerable debts to Hegel.

Gramsci was at one with Hegel in including within civil society not only economic division of labour, but also the corporations, the administration of justice and the police.

For both theorists it involves that new public conflict zone which has been differentiated out and their freed from the control of both the private sphere of family and the governmental institutions of kingship, law making and bureaucracy.

Likewise for both it is an aspect of the state as a whole, specifically that part of it which in Hegel's terms, fulfills the human needs of citizens for "livelihood, happiness and a legal status" (i.e. economic, cultural and political needs.) as distinguished from that part of the state which rules and regulates citizens from centralized institutions of authority. Initially it appears that all Gramsci has done is to relativize the content of Hegel's civil society.⁹³ Its particular content in any concrete case is always the outcome and the object of political struggle and depends ultimately on which "social group" has been and is becoming national popular and hegemonic. Hence Gramsci can recognize a possibility which Hegel could not: that of proletarian Civil Society in which worker councils substitute for corporations and the political party for the police.

However Gramsci's differences with Hegel are significant and bring us to the central strand of the argument. This is exemplified by Gramsci's relation to Croce and Marx. To summarize the argument: The concept of civil society in Gramsci operates through a double historical and theoretical field.

The concept of civil society is seen as involved in a double network that defines its functioning and goes beyond the Hegelian and even the Marxian model of 'civil society'.

93. Adamson, *op. cit.* ch 7.

On one hand it has its basis in the conditions of material life, 'capitalist forms' to the private system of production.

This must be underlined to defined Gramsci against idealist on culturalist interpretations of Gramsci.⁹⁴ On the other hand Gramsci is concerned to think out the relationship between 'state' and 'society' i.e. civil society. This involves Gramsci in a highly original operation which has broadly two aspects to it.

At 1 level civil society must be somehow distinguishable from the state so that it can be independently conquered; otherwise the tactic of creating an alternative hegemony would make little sense. But an the other hand civil society must be linked to the state to the degree that its conquest will be guaranteed to have political ramifications.

Gramsci's attempt was to make conceptually clear how the state and civil society could be both separate and linked in the required sense.⁹⁵

This led Gramsci to theorize the civil society as the *site* of cultural social processes i.e. the ideological and cultural apparatuses of hegemony, the educative aspect of the social process. Equally significantly Gramsci gave a expanded conception of the state in contrast to its identification with government.

"We are still on the terrain of the identification of state and government - an identification which is precisely a representation of the economic-corporate form, in other words of the confusion between civil society and political society.

For it should be remarked that the general notion of the state includes elements which need to be referred back to the notion of civil society (in the sense that one might say that

94. Buci-Glucksmann and Adamson defined Gramsci on this point against Bobbio and Anderson. It is dealt below.

95. Adamson, op.cit p. 215.

state = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of Courcion".⁹⁶

Civil society as the centre of cultural institutions is separate from the state but linked to state as well as the economy.

This enables Gramsci to rearticulate the relationship between base and super-structure as well as between culture, politics and production relations.

What is relevant for our analysis of the place of culture in relation to the total social space is the question whether civil society is part of the base or the super-structure. Gramsci does point to the cultural, ideological elements, institutions located in the civil society. It seems to be as Gramsci makes references to civil society as a consensual aspect of the state. This interpretation is further reinforced by his references to civil society as standing between "the economic structure and the state", However in Gramsci's account the two are linked. Hence he sees the economy as "making incursions into civil society"⁹⁷ and to the logic of political action as being distinct from economic action such that politics may be considered an autonomous science. Yet it does not follow as some interpreters have concluded that Gramsci has *reversed* the Marxian image and assigned primacy to the super-structure.⁹⁸

96. Gramsci SPN, *op. cit.* pp. 262-263.

97. Gramsci, SPN, *op. cit.* p. 235.

98. According to Bobbio, Gramsci locates "the focal point, the theatre of all history *elsewhere*" civil society is defined as belonging to the super-structure as the determining element in Gramsci. Bobbio-, "... both in Marx and Gramsci and civil society and not the state, as in Hegel, represents the active and positive stage in historical development. However in Marx this stage is a 'structural phenomenon while in G it is super-structural'" (p 83) N. Bobbio, 'Gramsci's conception of civil society' in Keane, ed. 'Civil Society and the State'.

Adamson has argued rightly that any such idea flies in the face of G's self proclaimed Marxism and turns him into an idealist. The novelty of the idea of civil society lies not so much in its topographical placement but the set of institutions and processes which form part of its social space and their two sided relationship with the state on one hand and economy on the other. In so doing Gramsci reconstituted the relationship of state/politics to civil society and hence between culture and politics. A more realistic assessment in face of idealist interpretations would be that Gramsci held the idea of the primacy of the economic in the traditional Marxist way⁹⁹ but altered its role within the theory of revolution.¹

Thus the distinction between the cultural sphere of civil society and the governmental sphere of political society could now be treated simply as an analytical distinction within the larger totality of the state.² Fascism had dramatized the degree to which popular consent could be used to gain political power and how political power in turn could be consolidated through consensual appeals. It demonstrated how easily elites could mobilize existing 'i.e. sense' (popularism) in anti-progressive directions. In the complex civil societies of the West, cultural practices and beliefs served as the foundation of all politics, and political society had unprecedented power to influence, manipulate and even reshape culture. Gramsci maintained that despite any genuine spiritual dimensions culture may have, it must always be understood as living domination of some classes over others.

99. It is correct to define Gramsci's materialism i.e. foundations of civil society in the relations of production. But Gramsci still effects a creative development of Leninism by postulating the relationship between state and Hegemonic apparatuses.

1. Buci-Glucksmann also defines a similar theses and argues that this expansion of the state has implications for the problem of revolutionary strategy. pp 69-76, (ch3), p 413 fn 5, 91.
2. What Buci-Glucksmann refers to as the 'expanded concept of the State'. Buci-Glucksmann, op.cit. ch 3.

This fact is especially palpable in advanced western countries where spheres of politics and culture have become so intertwined as to be virtually indistinguishable. Yet political society would not always be able to mobilize culture.

Thus Gramsci could appreciate the linkages of culture and politics, and so avoid the crude conception of ideology as an instrumentality of politics on which one stream of classical Marxism had relied. He could also appreciate, much better than classical Marxism had done, that culture might have a measure, of autonomy from politics.

One of the ventures of Gramsci's account is that by situating culture in civil society and by making civil society interact with political society as dual aspects of the state, he is able to capture the mutual interaction and co-determination of culture and politics.

What is important for our understanding of the relationship of culture and politics in Gramsci is that Gramsci accepts the primacy given to economic production processes and would not deny that the political can be traced back to the capital-labour relation. However he adds two important distinctions.

Gramsci saw that crucial political struggles in modern western societies occur in the civil society and these have a fundamentally cultural character. Moreover while the state may be a coercive instrument it manages to secure the consent and legitimacy of the populace through moral, cultural institutions which are located in the civil society. Thus Gramsci formulated in a significant manner what can be called *the politics and culture of civil society*. For Gramsci the conflicts of civil society are political in three separate senses. They not only make economic contracts and the dividing of labour product but also and more importantly the expression of political points of view (by political as well as cultural institutions like parties, religious groups, institutions, organs of information in order to influence the political idealizations of the masses and the

institutional nature and boundaries of civil society itself. Equally significantly Gramsci recognized the moral-cultural basis and import of the struggles of civil society. In *so doing* Gramsci *significantly altered the relation of culture to state*. Civil society through its apparatuses of cultural intellectual hegemony may ensure *the conditions* of the state. State for Gramsci is an element of coercion with no ethical content. In Gramsci may be found varying (partially conflicting) accounts of the state. At time Gramsci argues that state is the balance between political and civil society. At other times it is political society. (legal ideology) These diverse notions of state point to the complexity of the relationship between state and civil society in modern society. The net result is the reconstitution of the boundaries of culture and politics and the space attributed to them.³

Gramsci shifted from Hegel's correlation of civil society with 'needs and state with spiritual life to the

Correlation of civil society with consent and state with domination. This move is a transposition from Croce. Unlike Croce however Gramsci treated the dichotomics of force/consent domination/hegemony and state/civil society as aspects of public life or the state in the broad sense rather than as a division of public/private. Moreover because he accepted the Hegelian equation of civil society + political society = state, he insisted against Croce on the *simultaneously cultural and political character of civil society*.⁴

The great novelty of Gramsci, lies in the fact that civil society becomes the location of all cultural or "ethical life" publicly expressed. Gramsci conceived civil society as a field of cultural-political struggle and as a mediation of public and private.

3. Buci-Glucksmann. *op. cit.*, p. 69.

4. Adamson, *op. cit.* p. 322.

What is extremely interesting and politically significant is that civil society serves to look at culture and politics in a new way in a theory of revolution. Culture understood in this way. (interlinked to civil society) changes the role of economy and hence politics in a theory of revolution. For Gramsci the political-cultural effect was an activist strategy aimed at building of an alternative cultural-political bloc, cultured in his early life in factory-based institutions.⁵ (Until they were defeated) and later in a party expressing the national-popular collective will.

For Gramsci to narrowly conceive of the political in terms of capital-labour relation within production had led in practical terms to a theory of rev which was automatic or trade-union economic. Gramsci's analysis of civil society points to altering the space and role of culture within the social whole and hence also extending the notion of politics. Both culture, politics are reconstituted in a new relationship.

Why and how Gramsci thought of civil society in this universal manner is related to the insight that economic crises do not by themselves lead to intense class struggle. His own experience after the war, when Italian economic conditions were in complete chaos must have convinced him that the key factors in producing revolution were political and cultural rather than economic.

From this Gramsci draw a conclusion for revolutionary theory. It could not merely direct and hope that objective conditions provide consciousness. The philosophy of a

5. In 1919 he had seen the Turinese workers councils as the central institution in an emerging proletarian component of civil society; and they are simultaneously economic, political and cultural. Indeed it is in the way they integrate each of these aspects that Gramsci found their chief strength.

praxis" would have to learn to be a cultural force and not as in Nikolar Bukharen's popular manual, as a positivist science⁶.

Gramsci was also led to the realization that Italy's growth into a modern nation state require that it develop an hegemonic (integrated, unified and nation-popular) culture which it lacked under fascism. Thus the Risorgimento was a passive revolution a non-national popular non-hegemonic political movement that succeeds at the expense of a for more progressive rival and so was fascism. Italian national politics has always been of this sort because the jacoben force representing the moment of popular and cultural politics-necessary to galvanize at the political, cultural and intellectual level i.e. hegemonic had always been lacking.

In this analysis Gramsci is interested in employing his analysis to a historiographic task. By way of clarifying Italy's historical failures in gaining a national-popular hegemony he brings forth to his historical perspective the complex articulation of the relation between culture and politics through his perspective on civil society. His analysis of Resorgimento and of earlier Italian history as well as his discussion of the historical function of intellectuals in relation to "national-popular" and jacobin movements can be understood as offering this historical and theoretical insight.

The politics of civil society or struggle for national popular hegemony remained radically open in Italy, and this is the avenue which Marxism can best utilize. Indeed should it be victorious in the politics and culture of civil society, Gramsci seems to have believed, it would ultimately be sure to gain control of the state as a whole.⁷

6. Here Croce became a helpful theoretical guide. Gramsci was drawn to Croce's effort to win support for his 'religion of liberty' as a consensual basis for modern Italian society.

7. This is not to imply that G neglected question of state power, he did not however give it a preveliged and self sufficient status as in convention Marxist theory.

This brings to the application of how Gramsci's concept of civil society⁸ rearticulated the role of culture in its relation to the economy and politics.

Gramsci wanted to preserve both the Marxian insight that the forces of production (not the state) are the primary determinants of modern social life and the insight⁹ that civil society is primarily a sphere of "ethical political" contestation among rival groups. The first point means that the widening contradiction between forces and relations of production remains the most basic pre-condition. However the 2nd point leads to the insight that the fundamental political conquest is unlikely to be a direct confrontation between capital and labour for control of the state.

Rather the contest is likely to be a "positional one for civil society conceived essentially as a cultural-political domain the public domain where national-popular will is at issue.

Thus Gramsci offered a distinctive way of looking at capitalist social relations which brings out the import of an altered relation of culture to state.

Equally crucially the posing of the problematic allows him to refashion his politics for socialist society and hence his revolutionary theory.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

What emerges from this analysis is that in Gramsci's writings may be found an implicit theoretical concept of culture which relates to the a wider anthropological sense/ conception of culture:

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8. Although it taken from Hegel it was much more radical.
 9. Which is a Crocean insight.
 10. This has been looked in the section on Theory and practice. Briefly his theory-practice model is practice oriented and moves away from the narrow intellectualistic terms in which it was ordinarily approached. Gramsci realized the factor of popular element and the distinction between feeling and knowing in a way other Marxists failed to see.

For him culture did not just mean literature, cinema, theatre etc; cultural activity embraced the whole of practical life, human relations and mode of life.

This theoretical concept changes the way the interaction between culture and politics is understood and hence also the relation between socialism and culture. This relates to the significance of and materialist theory of cultural revolution found in Gramsci. It is necessary therefore to understand Gramsci's specific political practice of culture. However what shows the *full originality* of his Marxism is that he makes a shift away from seeing culture only as an instrument to an affirmative political impulse.

Gramsci's concept is not an instrumental conception of culture which poses the problem merely in terms of wresting the class privilege of 'culture' away from the ruling class and sees the party with a "cultural wing". In contrast Gramsci resets the agenda of cultural politics itself. Gramsci's theory leads towards a new *practice of culture*. The decisive factory council period and Worker's councils as forms of cultural self government by the masses, a form of permanent in class education and self consciousness,¹¹ Gramsci's theory of practical learning or political education as a social process¹² and finally Gramsci's passionate interest in political national popular culture constituted the elements of a new theory. What emerges is a theory of cultural revolution as a parallel prefigurative movement to the socialist transformation.

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11. This experience enabled him to reject any form of cultural messianism, and to make a criticism of that type of the Italian intellectual who posed as a 'guide' for moral life and politics without taking any of the risks of practical activity, what Togliatti called a 'school teacher moralism predestined for sterility'. The council, as an 'instrument of mutual education' was the birth place of a new type of intellectual, one linked to practical life Buci-Glucksmann, op. cit., p. 415.)
 12. Gramsci's interest in the educational system. This was based on privileges that mutilated human beings or simply excluded them from knowledge.

This is linked in crucial ways to the relocation of culture in its relationship with politics in the social cultural totality. Gramsci's analysis of civil society, hegemony, expansion of the state, and the reconstitution of base and super-structure are all attempts to rethink culture within the social space.

For Gramsci culture is not just an object on a third realm which has to be appropriated. The cultural realm cannot be neatly divided from the political and economic spheres. Culture could not be created and disseminated in isolation from everyday life. Everything else, infused with a 'culture' and it suffuses every realm of society.

This comes out strongly in his consideration of not only literature and art but philosophy, economic science and politics. In all cases his interest is not only in the object in itself as the place it occupies within the range of social practices for example in writings on philosophy his interest lies with the place of philosophical arguments and of particular philosophies within social life, in short with the 'culture' of philosophy. What holds his attention in relation to literature and art is their culture, the place they hold generally within what he calls the 'complex super structures' of a social formation.

CHAPTER TWO

**THE POLITICS OF THE CONCEPT OF
NATIONAL-POPULAR WILL**

INTRODUCTION

It is now generally accepted that at the core of Gramsci's thought there is an elaboration of a series of concepts crucial to *a theory of politics*.¹

The attempt in this chapter would be to show that the concept of national-popular will forms one such *keyconcept*. There is a whole area of Gramsci's work which has not been adequately or seriously considered but which lies at the very *centre of his theory of politics*: this is whole problematic elaborated around the concept of the 'national popular will' and the relationship established through hegemony, between a fundamental class and the people-nation.

As Eric Hobsbaw ² points out Gramsci is original in his thinking about the relationship between the working class, and the nation: 'This national question' is for him not external to the working class movement but integral to its task.

He breaks down with the habit of seeing *it as "the national question"*, something external to the working class movement.

In fact one of the most interesting and novel aspects of his 'political' theory is his concept *-original in Marxism-* of the working class as part of the nation. "Indeed ... he is so far the only Marxist thinker who provides us with a basis of integrating the nation as a historical and social reality into Marxist theory."³ The revolution must be a struggle to lead and represent the whole people of the nation.

National-popular will is a concept with a significant political import. Its political importance is crucial in two ways, One it helps Gramsci to elaborate and redefine the very meaning of the political. This is possible insofar as the content of the concept is political.

The image of the role of the political in a social formation found in Gramsci was not simply a question of adding a supplementary field of research-politics-to a historical

materialism which would continue to be understood as a general sociology. Gramsci's project has significance for it redefines the meaning of the political as part of the rearticulation of the relationship between theory and practice.

Secondly the concept goes on to elaborate a wholly new political strategic perspective. That is to say the concept sets a specific political praxis and political agenda, (reveals itself in political practice/action).

The concept of national-popular will operates as a methodological tool to understand historico-political processes. This relates to a broadly historiographer function which enables Gramsci to have a complex historical sense and theory of history.

(A) HISTORICO - POLITICAL FUNCTION:

"An effective Jacobin force was always missing and could not be constituted; and it was precisely such a Jacobin force which in other nations awakened and *organised the national-popular will and founded the modern states*" will (SPN p) National-popular Will as a historiographer tool:

As a methodological tool or heuristic device the concept is used to look at concrete historical processes, Gramsci's comparative analysis of the history of Italy and certain Key aspects of European development especially the French revolution leads him to identify a conceptual baggage as well as a set of criteria to analysis *specific historical conjectures* of a social formations.

Gramsci lays particular emphasis on the mode of formation of the unified Italian state (the history of Risorgiments) (1848-1870). In fact the formation of the Italian national state - what he terms as the 'passive' revolution - forms the permanent historical sketch of his theoretical reflections. It provides him the historical horizon and an important referent for most of his theoretical insights.⁴ In fact as his criticism of Croce's historiography⁵ shows

Gramsci is necessarily led to historical analyses of Italy from basic preoccupation and basic theoretical concerns.

For Gramsci history is not simply the narration of unique events hence Gramsci's historiography is a demand for a history with a theoretical depth and hence a history that understands any situation in terms of "the confluence of structures of different durations"⁶ He sees in it certain tendencies of long-term importance, and in terms of the present. Gramsci then is not against identifying general tendencies and networks of necessity which allow him to compare different social processes.

This understanding of the relationship between theory and history is in consonance with Gramsci's comparative historical analysis the constant comparison of Italy with French historical experience.⁷ Thus his analysis of Risorgimento is in terms of what it was not.

Out of this historical analysis emerge certain theoretical concepts/principles which are abstracted from the historical analysis. The concepts of Gramsci's political theory-national-popular will, hegemony, passive revolution, the intellectuals were chiefly developed in a historical theoretical analysis of the formation of the Italian state.⁸ Infact these concepts are formed in a dialectical relationship with their history. Emerging from it they serve as criteria, precepts to understand it better. Moreover after being theorized they acquire the status of key theoretical concepts having general theoretical importance.⁹

The concept of national-popular will is a key notion that serves as an analytical and descriptive tool for the examination of longterm trends in Italian history. Its theoretical genesis is from the comparative analysis of the different ways in which the bourgeoisie ceased power, *a theory and practice of revolution*.

Gramsci proceeds on the basis of a historically differentiated approach to the

hegemonic aperture" . The Risorgimento ... is opposite to the French model.

Briefly the problem confronting Gramsci was that of identifying the specific weakness of the Italian national state which emerged from the Risorgimento¹⁰ (weakness which culminated in the advent of fascism 60 yrs later.) i.e. the failure of the Risorgimento to be a successful bourgeois revolution.

The Italian national movement had failed precisely to be a popular movement and had played itself out as a 'reform-revolution' i.e. revolution without a revolution.¹¹ Will national-popular will emerges as a polyvalent notion interlinking a series of related ideas jacobinism, passive revolution intellectual and moral reform, link leadership not domination link between the town and country, the aspect of national-popular cultural unity (or the lack of it) expressed in the non-national-popular character of literature, 'transformist' hegemony.

This 'passive revolution' consisted in the inability of the national movement to generalize its struggle beyond the radical bourgeoisie around the Action party and win the support of the peasantry by carrying out agrarian reforms.¹² The Action party failed to be 'jacobin'¹³ i.e., "the particular methods of party and govt. activity characterized by extreme energy, decisiveness and resolution the ability to make the demands of the popular masses one's can the national political element."¹⁴

Rather the Action party was overtaken by the moderates around Cavour who were able to construct a class alliance between the bourgeoisie and the southern landowners.

The concept of passive revolution taken over from Cuoco was to turn out a strategic one in the use that Gramsci made of it.

Negatively 'passive revolution' is the sign of the absence of Jacobinism within the Re-

sorgimento to the absence of a real alliance between town and country, the bourgeoisie and the peasants, the Northern ruling class and the peasant masses of the South.¹⁵ This absence underlies what Gramsci saw as the central fact of Italian history (and one of none distant origins of fascism) i.e. Italy had never known a bourgeoisie revolution.¹⁶ At the economic level 'passive revolution' expressed the inability of the Italian bourgeoisie to carry out "an economic revolution of a rational kind" Gramsci saw this in terms of the conflict between the old and (less) productive forces and its opposite.

At a political level¹⁷ Gramsci traces a double weakness in the forces in play (but for different reasons and different historical circumstances): both the liberal Moderates (Cavour) and the Action party (Garibaldi).

On the side of the subaltern forces, the Action party was unable to present itself as an autonomous force with a concrete programme of govt. and a firm leadership.¹⁸ It lacked a real organic link with the peasants that would have enabled it to put forward democratic objectives guaranteeing the popular character of the bourgeoisie revolution.

Failing to struggle politically for agrarian reform which would have ensured the connection between town and country, it did not function as a 'Jacoben party':¹⁹

"In the Action, party there was nothing to²⁰ be found which resembled this Jacoben approach, this inflexible will to become the 'leading' [diriginte] party".

The governing class, for its part was formed by the moderates the intellectuals in the organic sense of the term.²¹

They were infact doubly organic, as political organizers and as organically tied to their class. But class real and organic vanguard of the upper classes,"Which did not fail to exercise a spontaneous attraction own the intellectuals as a whole rested content with bringing the bourgeoisie to the position of principal dominant class."²² Its leading action

was important, even hostile as far as its relation to its masses went. It not only failed to seek to promote their entry into political life, this bourgeoisie also proceeded literally to absorb the active elements of its allied classes and even, its enemies ('transformism: passive revolution). This is in two phases . This signifies a process-firstly a process of *molecular change* by which either the bourgeoisie as a whole slowly exerts its supremacy with regard to the forces of the old regime and secondly group transformism - (1900 onwards) section of the bourgeoisie succeeds in grouping the whole of the rest of the classes and groups around it".

Certain key thesis can be extracted from these concrete analysis.

Gramsci poses it in terms of a methodological injunction and it deserves to be quoted in full " the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways as "domination" and an intellectual and moral leadership.²³ A social group dominates antagonistic groups which it tends to "liquidate" or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force, it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can and indeed must, already exercise "leadership" before winning governmental power (this is one of the principal conditions for the winning of power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to "lead" as well.²⁴

This leadership as distinct from domination is our other social groups a hence is a question of national-popular leadership.

Leadership and domination do not form two separate worlds but a preliminary political leadership (mass policy and policy of alliances or national popular) is the sine qua non for exercising domination -real leadership simply limited to the material force given by state power²⁵. Leadership has two aspects to it: Political - this consists in the ability of hegemonic class to be a *national* class with a progressive, function at a given historical moment; it is

able to carry forward the whole society²⁶. By expanding its own class interests to include those of allied strata whose demands it takes up, even if in a form of compromise, it rises above corporatism.

The expansive ability of a class's hegemony is not limited just to political leadership, it is also structured into the different ideological and cultural hegemonic apparatuses.

"The educational activity of the Risorgimento, a liberal or liberalizing activity, is of great importance in grasping' the mechanism by which the moderates emerged hegemony over the intellectuals".²⁷

This follows two strategic lines Firstly a general conception of life, a philosophy offering those who subscribe to it a dignity enabling them to oppose the dominant ideologies and serving them as a weapon in their struggle.

Secondly, an educational programme that gives an interest to this section of intellectuals, the most homogeneous and the most numerous i.e. teachers (from the school level up to the university professors) enabling them to develop a specific activity in their own field.²⁸

By way of the role of the educational apparatus and the need for philosophy as a mass "intellectual and moral reform. Gramsci introduces his entire theory of the *hegemonic apparatuses in the cultural and ideological domain*.

The analysis of Risorgimento as a non-national popular passive revolution brought forward the necessary conditions that enabled any class to become hegemonic.

These were

- (1) economic for the Italian bourgeoisie absence of hegemony is related to its 'relative economic weakness'.
- (2) Political conditions in terms of the dialectic of leadership and domination.

(3) Cultural conditions involving the relationship between intellectuals and people and an educative relationship.

This analysis in turn goes on to reveal what Gramsci means by national popular ('bourgeoisie') revolution and the specificity of his thinking on the revolutionary process. It highlights theoretical principles by which Gramsci looks at historical conjunctions.

Further the 'political' impulse which guides his historical analysis is that of the 'present'. The standpoint is the political praxis of the present²⁹.

The hermeneutic criterion³⁰ of Gramscian historical perspective is the national popular nature of historical revolutionary process. From this standpoint, Gramsci reviews the most important phases of Italian and European history and arrives at an original interpretation in terms of the degree of diffusion of a movement among the people-nation (cultural penetration).

On the extent of participation in the national-popular political and cultural life of the nation. (in the hegemony of the fundamental 'national-popular' class the relationship of the intellectual to the people-nation).

Thus Gramsci approaches history hermeneutically and looks at nature of politics and political cultural life at specific moments of history.

Thus out of this analysis emerges the concept of Jacoben "national-popular-political hegemony for which the French historical experience provides the model. "France offers the example of an accomplished form of harmonious development of the emerges of the nation and of intellectual categories in particular".³¹

(The Characteristic form of the jacoben revolution is its national-popular hegemonic character.)

Gramsci writes of the Jacobens:

“They did not rest content with making the bourgeoisie, a dominant class (element of force command junction) They did more, they created the bourgeoisie state and made the bourgeoisie the leading hegemonic class of the nation, in other words they gave the new state a permanent base and created the compact unity of the modern French nation”³². In Italy on the other hand, the dominant role of the bourgeoisie has the upper hand over its directing role, that of organizer of consent, for the broad masses.

“Political leadership becomes an aspect of domination to the extent that the absorption of the opposing classes elites decapitates them and reduces them to importance “ Notebook I, jnagment 44 (quoted in B-G 409 Buci-Glucksmann, *op.cit*, p409.)

This thesis operates with a view to the bourgeoisie in its relationship to the state.

In contrast to the French ‘national-popular’ revolution the class deficiency (of hegemonic leadership) that characterized the bourgeoisie in the Risorgimento led to the establishment of a ‘bastard state’ a ‘falsely liberal’ state with the permanent threat of resort to force and authoritarianism. A radical revolution on the other hand, leads to an ‘integral state’ ensuing the people a permanent participation in the framework of its political institutions. (the classical parliamentary state)³³.

This particular analysis of the French ‘experience’ is marked by his stress on seeing it as articulating the national-popular energies of the people.

Gramsci’s theoretical and historical problematic draws on the distinction he makes between passive and indirect consent and active and direct consent³⁴. This is linked to another Gramscian notion: the expansiveness of consent.³⁵

Hegemony is primarily a strategy for the gaining of the active consent of the masses through their self organization, starting from civil society, and in all the hegemonic apparatuses.³⁶ And this has the aim of creating a collective political will, at once national

and popular;³⁷ a historic bloc of socialism capable of unifying economic base and super structure.³⁸

Gramsci approaches the problem on the basis of a comparative analysis of the French and Italian bourgeois revolutions contrary to the French Jacobin strategy of 'war of movement' which gave the bourgeoisie 'a much more advanced position that it could have had spontaneously'³⁹ Thus enabling a popular revolution, the Risorgimento as 'passive revolution' relied upon the absence of real popular initiative even if certain popular demands were satisfied in small, doses legally, in a reformist way' from above and by means of the state (the Piedmont). The result was that instead of resolving its historical tasks of leadership by developing the democratic initiative of the masses, a class relied primarily on the state, on domination. In this case of 'dictatorship without hegemony' the state is (stage by stage) substituted for the class. It creates its own administrative and bureaucratic, even police apparatus. 'Leadership becomes an aspect of domination'⁴⁰ The unity of the power bloc realized through these statist links between leaders and led remains of a bureaucratic. Military type⁴¹.

The French case represents the balance between force and consent 'force appears to rest on the consent of the majority', power is exercised in a 'normal' way. But such an equilibrium (for Gramsci, the French Third Republic) requires precise conditions: a great development of 'private energies' in civil society, an ideological and economic individualism an enlargement of all the economic base, which will not upset the countryside/town equilibria, a phase of colonial expansion and finally a more or less link between universal suffrage and 'national feeling organized around the concept of nationhood' - Which 'wills' consensus at the national level.

As is apparent this has special relevance for the politics of socialism.

While Gramsci uses the French revolution as a model of a bourgeois revolution his historiography of the French revolution is careful of the pitfalls of a reductive understanding of the revolution usually found in Marxist accounts. Scholars⁴² have held Gramsci responsible for glorifying the role of the French revolution and the Jacobin moment in the time with traditional Marxist understanding. However this does not stand up to scrutiny. Gramsci's thought is sensitive to a much more complex sense of the historical process. He does not betray the linear understanding of the European developments which sees the French revolution as the key progressive point of history and from where the socialist project would take off.

The form of the state may represent a disjuncture between the economic and political levels of a social formation that the exact form of political rule with all its peculiarities must be studied in order to avoid oversimplifications.⁴³

As Gramsci says "It is true that conquest of power and achievement of a new productive world are inseparable and that propaganda for one of them is also propaganda for the other, and that in reality it is solely in this coincidence that the unity of the dominant class-at once economic and political-resides".⁴⁴

Gramsci points out that the complex problem arises of the relation of internal forces in the country in question of the relation of international forces and of the country's geopolitical position.

In his analysis of the French revolution he is careful to avoid schematism and warns.

"The conception of the state according to the productive function of the social classes cannot be applied mechanically to the interpretation of Italian and European history from the French revolution throughout the 19th Century. Although it is certain that for the fundamental productive classes (capitalist bourgeoisie and modern proletariat) the state

is only conceivable as the concrete form of a specific economic world, of a specific system of production, this does not mean that' the relationship of means to end can be easily determined or takes the form of a simple scheme apparent at first sight."⁴⁵

Gramsci's analysis of French historical, development its comparison with Italy and the theorization of the national popular mediation or passive revolution which emerges enables Gramsci to establish a non-determinist relation between crisis and revolution by which he manages to avoid any interpretation of historical development and of the transition from one mode of production to another solely in terms of the development of productive forces. His focus on French revolution as the political form of the transition and its analysis in terms of the relationship of forces in society, revolution in the cultural processes at the level of civil society-state relationship enable him to throw into question the idea of a linear historical development. Gramsci is marked by the attempted to theory the *'objective factors and the subjective* in their unity.

Gramsci analysis of the historical process shows that he is keenly aware that a revolutionary process need not necessarily lead to a revolution but one could be a surrogate for a counter-revolution or 'restoration' as he puts it. This awareness is theorized in his concept of the 'passive revolution' where Gramsci sees revolution and restoration as not simply opposed but dialectically related.

(2) ITALIAN AND FRENCH REVOLUTION COMPARED

At this moment it would be worthwhile to briefly review the debates on the French revolution. What is at issue in the controversies, we must note, is not the nature of the revolutionary experience itself but rather its long term origins and outcomes. The revolution merely serves as the vehicle of transportation between long term causes and effects, as a result, the emergence of a revolutionary politics is taken as given.

The Marxist interpretation of the revolution has come under heavy fire in recent years, in part because it is the most theoretically developed account ⁴⁶. Two inseparable elements - the establishment of a suitable legal framework for capitalist development and the class struggle won by the bourgeoisie have characterized Marxist historical accounts of the evolution. As the most recent defender of "the classic historiography of the French revolution" Albert Soboul maintained that the revolution marked "the appearance the growth and the final triumph of the bourgeoisie"⁴⁷

In the Marxist account,⁴⁸ the revolution was bourgeois in nature because its origins and outcomes were bourgeois Marxist historians trace the origins of the French revolution to the aggressive self assertion of the bourgeoisie in the face of aristocratic reaction in the 1780s and they consider the outcome to be the triumph of the capitalist mode of production ⁴⁹. The intervening variable the revolutionary experience is read in terms of its contribution to this scenario. The bourgeoisie had to ally with the popular classes in order to break the back of the feudal aristocracy; it had to break with the popular classes when the terror threatened to get out of hand; it had to ally with Napoleon in order to ensure the consolidation of bourgeoisie aims in property and legal reform. The outcome bourgeoisie's economic and social hegemony followed from the origins (class conflict) in seemingly inexorable form.

The "revisionist" position challenges the Marxist account on virtually every front, but for the most part revisionists implicitly accept the central premise of the Marxist argument, that is, that an interpretation of the Revolution consists of an account of social origins and outcomes. In the first, wide-ranging attack on Marxist orthodoxy, Alfred Cobban insisted that the Revolution was not made by the bourgeoisie in the interests of capitalist development but rather by rural officeholders and professionals whose fortunes

were declining. In the end, their actions benefited the landowners in general, the experience of revolution actually or retarded the development of capitalism in France ⁵⁰ The Marxist account on what Cobban called "the social interpretation" was mistaken both about the origins and outcomes of the revolution.⁵¹

Further this account has been unable to offer an comprehensive alternative explanation which raises questions about how the nature of political forms that emerged during the involution as well as the changes in the socio-economic fabric are linked.

As Lynin Hunt ⁵² argues the premise of the Marxist historiography is retained about the origins and outcomes. This focus has made the revolutionary experience itself seem irrelevant.⁵³ The revolutionary event is sandwiched between its long term origins and outcomes; the actual event of revolution appears only in the interstices of the schema.

As Theda Skocpol also argues debates over possible reinterpretation have remained largely within the socio-economic terms of the established frame of reference.

New groups other than the bourgeoisie, with economic interests corresponding to the non-capitalist economic outcomes of the revolution have been sought out in the historical evidence.⁵⁴ Hence it may be argued that no counter-interpretation of comparable scope and power has yet achieved widespread acceptance.

Theda Skocpol herself while attempting to do away with "the placing of interpretative emphasis upon very partial aspects of the revolutionary outcomes" places emphasis on the socio-political and juridical transformations - i.e. bureaucratization, democratization, and the emergence of a politico-legal framework favourable to capitalism - wrought through a confluence of political struggles for state power and peasant struggles against seigneurial rights rather than in a basic transformation of the socio-economic structure effected by the class action of a capitalist bourgeoisie.⁵⁵

However this analysis sees the 'logic' of the French revolution again in terms of origins and outcomes⁵⁶ while the emerging modern forms of political life are ignored. Skocpol emphasis on 'politics' is to see the process of growing state power of the French state⁵⁷ and hence the revolution appears as a vehicle of state modernization. Because current interpretive debates focus on the analysis of origin and outcome it is not surprising that research efforts have been increasingly directed to the periods preceding and following the revolutionary decade⁵⁸ These studies have had little impact on the overall schema. Revisionists maintain either that revolutionary conflicts had no particular social significance or had only very broad and ambiguous social meaning.⁵⁹

As the particulars of the Marxist account have come under increasing attack Marxist historians have withdrawn to more structural positions: What difference does it make, who initiated the revolution or who held power at any particular time as long as its origins and outcomes can be traced for enough back or for enough forward to substantiate the import of class struggle and the development of capitalism.

All these interpretive positions share this programmatic disregard and distrust for revolutionary intentions⁶⁰ In the Marxist interpretation the revolutionaries facilitated the triumph of capitalism and in the revisionist account revolutionaries mistakenly dragged the process off its course of liberal notable rule. What the revolutionaries intended, is not what came out of the revolution, hence it matters little ⁶¹ Thus the focus outcomes has made the revolutionary experience itself seen irrelevant.

As a consequence politics, revolutionary innovations in the forms and meanings of politics often seen either pre-determined or entirely accidental. In the Marxist account, liberal constitutionalism, democracy nationalism, institutions of public life all appear at the handmaidens of the consolidation of bourgeois hegemony. Whereas in the Marxist

interpretations, the politics of revolution are determined by the necessary course from origins to outcomes; in the revisionist account politics seem haphazard. The end result, however is the same, politics loses significance as an object of study.⁶²

It is the argument of this study that what is interesting and historically relevant about the beginnings of modernity⁶³ (in addition to the socio-economic transformations) are the political processes, forms of political life it inaugurated the revolution in the political *culture*., and significantly the political and territorial unit of politics i.e. the nation-state. It is a further contention that Gramsci's historitico-theoretical analysis forms one of the my many suggestion although under-developed contributions in this direction. His is an attempt *to rehabilitate the politics of revolution* which is not only a political history, i.e. narration of events.

It is to be noted that some recent accounts which now emphasize "politics" in the French revolution and have pointed the *historiographical debates i new directions*, do so from an anti-Marxist position. What is interesting is that they echo some of the themes and links which Gramsci is trying to come to grips with in a fragmentary form.

Furet's recent book 'Interpreting the rench revolution'⁶⁴ and Lefort appreciation in his 'Democracy and political theory'⁶⁵ has the great merit of drawing attention to the importance of the "political". i.e. to rediscover the analysis of its pol dimension⁶⁶.

3 KOSELLECK & GRAMSCI:

It is in connection with these questions that Koselleck's study *Critique & Crisis* provides an interesting point of reference.

While the structure of argument in Gramsci's analysis as well as his conclusions are very different from koselleck's theses what is suggestive is that the image of the historico

political process of the European development i.e the modern age it inaugurated found in Koselleck's account echoes certain themes raised by Gramsci. Their analysis of that period bears a striking resemblance despite many differences. Koselleck is speaking of the eventual de-enlightenment while Gramsci is firmly on the side of the Enlightenment project, although Gramsci, is more conscious of its limits than other Marxists. The political purpose of the two thinkers is different yet their historical analyses identifies similar political processes.

Koselleck's work attempts to trace the origins of the modern world in the European Enlightenment i.e offer a genetic theory of the modern world which may help to explain individual historical phenomenon. What is of interest of us is that he treats it as a political phenomenon having its roots in the state-society distinction which emerged during & after the period of Absolutism. In a way similar to Gramsci major themes of the early modern period are connected "with the aim of deducing therefrom the evolution of & longterm process which went beyond what the contemporaries had intended".⁶⁷ These are: his focus on the political process with a view to show how the changing political & cultural forms changed the very meaning of political life & its relationship with what Koselleck calls "the conscience" or morality and Gramsci would refer as political society & civil society with its ambiguous realm of culture.

This argument is significant. For Koselleck is noting the emergence of a new & 'modern' notion of politics i.e. the public. He attempts to bring out the nature & the genesis of this notion of the political. He does so by highlighting the persistent structures of the modern age, 'the mentalities, attitudes & behavioural patterns',⁶⁸ 'the values expectations & implicit rules that expressed & shaped collective intentions & actions are what can be called the 'political culture' of the revolution.'⁶⁹

This is in some senses is Gramsci's concern too for he too in his analysis of the revolutionary process in Europe is concerned to stress modern forms of the political it inaugurated. His emphasis is on the political process of the French revolution. Gramsci's, despite the very different language & mode of analyses, from Koselleck's, argues that unless one pays attention to these political forms, "its limits & constraints" unless a new relationship is forged between the intellectual elite & the people 'the public' (national-popular), unless the relationship between state & civil society is more 'normal', balanced i.e. hegemony is expansive & national-popular the end result would be a passive revolution. Koselleck's account as well as Gramsci's analysis is marked by a sensitivity about the character of experience itself. The long term origins & outcomes are linked to the nature of the political process. Both accounts function within the framework of the origin of the bourgeois society.

The Koselleckian thesis is extremely suggestive & interesting & needs to be gone into, in some detail.

It points to an extremely intricate relationship that emerged between the political forms, society & state power during the revolution. This emerges in his analysis of the history of the ideas of Enlightenment

From a feudal structure of absolute domination, a political sphere was marked out & 'released'. Hobbes's political theory contained the nucleus of a bourgeois notion of laws.⁷⁰ This movement from the Absolutist state to the Enlightenment saw "the expansion of the private interior into the public domain, while the public became the forum of society that permeated the entire state".⁷¹ This is evident in the characterization which Locke makes of the philosophical law. This law originated in the private space but possessed the power of public sense. Koselleck notes this expansion of the private into the public. What is

significant is that it is only in the public sphere that personal opinions have the force of the law.⁷² "The citizens' verdict legitimises itself as just & true censure, their critique, these become the executive of the new society".

What is crucial to note is that while a new relationship is being established between the political & civil society the logic of both these realms is being disintegrated. As Koselleck points out. "To him, (Locke) the effect of the moral legislation *was greater than the State's, but also quite different in kind*. For while state laws are directly enforced by state power (coercive power) the moral legislation works indirectly, through the pressure of public opinion".⁷³ Thus the partitioning of morality & politics takes on a new shape. "The laws of the state work directly, backed as they are by the state's coercive powers, moral law making works within the same state, but indirectly and thus all the more strongly. Civic morality becomes a public power one that works only intellectually but which has political effects forcing the citizen to adapt his actions not just to state law but simultaneously & principally, to the law of public opinion".⁷⁴

Locke's theory anticipates and brings forth the institutionalization behind the scenes of the new society of sociable and social stratum. However *its character was potentially political* and became the indirect political force of the new society. These indirect centres acted as countervailing powers & formed the modern 'form' of politics. Koselleck identifies two social structures that 'left a decisive imprint on the age of Enlightenment: The Republic of letters & the Masonic lodges.⁷⁵

Koselleck notes how the combination of social strata & groups, the nobility, the bourgeoisie comprising of merchants, bankers tax lessers & businessmen, the emigres, the philosophers of the Enlightenment determined their country's cultural physiognomy or bore the burden of the state but had no role in the politics of the state : all were subjects.⁷⁶

The tension between their socially increasing weight, on the one hand, & the impossibility of lending political expression to that weight on the other, - this tension determined the, historical situation in which the new *society constituted itself*.⁷⁷

Koselleck notes the process of the institutionalization of this society which initially took place in wholly 'non political' localities,⁷⁸ whose tasks were 'social'. All institutions of this novel sociable & social stratum acquired a character that was potentially political & turned into an indirect political force. This 'institutionalization' in the social & the so called 'non-political' realm turned the political criticism that was conducted there into an outwardly effective political force while circumventing the powers of the state i.e into an indirectly effective force.⁷⁹ The civil order & the political state seemed to be drawing apart.⁸⁰

Koselleck focuses special special attention on the institutions of Freemasonry, the aura of mystery or secrecy which enveloped them & the political function it served (of freedom from the state, even even more than social equality).⁸¹ This mystery delimited a social sphere & was a dividing line between morality & politics. Masonry was the social realization of the bourgeois moral doctrine & helped to disintegrate the bourgeois social space & to intrasocially unite the bourgeois, would as well.⁸² What is more significant & Koselleck's main argument hinges on it, is the potential consequences of this internal moral work. The act was always simultaneously an act of passing moral judgment on the state.⁸³ Initially a power that threatened only morally these lodges came to effect "a politically crucial shift from inner freedom to outward political freedom...its specifically political function."⁸⁴ The political function of the lodges was the 'process of criticism'.

Koselleck notes two aspects of this shift towards the political sphere: One is the separation between ethics & politics which provides the condition for the growing intensification of the antitheses of state & society.⁸⁵ Thus Koselleck records the birth of

political institutions of the new order - new political forms & structures of society - that are symptomatic of the new relation between civil society & the state. The moral basis of society & hence the civil/political order is changed. The consequence is a through going 'reform' of the cultural process.⁸⁶ the moral & spiritual world view of the society changes in the 18th century but what is equally significant is that it is perceived by the members as such. The revolution in the political culture is effected precisely because the changes being brought in the state (from Absolution of Republicanism) & society (emergence of institutions of the public).

Neither polities nor the concept of the political was invented by the French but for reasons, some of which is evident in Koselleck's study, the French managed to invest them with a new meaning & new form & a new unit in which it was to be realized as well as an extraordinary emotional & symbolic significance (in the symbolic or the social imaginary).

Koselleck, argues that at the point at which the dualistically segregated dominant politics are subjected to a moral verdict, that verdict is transformed into a political factor, into political criticism,⁸⁷. Thus the dualistic world view serves & is a function of political criticism.⁸⁸ Political criticism is based on this division & is at the same time responsible for it. This for Koselleck constitutes a genuinely historical-dialectical fact & forms the basis of the political significance of the criticism that gave its name to the 18th Century.⁸⁹ Koselleck links up this political significance of criticism with its claim to represent reason & progress.⁹⁰ It was Pierre Bayle & his *Dictionnaire Historique et critique* (1695) who turned criticism into the essential function of reason. And progress because the *modus vivendi* of criticism even when as in Bayle it was not deemed a forward movement but one of destruction & decadence.⁹¹

The postulate of criticism drew a final critical separation - a boundary line- against religion and revolution and secondly the State,⁹² "Ostensibly non-political and above politics it was in fact political",⁹³ Criticism assumed the role. Locke had assigned to moral censorship, it became the spokesman of public opinion. Its political nature lay in the fact that criticism moved beyond the inner sphere of society, the sphere of personal morality & the shift to the exterior had been completed. From the principle of secrecy to abolishing of all privileges —"caused everything to be sucked into the "maelstrom of public gaze": The political import of criticism grew out of the *principle of publicity it instituted & in the change in the intellectual order (culture) it brought about*. Initially a 'critique' of religion it increasingly involved the state in this process & hence came to define the parameters of political life.

Koselleck demonstrates how this process through its inherently indirect and ultimately direct political criticism marked the emergence of the bourgeois world.

Koselleck notes the growth of bourgeois stratum. Koselleck's characterization of the disintegrated aspect is as follows:"The bourgeoisie stratum, growing in strength in social & economic life with a fresh world view, saw itself increasingly as the political holder of political power...gave the new elite its sense of self & made it into what it was to become: *a group of individuals who as representatives & educator of a new society, took up their intellectual positions by negating the absolutist state & ruling church*".⁹⁴

Certain Key themes form part of this argument themes which bear on the kind of interlinkages Gramsci is attempting to establish between the new modern world, intellectual & moral (cultural) hegemony & national popular will. These bear on the kind of argument found in Gramsci's notion of national-popular.

Gramsci in fact is distinguished by his ability to see not only the political role of this

criticism (i.e. to institute a new State & modern forms of conducting the relationship between state & society) and process of Enlightenment but goes even beyond the argument found in Koselleck in emphasizing the general process of cultural peretnation & change & change. This for hin is constituted by a new morality, even more significantly a new intellectual direction & leadership. The political criticism forms part of the whole new way of life, infact of culture (understood in a broad sense).

Koselleck's inquiry into the origin of the modern world leads him to attribute a significant role to the intellectuals & the impact of their ideas.⁹⁵ He is concerned to note how the leaders - elite of society came to exercize leadership & came to constitute the public - political social world. This point forms part of Gramsci's argument about national-popular collective will. For Gramsci's too, the role of intillectuals to establish political & cultural hegemony plays an important part in the emergence of the new society. Infact Gramsci focuses his key attention on intellectuals - their nature and kind of relationship they have forged with the rest of the society. Gramsci's a successful national-popular bourgeois' revolution necessarily relies on an organic and hegemonic relationship with the people-nation. The distinction which Gramsci's draws between an active and passive revolution is significantly based on the role of intellectuals and their relationship articulated to the rest of society.

Another issue which emenges from Koselleck's study is the significance he attaches to the emergence & role of such social institutions as the republic of letters & the Masonic Lodges. The constitution of these institutions of public sphere forms the new ininnovative forms of modern political life. Their emergence & the role of moral & political critique which they launch goes on to define modern political practice.

This concern is in line with Gramsci's project of considering the structures 'of politics',

(of public) and the emphasis he accords to institutions of civil society (sites of political activity) & their impact on the way politics is done in the modern world.

It is here that it is important to consider an important difference with Gramsci's position. In Koselleck's argument these institutions constituting as they do the public sphere is the bourgeois public sphere. It belongs & is comprised of leaders of bourgeois social order.⁹⁶

While in Gramsci's analysis he does not pay the in-depth attention to institutions of public sphere his concern is equally with institutions of the "plebeian" public sphere. In pointing to how peasants burst into political life he would pay the same amount of attention to the institutions of the subaltern public sphere.

Koselleck does not try to show as to why & how this form of public sphere acquired the dominance that it did & why it was able to incorporate the masses of the people-nation into it, so that the institutions of plebeian life were finally suppressed in the historical process.

In the stage of the French revolution associated with Robespierre a public sphere stripped of its literary garb began to function. Its subject was no longer the "educated strata" that the uneducated "people".⁹⁷

One significant issue raised in Koselleck's study which allows us some basis for comparison with Gramsci is the emerging relationship between state & society that Koselleck notes. Koselleck's argument relates to this public space which was released in the 18th - 19th century and marks itself out from the state. Koselleck notes it as a split but it was the 'birth of society' & hence constitutive of the new relationship between civil society & state.

Gramsci's analysis also accords attention to the articulation of the new relationship between civil society & the state. He also refers to this society - the public realm which

is distinct from state on hand & economy on the other.

However Gramsci's concept of civil society is distinct from the one found in Koselleck's argument. Koselleck is using the definition in the tradition of natural law theories Hobbes, Locke & Rousseau - who use the term in contrast to natural society. Hence for Koselleck civil society is in fact political society.

In contrast Gramsci's analyses of civil society is a much more complex one - drawing from Hegel Croce & Marx - pointing to the public but not the political part of State- Society relationship. Moreover at times Gramsci differentiates civil society from the state but at other times understands it as part of the state as in the formulation state = political society + civil society. Gramsci's concept of Integral or Extended state incorporates the hegemonic apparatus of 'civil society' into state but they are not assimilated into it.

Another aspect of the argument which relates centrally to Gramsci's analysis is the cultural mutation which Koselleck notes. The changes during the revolutionary process in the politico - cultural as well as moral value system play an important role in *changing the political culture*. This accords with Gramsci's emphasis on cultural change, before & after the revolution. Koselleck's analysis brings out how the modern forms & ways of doing politics discuss & raise moral & cultural problems. The cultural mutation reforms to changes in ways of conceiving what is right and wrong, just and unjust, with ways of conceiving themselves in their relation to the world. Koselleck brings out how this had a political function as well as a political import. Gramsci's analysis also highlights the changes in political culture which is so critical to the revolutionary process & for the *form of modern politics that emerges*.

In Gramsci's concern this is linked to the lessons which socialist theory & practice can learn. However that is not Koselleck's concern.



We have noted that both Gramsci & Koselleck look at a certain slice of genesis of modern history & the images of the revolutionary process which is found in their analysis provide a basis for comparison & contrast. Infact this analysis of comparison & contrast allows us to read each in light of the other.

(B) NATIONAL POPULAR WILL AND THE ORIGIN OF THE MODERN NATION-STATE

The concept of national popular points to a significant area of modern politics the theme of the nation state form. Contemporary Marxism has not tackled the meaning and position of the nation as a social unity and its relationship to Nationalism. Gramsci is one of first Marxists of his generation to have considered and posed the question of integrating the 'nation' as a historical and social category into the political theory and practice of socialist thought.

Gramsci's analysis of the history of comparative European development was from the standpoint of the failed, development of the Italian 'national' state. His consideration of European development takes its point of departure from the perspective of a truly national-popular revolution. This points to the problematic of the genesis nature and historical development of the modern nation state and the nature of modern forces let loose by the phenomenon. In short it points to the specificity of modern life as a result of being operative in the crucible of a nation. What does the unit of nation do to the modern world. In the realm of economics, culture, politics and the symbolic world - in 'the' social imaginary signification'?

What is the nature of the transformation inaugurated by the coming of the nation-state form? The institutional profile of the modern state was the national boundary-a territorial unit but more than that a cultural, symbolic order and a political being. Why did it take the form of a nation?⁹⁸

The Gramscian insight about the significance of a national-popular bourgeois revolution (which is active and not passive) leads into an independent analysis into the historical process of the rise of nation-state.

The problem posed is the following:

It is universally acknowledged that the form of political society associated with the modern world is the nation. However what is not recognized is that how^{98a} recent is this 'natural state of affair is. What is the specific nature of its form of society or phenomenon? There is a marked absence in social theory-both liberal sociality and Marxists writing to consider the question of the rise of the territorially bounded nation-state and the form of politics it inaugurates. It represents the coming of a type of society radically distinct from all prior forms by social order.

The problem complex considered is the following: Is there a generic connection between the modern nation-state form, the resultant state-society relationship and the various forms of political cultural life that emerged during its formation.⁹⁹

Gramsci's analysis offers us one perspective which attempts to integrate the question of nation into his social and political theory. Some other interpreters of the phenomenon have offered other though related viewpoints.

This study attempts to look at some of the issues opened up by Gramsci's insights. However no easy answers are proposed but rather the posing of certain questions proposed by subsequent debates as they interlink with the problematic Gramsci raises.

Gramsci analysis of the French revolution points to the distinctive form it took and the nature of the processes it represented. According to him what is distinctive about the coming of the bourgeoisie society is that they created a terrain, a force-field, where it was possible to unite all the energies of the people, this unit was the nation-state. The

significance of the formation of nation-state lies in its being equated with people. The revolution fashioned the people. The effect to break with the past was through establishment, the basis for a new national community.

“... it is also true that this always occurred in the direction of real historical development for not only did they organise a bourgeois govt. i.e. make the bourgeoisie the dominant class - they did more. They created the bourgeoisie state, made the bourgeoisie into the leading, hegemonic class of the nation, in other words gave the new state a permanent basis and created the compact Modern French nation: SPN p 79.

Certain key strands of the Gramscian argument are:

- The distinctiveness of this process lies in the fact that the nation came to be equated with the people and the people with the nation. The Jacobean succeeded in its task of mobilizing all the national energies of all the sections of the population. What is significant is that the ‘people-nation’ is drawn into a movement which encompasses the whole of society.

“Any formation of a national-popular collective will be impossible unless the great mass of peasant cultivators bursts simultaneously into political life ...”¹

It was a question of reawakening of French popular energies achieved by the Jacobins.

This point is directly linked to the question of leadership and intellectual life which Gramsci poses in classic and original terms as hegemony.

But here it is important to interlink this argument with the kind of discussion about the state and society relationship found in G’s account.

Briefly it may be argued that G sees a certain kind of relationship emerging between state and society during its time which has implications for the kind of national state (and society) that is formed.

Gramsci describes the problem as follows:² within the last 2 centuries - roughly from the French revolution to the present there has arisen a relationship between state and society generally characteristic of modern social formations, "The revolution which the bourgeois class has brought into the conception of law, and hence into the function of the state, consists in the will to conform. The previous ruling class were conservative in the sense they did not tend to construct an organic passage from the other classes into their own i.e. to enlarge their class sphere "technicality" and ideologically: their conception was that of a closed caste. The bourgeois class poses itself as an organism in continuous movement capable of absorbing the entire society assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level. The entire function of the state has been transformed, the state has become an "educator", etc... ' The main point about this modern state society relationship quite distinct from that of antiquity or Feudalism is that through it the whole people become part of society, really for the first time. The modern states, became 'organic' national community with its own distinctive union of civil society and state.

Previous state-systems and ruling castes had presided. By contrast Gramsci argues " ... the most reasonable and concrete thing that can be said about the ethical state the cultural state, is this: every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces ... and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function and the courts are the most: important state activities in this sense but in reality a multitude of other so called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling class."³

According to Nairn, in Gramsci's analysis, Nationalism has been a central inescap-

able feature of the development of modern society because of the herge complexity and variety of pre-existing social evolution meant that each society had a different starting point and was transformed in different ways. The state society knot which Gramsci is talking about tied is different fashions. Therefore the normal historiographical and sociological model for it is naturally that of one society-cum-state. It is this modern and contemporary 'nation-state' that has become an education, has raised the great mass of population to a particular cultural level, generated a particular apparatus of political and cultural hegemony.

Hence Gramsci indicates that 'revolution of the bourgeois class' which involved the progressive, 'absorbing of the entire society' into the new state-society relationship embodied in nationalism.

The novelty of Gramsci's analysis is that while he accepts the rise of nation-states as a changed mode of socioeconomic evolution (change in patterns of accumulation) he also emphasizes political and cultural evolution and significantly the change at the symbolic order which interests the idea of 'nation' with extraordinary significance.

What is interesting is that we have in Gallne's study the development of an argument which is similar even if stated in a different way.

He also sees the process of rise of nationalism as leading to a new kind of society which is marked by cultural homogeneity and by what he calls "social entropy".⁴

He starts by destroying the myth of a nation's naturalness and argues that it is a contingent reality having its origin at the turn of the 18th and 19th cent.⁵

This relates to the point stressed in Gramsci's account too, of the creation of a terrain which becomes the focus of the collective energies of the people. Gramsci sees this development as inaugurating a modern epoch, the emergence of a different kind of

community, what is significant is that this community is as much invented and invested with certain values as it fashions a different kind of articulation of the relationship between the people and the state. (State and society)

This aspect of the Nationalism phenomenon has been stressed by G Poggi⁶ who argues that one of the crucial aspects of the 'modernity' of the modern-nation-state is that it is a "made" reality.⁷

Poggi explicates an idea which bears directly on the argument found in G.

"Conceptually speaking, the state of the late 18th, & 19th Cent, in particular often owes its existence to 'an act of (collective) *will* and deliberation, sometimes embodied in explicit, constitutional enactment...."⁸. This draws on the work of the German scholars like Hermann Heller who talk of the will to put state into being:⁹

"In other words the modern state is not bestowed upon people as a gift by God, its own guest, or blind historic forces, it is a "made" reality.¹⁰

In more recent times it is the work of Benedict Anderson which sees 'nations' as an imagined community.¹¹

Gellner makes a comparable point when he proposes:

"Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to selfconsciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist"¹²

However, it is important to stress and Gramsci's account as well as Anderson stress this point that nationalism is not false or fabricated but a question of invention which is related to 'creation' and imagination.¹³

While the art of 'willing' it is significant, it is equally important to ask the question as to the nature of the society it brings into being for these societies are of a different kind.

This takes us to the second important ideal of an argument. What is form of the state-

society relation entailed by the coming of the national community. What is the *form of politics* that is constituted by the national community. To understand that we need to look closely at how Nationalism operates as politics and what it is about modern politics that makes nationalism so important.

Or to put it inversely what it is about nationalism that modern politics takes the form of a nation-state. Why is the activity of modern political life conducted in a territorially constituted 'national' form.

The kind of answer proposed by Gramsci is significant for it relates the question of coming of bourgeoisie society i.e. capitalist relations of production and capitalist organisation of the economy but extends and puts the emphasis on the emergence of new mode of relating the leaders and the people. This emphasis the movement of the people-nation into the public and political life of the nation-state brought about by the intellectual leaders of the society.¹⁴

Equally significantly Gramsci is concerned to point the transformation in the politico-cultural realm of national life. The kind of movement brought about is essentially through an *ethico-political* mediation which leads to the establishment of an intellectual-moral bloc.

This he argues in his analysis of the French revolution that how a new elite¹⁵ was selected out which did not concern itself solely with "corporate" reforms but tended to conceive of the 'bourgeoisie as the economic group of an the popular forces.¹⁶

Further Gramsci states "The Jacobens language, their ideology, their methods of action' reflected perfectly the energies of the epoch — according to the French cultural tradition"¹⁷

The Jacobens strove to ensure a bond between town & country. The Jacobens

captured this essence of the French political cultural literature which stressed this concern.¹⁸

This was found in the case of language. Gramsci notes the parallel between juridico-popular language of the Jacobins & the concepts of classical German philosophy documented by Hegel.¹⁹

Equally significant was the rise of the vernaculars & the 'invention' of popular culture. Part of the movement of the emergence of the public sphere was that "the state's codes & statutes had to be promulgated & published, printed in the vulgar tongue (Vernacular) Widely diffused".²⁰

Peter Burke in his study 'Popular culture in early modern Europe'²¹ records the political significance of the discovery of popular culture & its politicization as it became linked to Nationalism.²²

It was in this transformed milieu that it became indispensable to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural & moral level²³ "a level — corresponding to the needs of the productive forces for development, & hence to the interests of the ruling classes".²⁴

This could only be done by means of a new, more accessible culture, one located on a far more particularistic & popular basis. It had to be closer to the people, to their real ethnic & historical character, their language & modes of expression & so on.²⁵

Another aspect of the politico-cultural change that the revolution represented in its focus on the 'nation' was the transformation in the symbolic order, change in the values, beliefs & in the social imagination of the people-nation.²⁶ Nation became the prime conceptual framework of the self conception of the society. In the words of Lefort "the identification of the nation with the people was significant for it constituted a change in the

'social imaginary of the society". Lefort too draws upon this idea from the analysis of Francois Furet²⁷ who has laid particular stress on the change in the "imaginary" relations which the revolution represented.

The first aspect of the argument relates to the kind of connection that can be made between modern forms of politics & the national community. Ernest Gellner offers a few suggestive insights to see the connection.

His analysis²⁸ suggests that nationalism marks a certain logic of cultural homogeneity. He sees the modern industrial society exhibiting a certain kind of relationship between 'structure' & culture. This relationship is inverse in that²⁹ a highly structured society, culture is dispensable where relationships are fairly wide known (because the community is small), & people are inscribed into set structures shared culture is not a pre-condition of effective communication.

In Modern Societies (Although structured but the relationship is different) persons are not so rigidly defined with their role. In fact a large proportion of relationships & encounters are ephemeral, non-repetitive & optional. Hence Communication symbols, language become crucial. Hence Gellner argues, Culture becomes of utmost importance for it not so much underlies structure (as in simple societies) but replaces it.³⁰ In Modern society man does not possess citizenship in virtue of prior membership of some organic subpart of it. He possesses it directly by virtue of documents such as a passport documents which so as to speak enumerate individuals.³¹

One part of the explanation lies hence. If citizenship, effective membership, 'belongings' — effective enjoyment of rights, depends on culture it follows that loyalties will also be expressed in terms of it.³²

This situation obtains partly because of the erosion of the given, intimate structures of society.³³

The positive reason for the rise of nationalism takes us to the argument regarding the educational system, literacy & language which is remarkably similar to Gramsci's notion of cultural a moral bloc through education.

According to Gellner it is the resources of an educational system which essentially functions through the medium of language & literacy that creates a certain basis for sharing & hence leads to an linguistic & cultural community of a nation. It is the 'culture' which replaces 'structure' & makes it co-extensive with society at large.

Gellner records how only a nation-size educational system can produce such full citizens & to produce a large number of specialists, of the second order teachers & intellectuals necessary to produce the ground level teachers.³⁴

What Gellner is pointing to is a change in the internal relationships within society & how the new conception is related to the cultural a linguistic homogeneity brought by education.

It is argued that the transition from agrarian to industrial society has a kind of entropy quality a shift from pattern to systematic randomness.³⁵

The old structures are dissipated and largely replaced by an internally random & fluid totality within which there are no genuine sub-structures. The total and ultimate political community thereby a wholly new & very considerable importance being linked both to the state & to the cultural boundary. Significantly the internal relationships have *become intelligible* in a new way which creates conditions for homogeneity. Hence the nation becomes important due to chosen of sub groupings & the vastly increased importance of a shared literacy dependent culture.³⁶ The State comes to adopt this role.

Thus for Gellner special type of homogenisation of culture underlies the process of nation formation.

What emerges from this analysis is the distinctive nature of the transition to modern nation-states which in important ways is a form of doing politics i.e. restructuring of the relationships between state and society so that 'people'-nation are refashioned. Moreover the relationship between the 'educators' of society & the people is forged so that the people are continuously brought forward. The state increasingly intervenes in the society but it does so in a national-popular forceifield.

The specificity of the rise of nation-states lies in the transformation of political culture it represents. Politics is invested with a new emotional & symbolic significance.

This is related to the kind of cultural & social homogeneity which brings forth a shared community.

However Gramscian insight warns us that this is the rise of a bourgeois national-popular nation-state which has its limits.

However what is equally significant is the insight that a socialist political revolution 'collective will' and the state build after it must be a national-popular one i.e. the working class is part of the nation. The socialist political theory & practice must be re-structured to integrate this insight which emerges from Gramsci's historical analysis of comparative European development & the extension of a similar argument by Gellner.

SECTION B

(1) HEGEMONY AND NATIONAL-POPULAR WILL: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF POLITICS

It is the claim of this section that national-popular collective will points to the practice of conceiving and doing politics. In attempting to redefine the very meaning of politics,

Gramsci's writings sought to formulate a theoretical alternative to the theory and practice of the Second International.

This consists in a double movement which Gramsci effects : i.e. redefining and enlarging the political . What does political mean as well as the nature of politics.

This he does by defining & theorizing the concept of Hegemony and national popular will. These two concepts should be understood together as a complementary couple and operating so as to qualify each other. They in turn go on to elaborate a new notion of the political in Gramsci.

It is important to understand how the two concepts are related in Gramsci's theoretical scheme. Briefly this analysis would link up with the argument regarding the new form of theorizing and doing politics found in Gramsci.

Gramsci's theory of Hegemony takes for its point of departure the comparative insight of nature of the transition in the West and the East³⁷ The distinction between the form and practice of politics different in the two modes of transition involved a real advance in the theoretical problematic he was elaborating : his critique of economism led to the analysis of a new relationship between state and society specific to the developed capitalist countries³⁸

Gramsci, took up, then Leninist critique but added something new to it by his own analysis of organic crisis or crisis of hegemony with its concrete historical conditions leading to the expansion of the state and the concept of hegemonic national-popular will.

Before going on to an analysis of how this leads to a theory of politics it would be important to define the relationship between hegemony and national-popular will.

Briefly put : Hegemony points to the moment of leadership - which is domination + direction and involves for Gramsci, intellectual and moral leadership, in addition to

political leadership, C. Mouffe³⁹ distinguishes two aspects of the definition. 1st is the political aspect which consists of the capacity of the fundamental class to be national-popular i.e. articulate the interests of other groups to its own interests thereby becoming a leading element of a collective will.⁴⁰ And then there is the aspect of intellectual and a moral leadership which indicates the ideological and cultural conditions which must be fulfilled for such a collective will to become possible, the ways in which it is universalized. However it is futile to overstress the distinction between the two meanings for they are the two aspects of the same phenomenon and go on to exemplify each other. Hegemony is a feature of the civil society (although also goes on to redefine the state) so that Gramsci focuses on cultural social institution in civil society which are part of the hegemonic apparatus. Gramsci emphasizes the cultural realm, not only ideology, as part of hegemony.

A hegemonic social formation must bring about a national-popular will in society organising all the national energies of all the section of people. It is hegemony understood in all its aspects which provides the necessary condition for the construction of national-popular collective will.

Further national-popular will cannot be understood without hegemony, for national-popular will is not merely a question of class alliance but it is an aspect of intellectual leadership, the harnessing of cultural factors as well as the articulation of a cultural and moral universal which gives to national-popular will its crucial meaning and characteristics.

It could be argued that Gramsci's concept of hegemony and national-popular will lead him to elaborate a double enlargement or enrichment of the concept of the political - (what does political mean). At one level it goes on to reject an **instrumentalist and economist** conception of the state and politics which reduce it to a simple instrument of domination

or to a 'neutral' instrument of government (an unilateral concept) and elucidate an extended concept of the State - The Integral state or the ethical state⁴¹

This formulation is arrived at when Gramsci opens the relationship between the economic and the political moment within his analysis of the relations of forces⁴² Gramsci analyses the transition from the economic of the political moment by relating it to the 'degree' of homogeneity, self consciousness of organisation, that classes possess in relation to the state.

This criterion is so determinant that the political moment is itself sub-divided into three steps :

(1) the first is the economics-corporative moment : The unity of a group is effected on the professional basis of a community of interests without any relation to the state being raised.⁴³ Political consciousness does not yet exist.

(2) The second moment marks the transition to the unity of the class, but with its economic struggle still developing in the framework of the existing state⁴⁴.

(3) In order to supersede this level and to reach the political level, it is necessary to gain hegemony, as an integral relationship between class/state/society. This analysis is significant and deserves to be quoted in full :⁴⁵

A third moment is that in which one becomes aware that one's own corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, & can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too. This is the most purely political phase, a marks the decisive passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex super-structures; It is the phase in which previously germinated ideologies become 'party', come into confrontation and conflict, until only one of them, or atleast a single combination of them, tends to prevail to gain the upper hand *to propagate itself throughout society* - bringing

about not only a unison of economic and *political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity*⁴⁶ posing all the questions around which the struggle wages, not on a *corporate but on a "universal" plane*, and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group, over a series of subordinate groups.⁴⁷ This necessitates the expansion of the class into the sphere of the state (seizure of power).

"The state is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favourable conditions for the latter's maximum expansion"⁴⁸.

However not any state would do nor can the relationship between the state/class and society be a bureaucratic or external one. This brings forth the national-popular dimension of the hegemonic relationship

"But the development & expansion of the particular group are conceived of, and presented, as *being the motor force of a universal expansion, of a development of all the 'national' energies*. In other words, the dominant group is coordinated concretely with the general interests of the *subordinate groups* and the life of the state is concerned of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria between the interests of the fundamental groups and those of the subordinate groups - equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only upto a certain point i.e. stopping⁴⁹ short of narrowly corporate interests.

A state of this kind is the integral state which has superseded the economic corporate phase.⁵⁰

This was to permit G to break with the economic conception of the state envisaged as a coercive, bureaucratic apparatus in the hands of dominant class The integral state⁵¹ performs a certain adaptive and educational role. One that seeks to achieve an adequate fit between the productive apparatuses the 'culture' and morality of the popular masses⁵²

"The state is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules"⁵³.

It is important to note here the introduction of the *ethico-political element* (of Crocean inspiration) for it indicates how to overcome the dichotomy between structure and super-structure points "to the integral parts of a social process".⁵⁴

In this new articulation of the state concept *incorporating hegemony into the state itself*. Gramsci is attempting a dual critique of Liberalism, fascism as well as the statist reductionist Marxist position.

Thus Gramsci rejects any distinction between civil society and state, hegemony and dictatorship, the position which tries to pose the state as 'neutral'. Significantly Gramsci criticizes Gentile's reduction of state to one of its terms which leads to state and society being identified in a authoritarian and '*etatisf*' perspective. In that case 'hegemony' and dictatorship are indistinguishable, force and consent are simply equivalent. Thus the totalitarian is distinguished from an integral one. The integral state requires a rich, articulated development of the super-structures which excludes their reduction simply to government and force, even if this is complemented ideologically.

It goes on to define three principal conditions.⁵⁵

Firstly the mass, social base of the worker's; state i.e. the system of alliances led by the proletariat, its ability to resolve the possible contradictions in this alliance in a non-corporatist, (hegemonic) fashion, so as to preserve the long-term interests' of the bloc of social forces supporting the proletarian dictatorship.

Secondly the nature of the policy conducted by the class in power, as the 'dominant and leading class'. It must be dominant in relation to its adversaries and leading in relation

to the allied classes, as well as a support for society as a whole.⁵⁶

Thirdly the leadership has its roots in the practice of the vanguard party: its relationship to the working class and to the masses and its own internal functioning.⁵⁷

Hence we note that Gramsci's novelty lies not only in his theoretical analysis of the revolution in the west but his analysis prefigures a whole vision of politics of socialism.

For Gramsci the politics of national-popular will as articulated through hegemony was certainly by no means limited to a mere geographical distinction: East (Russia) and West. It very probably involved the strategy for socialism in the Soviet Union if it is true that the concept of hegemony is 'a universal political concept'⁵⁸.

As we have seen Gramsci's concept of politics breaks with economistic problematic of the Marxist position; However what is more significant is that Gramsci adds something to the Leninist anti-economism and this is precisely, in the notion of the form and nature of the state. Gramsci's concept of political is hence a critique of the statist form of reductionism, found in Leninism especially as it became institutionalized in the Soviet Stalinised state.

The *second* dimension to the enlargement of the political relates to the *nature of politics*. This points to the way he conceives of the relationship between the fundamental class and the other sections of the 'nation'. Hegemony effectively involves the supersession of the classist and reductionist conception of politics which sees it as a simple confrontation of antagonistic classes. Gramsci's notions of national-popular will and the integral state embodies a conception of politics as an articulation of the interests of a fundamental class and those of other social groups in the formation of a national popular collective well.

This provided an effective non-revisionist response to the problem of the absence of

polarization in society. Contrary to Marx's expectations, there was not going to be a growing proletarianization of society, but, on the contrary a development of the intermediate sectors. Bernstein, the leader of the SPD who began the famous debate on 'revisionism', was one of the first to sense the importance of this question. He insisted upon the necessity for the working class to establish political relations with these other groups in order for the party of the proletariat to become the party of all the discontented.⁵⁹ But for Bernstein, such a strategy involved the abandonment of Marxism, a condition which Gramsci rejects. For Gramsci it was a question of developing Marxism through the elaboration of the theory of hegemony.

The central thesis of this theory of hegemony as elaborating a different *nature* of politics is the fact of *expansive hegemony*.⁶⁰ This entails that proletarian hegemony was to be in no way limited to its domination over the bourgeoisie. It involves the whole series of political and ideological relations that the working class maintains with non-proletarian classes and strata i.e. which makes the proletariat in power 'a ruling and leading class'.

Secondly this points to a *organic relationship* - one between the leaders of party/class and the rest of the people-nation. This follows from the notion of expansive hegemony i.e. the First thesis. In addition Gramsci's theory of hegemony points to a organic relationship between class and party i.e. inside working class. This relationship must not be bureaucratic and military kind of a relationship so as to ensure that "the proletariat does not merely exercise physical domination, but dominates spiritually as well".⁶¹

Thirdly Gramsci's notion of hegemony points to 'a *continuous movement* which takes place from the base upwards a continuous replacement through all the capillaries of society, a continuous circulation of men'.⁶²

Hence G emphasizes a movement from bottom to top, deriving infact from the mass

base of the proletarian leadership and its implantation in the masses, from its ability to lead alliances.⁶³ Unlike the passive revolution, where vast sections of the popular classes are excluded from the hegemonic system, in an expansive hegemony the whole society must advance.

This distinction of the two methods of hegemony makes it possible to specify further the real nature of national-popular collective will and the form of politics it entails.

It hegemony is seen to be the ability of one class to *articulate the interest of other social groups to its own*. It is now possible to see that this can be done in two very different ways: the interests of these groups can either be articulated so as to neutralize them and hence to prevent the development of their own specific demands or else they can be articulated in such a way as to promote their full development leading to final resolution of the contradictions which they express.

Fourthly The problematic of hegemony is grasped in terms of the relations of force as G is conscious that civil society is riven by class struggle from the economic to the ideological levels.⁶⁴

"The fact of hegemony undoubtedly pre-supposes that account is taken of the interests and groups over which hegemony is exercised, that a certain balance of compromise' is formed, in other words that the leading group make sacrifices of a corporate-economic nature...."⁶⁵ and lastly hegemony as defining democracy, - forms of democracy from below to above⁶⁶ functions effectively as a *critical anti-state principle*.

The fact of building a national-popular will means that it cannot be reduced to a simple doubling of state force.

However this should not lead one to over-emphasize the element of spontaneism in Gramsci. Gramsci was not merely stressing, the spontaneous movement' of the masses

as was reformulating the relationship between the 'people' and the leading class/party/intellectuals. Infact Gramsci is acutely aware of the need for rulers and leaders and gives significant importance to the role of intellectuals.

Gramsci who has been attacked for his Bergsonianism spontaneism and voluntarism emerges as stressing 'the new practice of politics'⁶⁷ which emphasizes mass politics, and not merely an adventure by groups claiming to represent the masses'.

Speaking of political leadership at the time of the Turin movement G articulates his notion of leadership.

He wrote

"This leadership was not 'abstract', it nether consisted in mechanically repeating scientific or theoretical formula, nor did it confuse politics, real action, with theoretical disquisition'. It applied itself to real men formed in specific historical relations with specific feelings, outlooks, fragmentary conceptions of the world, etc which were the result of 'spontaneous' combinations of a given situation of material production with the 'fortuitous' agglomeration within it of disparate social elements.

This element of 'spontaneity was not neglected and even less disposed. *It was educated ...*"

One point which has emerged in most interpretations and debates on the question of hegemony is that Gramsci theorized this concept to make comprehensive the distinction between the nature of civil society and the state in the East and the West. That is Gramsci enriches the Leninist problematic of hegemony by developing it for the advanced Western countries.

However the significant political import of national-popular will and hegemony is *not* only due to Italy's difference from Russia *but has a deeper theoretical novelty*. It has

implications for the whole revolutionary process as a whole and has lessons for any socialist revolution. Lenin too came to this realization after the completion of Bolshevik revolution.

Hence Hegemony *qualifies* the proletarian dictatorship in particular its expansive character and ensures condition for national-popular collective will.

Gramsci's conception of hegemony acquires its specifically, Gramscian dimension in the PN and in the process Leninist conception of hegemony is enriched.

It must be stressed against interpretations which see Gramsci's conception of hegemony as 'cultural' and regard him as reversing the relation between base and super-structure⁶⁸ that Gramsci's attempt to theorize the problematic of hegemony as anti-economistic doctrine is unthinkable without an analysis of the prevailing relations of force, the analysis of 'class-structure' of society, understood as the concrete articulation of class places and positions in a given conjuncture.

Thus an earlier statement which talks of the balance of compromises goes on to prescribe its limits:

"... the leading groups makes sacrifice of a corporative economic nature; but it is evident that such sacrifice and compromise cannot involve what is essential. For if hegemony is ethico-political, then it cannot but be economic; it cannot but have its basis in the decisive function that the leading group exercises in the key sectors of production"⁶⁹

This prompts two observations: Firstly on a fundamental class i.e. one which occupies one of the two poles in the relations of production of a determinate mode of production can become hegemonic.

Second, this condition not only restricts the possible number of hegemonic classes, it also indicates the *possible limitations* of any forms of hegemony sacrifices of an

economic-corporate kind does not mean that the hegemonic class can jeopardize its basic interests. Sooner or later therefore the bourgeoisie comes up against the limitations of its hegemony as its interests must clash with those of the popular classes. This says, G is a sign that it has exhausted its function and that from then 'the ideological bloc tends to crumble away,; then "spontaneity" may be replaced by "constraint" in ever less disguised forms culminating in outright police measures and *comps d'etat*'⁷⁰.

Thus only the working class, whose interest coincide with the limitation of all exploitation can be capable of successfully bringing about a n-p expansive hegemony.⁷¹

NOTES

1. Gramsci's was a quest for a Marxist political theory going beyond the horizon of second International Marxism and even that of Third International.
2. Hobsbawm, Gramsci and Marxist Political Theory in 'A Sasson' (ed.) *Approaches to Gramsci*, London, Writers and Readers, 1982, p. 20.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
4. Tom Nairn, Antonu Su Gobbu' in A. Sasson (ed.), op. cit. Davidson, Gramsci's point seems useful" studying Gramsci makes one grasp how much each individual can only be explained by his position in a parte historical and social structure which is his ... The social and economic structure which 'produced' him can only be grasped structurally if it is grasped historically'. *Approaches to Gramsci* London, Writers and Readers, 1982 has provided an interesting interpretation of Gramsci arguing for seeing Gramsci as essentially an 'Italian Gramsci'. It would be counter productive to imprison Gramsci in the Italian specificity (as Nairn argument tends to do) for many of his concepts have general theoretical utility. However the valid point in Nairn's argument is well taken: Too often the specifically Italian context of G's ideas is ignored by those who wish to use him to support Eurocommunist alternatives. Infact lessons can be learnt only if placed firmly in his historical context seeing his specific Italian resonance.
5. Gramsci criticizes Croce for starting in his historical reflections from 1815 which itself betrays his liberal outlook.

6. Esteve Morera, *Gramsci's historicism: a realist interpretation*, London, Routledge, 1990, p. 148.
7. It is not a mere accident that Gramsci looks at the French case for comparison.
8. As Tom Nairn argues "All Gramsci's key notions like 'hegemony', were valiant efforts to wrestle Italian dilemmas into some kind of theoretical sense". Nairn, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
9. "Certainly the philosophy of praxis is realized in the concrete study of past history and in the contemporary activity of creating new history. But a theory of history and politics can be made, for even if the facts are always singular and changeable in the flux of historical movement, the concepts (can and must) be theorized" Gramsci, MS p. 126 quoted in J Femia, J, *Gramsci's political thought* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981)
10. Whatever the historical accuracy of his specific theses and there have been debates on that. Our attempt is to show the general line of argument and mode of historical explanation and its novelty.
11. SPN, p. 59. G later extended it to his analysis of fascism.
12. Ibid. p. 74.
13. Ibid p.63.
14. Here two senses of the term must be distinguished one, which underlines the energetic, resolute and fanatical characteristics the destructive sectarian elements of a clique derived from hatred of enemies and the constructive one derived from having made demands of popular masses one's own the 'national-popular' aspect. See SPN, p 66.
15. This links upto G's argument that Action party was the only party capable of writing peasants because it was a party of the petty-bourgeoisie.
16. This links to G's attempt to understand the origins of the bourgeois state in Italy - the specific type of the *new Italian state*.
17. Gramsci sought to study the Risorgimento as a problem similar to that of the French revolution *a problem that was essentially a political process*. - a treatment in line with later day interpretations eg. Furet-Interprety the French revolution *op. cit.*, p. 5-14.
18. SPN, pp. 62. See for an extended analysis of the Action party SPN, p. 58-64.
19. The notion of national popular transformation is linked to the 'Southern question'. The question of the south in Italy and the resulting imperative of alliance between the workers and peasants.
20. 'Notebooks I' quoted in Buci-Glucksmann., *op.cit*, p. 55.

The lack of economic hegemony acquires its distinctive and *explanatory character*. when examine the type of 'revolution in the super structure' that is specific to the passive revolution.

21. Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual - "every social group has its own stratum of intellectuals or tends to form one. SPN, p. 60.
22. Note book I, Buci-Glucksmann, op. cit. p. 55.
23. The moment of coercion and consent the Gramscian centaur.
24. SPN., p. 58,
For eg. the Moderates continued to lead the Action party even after 1870 & 1876. This analysis is especially interesting for it is with reference to the analysis of the Risorgimento that Gramsci says and implies a whole 'politics of socialism' cf. Buci-Glucksmann op. cit. p. 66.
25. Buci-Glucksmann op.cit.,p. 62.
26. This means two aspects: One is the ability to be organic to the class to which the group belongs e.g. the moderates and the other the question of alliance with other social groups in society.
27. Notebook 1, 46 quoted in Buci-Gluckeman op. cit. p. 62.
28. Note book 1, 46, quoted in Buci-Glucksmann, Op.cit. p. 63.
29. "In fact ever real historical phase leaves traces of itself in succeeding phases, which then become in a sense the best document of its existence. The process of historical development is a unity in time through which the present-contains the whole of the past and in the present is realized that part of the past which to 'essential' with no residue of any 'unknowable' representing the true 'essence" . The part which is lost i.e. not transmitted dialectically in the historical process, was in itself of no import, usual and contingent 'dross', cronicle and not history, a superficial and negligible episode in the last analysis". SPN. p. 409.
30. Gramsci's understanding of the meaning of socialism and the revolution makes him identify what is progressive or regressive in the hisotorical moment. It is the argument of this study that Gramsci's notion of national-popular will changes the very meaning of revolution and socialism and hence changes his historical perspective.
31. SPN, p. 18.
32. SPN, p. 79.
33. Buci-Glucksmann p. 62. Her analysis attempts to link G's thisny theory to the problematic of the state. Her work offers invaluable help to understanding G distinctiveness as well as his relation to Lenin and the continuity with the world communist movement.

34. According to G consent can be either passive and indirect: (it excludes any, intervention from the base' the state instrumentalize consent and treats the masses as 'masses for manoeuvre') or active-direct (consent requires a real interchange between rulers and ruled).
35. This relates to exclusion of any bureaucratic relationship between leaders and led. Further it denotes a continuous movement in society.
36. From the factory to the school and the family.
37. This has many dimensions to it (polyvalent): an intellectual and moral dimension, a politics of alliances which must open up a national perspective to the whole of society, the nature of the relationship between intellectuals and the 'people-nation'. (masses). The aspect of cultural articulation etc. In the context of these meanings Gramsci contrasts the hegemonic class to the corporate class which defends its own present material interests. Gramsci esp emphasizes the national-popular dimension "the development and expansion of the particular group are concurred of, and presented, as being the motorforce of a universal expansion of a development of all the "national" energies. SPN, p. 182.
38. This refers to the argument that only through the kind of democratic control by the mass of the population implied in Gramsci's view of socialism is it possible to overcome the traditional split between an economy dominated by the anarchy of market forces and the political ideological super structures, themselves beyond the democratic control of the mass of the population.
39. Gramsci, Q 50 quoted in Sasoon.(ed), Approaches to Gramsci, *op.cit.*, p. 121.
40. SPN, pp. 104-6.
41. In contrast the hegemonic strategy of the working class in the conquest of majority consent can only be an "anti-passive revolution" based on active consent and national-popular will.
42. Joseph Femia *op. cit.* pp 46-47 and p 259 fn 64. He argues that G exhibits the Marxist tendency to exaggerate the achievements of the French revolution and glorify its jacobin heroes.
43. Sassoon Gramsci's Politics Hutchinson, 1987, p. 206.
44. SPN, p. 116.
45. SPN, p. 116.
46. The most classic representations may be found in the work of Albert Soboul. The French revolution 1787-1799: From the storming of the Bastille to Napoleon, trans. by Alan Forrest and Colin' Jones, Newyork 1974 and George Lejebvre.

Useful reverses of literature may be found in William Doyle. 'Origins of the French revolution' and Geoffrey Ellis "Review article". The Marxist interpretation' of the French revolution" *English historical Review* 93, (1978) pp 353-376.

To go into the literature in depth is beyond the scope of this study.

47. Albert Soboul, *Aspects of the French Revolution*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1968., p 142.
48. Other points on which critics' objections are: they have argued that there was no conscious class conflict between bourgeoisie and aristocracy before the revolution. Aristocrats did not stand in the way of the bourgeoisie, indeed they shared many economic, social and political interests. It was the liberal aristocracy, not a frustrated bourgeoisie that initiated the revolution against the Absolutist states. In the revisionist account the revolution loses its pre-determined quality because it appears as a mistake.
49. Alfred Cobban, *The socialist interpretation of the French revolution* Cambridge 1964.
50. *Italian and French revolution compared*.
51. Koselleck - 9.
52. Lynn Hunt p 5.
53. *ibid* p 10.
54. Skocpol cites the work of Norman Hanipson. But this is time of later revisionist accounts, like Cobban, Colin Lucas etc. *The social history of the French revolution* (Toronto University Press 1963).
55. Interestingly the author quotes the work of M.J. Sydenham's *The French revolution* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1966) in which Sydenham has: "deliberately chosen to reassert the importance of political developments particularly the emergence of the new religion of nationalism and the attempt to reconcile constitutional authority with popular control of power" (p. 5). Skocpol, p 175 fn 6 on page p 331 fn 6.
This analysis does try to explain the processes and outcomes of the revolution in new ways - ways which highlight certain themes taken up in Gramsci's analysis.
56. A brief look at the way she discusses the French revolution illustrates this point. Her subsections to the chapter *Birth of a "Modern state edifice"* in France are 'The revolution economic development', *The effects of crisis and etc.* p. 174-205 'The *impact of revolutions*'.
57. See page 202-205 'The State in society'.
58. Lynn Hunt, *op. cit.* p. 8 and fn. 17.
59. Cobban led the way in emphasizing the importance of these social divisions quoted by Hunt. *Ibid.*, p 8.

60. Lynn Hunt, *Ibid.*, p 9.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*, p 10.
63. In the words of Koselleck 'Future's past' *op. cit.*
64. Francois Furet, *Interpreting the French revolution*, trans. Elborg Foster (CUP, Cambridge 1981).
65. C. Lefort *Democracy and Political theory*, trans. David Macey (Cambridge Polity Press 1988).
66. Furet, *op. cit.*, p 27.
67. R. Koselleck, *Critique & Crisis: Enlightenment. and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*, Oxford, Berg Publishers, 1988.
68. *Ibid.* p. 4.
69. Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture & Class in the French Revolution*, London, University of California Press, 1984, p.10.
70. Koselleck, *Op. Cit.*, p. 21 and pp. 23-40.
71. *Ibid.* p. 53.
72. *Ibid.* p. 56.
- 72a. *ibid.*
73. *Ibid.* p. 59.
74. *Ibid.* p. 59-60.
75. Koselleck p. 62.
76. A new stratum coalesced from all these highly diverse groups - groups that were socially accepted but politically powerless like the nobility or economically powerful but socially branded as upstarts like the financiers or socially without a proper place but of almost intellectual importance like the philosophers. It was a stratum which pursued very different, even conflicting interests, but which shared the fate of being unable to find an adequate place within the absolutist state's existing institutions.
77. The sphere of interests that evolved lay outside the state; in was the sphere of society in which the various groups saw their indigenous place.
Kosellick, p. 66. (emphasis added).
78. At the exchange, in coffeehouses or at the academies, salons libraries, & literary societies.
79. Koselleck, *Op. Cit.*, p. 68.

- 80 . Koselleck draws upon the writing of the period in France to note, the 'cleft between state & society almost from 1731. Rousseau saw the tension between the Absolute state & the new society since 1760 & felt that only a revolution could release it. *Ibid.*, p. 69 fn 16).
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-75.
82. *Ibid.* p. 75.
83. . The separation of ethics & politics implied a moral verdict on the prevailing political system, an indirect power that threatened sovereignty.
84. Koselleck, Op. Cit., p. 85.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
86. Gramsci would call it 'intellectual & moral reform.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
88. This criticism feeds on the dualism of politics & morality, in the effected separation of moral & political jurisdiction. The moral tribunal becomes political criticism not only by subjecting politics to its stern judgement but vice versa as well, by separating itself as a tribunal from the political sphere.
89. "To understand the peculiar political significance of criticism in the 18th Cent it is necessary to show the evolution of the critical factor in its conflicting relationship with the state, & then to pursue the gradual development & the growing chain of the critical factor on this state.
90. i.e. the criterion of truth shifted from revelation to the sphere of clear & rational & critical thought & 'criticism' came to have a political meaning. In the 18th Cent. 'critical' and 'rational' were often used interchangeably. Reason became a critical process of the search for truth. if Ernst Cassirer. The philosophy of the Enlightenment. Quoted in K. p. 168.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110. "The self made link to the future enabled the rational judge to become a critic of the present."
92. Criticism claims to be non-political; it does not impinge on the state yet it is also not subject to the state Bayle saw the function of criticism as purely "intellectual" & nonpolitical. This is found in the art criticism of Voltaire who engaged in literary, aesthetic & historical criticism & whose criticism took on a political significance.
This contributed to politicizing the various intellectual fronts that had opened up, *Ibid.*, p. 113.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
- 95 . His study claims to be an intellectual history - at the plane of ideas.

96. Another extremely interesting - historically concrete indepth study of the rise & 'evolution of public sphere is by J Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere : an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Translated in 1989. Written in Habermas infact draws on the work by Koselleck's Critique and Crisis in his discussion on the idea & ideology of the public sphere See (Ch IV p. 89-129). Habermas makes the point in the Preface that his study refers to the 'liberal model of the bourgious public sphere' & leaves aside the plebeian public sphere.
97. J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere : An Inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, trans. Thomas Burger, G. Britain, Polity Press, 1989, p. xviii.
98. i.e. the form or structure or unit of modern politics and its distinctiveness.
- 98a. This points to an important claim of nationalist ideology, to regard nations as 'natura' and given.
99. That is the question of origin but in interms of kind/nature of peonomenon it inaugerated. What are te inherent connections between the nation-state and the modern politics which make it impossible for us to visulize any other mode of transition.
1. SPN. See the Prison Notebooks.
 2. Drawn from Tom Nairn's analysis.
 3. SPN, p. 258-60.
 4. Gellner. Nations and Nationalism.
 5. The identification of nation, with state and 'people' is quite recent and infact is historically novel.
 6. Gian franco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State : A Sociological Introduction*, London, Hutchinson and Co. 1978, pp 86-177./
 7. "... the modern state appears as an artifical, enginerned institutional complex rather than as one developed sponteneously" Ibid., p 95.
 8. Ibid.
 9. H Heller, p. 204 quoted in Poggi, op. cit., p. 95 and p. 164, fn. 15.
 10. Ibid., p. 95.
 11. " it is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inheretly limited and sovereign"
B Anderson, *Imagined communities*.
 12. Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change*. p. 169.
 13. Anderson, op. cit., p. 15.

14. The rise of the 'public', the separation of the societal realm into public life and of the institutions has been analysed, in Koselleck critique and crisis.
A similar account is also found in an recently trans work of J Habermas, The structural transformation of the public sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, G Britain, Polity Press, 1989.
15. Gramsci's reference to elite attitude of an intellectual group.
16. SPN, p. 77.
17. Ibid.
18. Gramsci illustrates by reference to a series of novels by Eugene Sue which particularly lay emphasis on the necessity of having a concern for the peasantry. Ibid p. 63-64
19. SPN, p. 78
20. Poggi, op. cit., p. 77-78
21. Peter Burke, Popular Culture, in Early Modern Popular England, Wildwood House, 1988.
22. Ibid. Discovery of 'Popular Culture' linked to nationalism (p. 8, p. 10-11, p. 12, p. 13).
23. SPN, p. 258-260.
24. SPN, p. 260.
25. Tom Nairn, The Break, up of Britan uses this' Gramscian idea to analyse the history of Scottish Nationalism
26. The Political Culture of revolution was made up of symbolic practices, such as language, Imagency & gestures.
Lynn, Hunt, in her recent study 'Political, Culture & Class in the French revolution has claised to highlight centrally the Kind of revolutionary change brought about in te symbolic order & beliefs as part of her analysis into the political Culture of the revolution.
Lynin Hunt argues that the revolution was, in a *Special sense fundamentally* "Political". the creation of a new Political rhetoric & the development of new *sysbolic forms of political practice* transfored contemporary notions about politics. Politics became an instrument for rejaseoing society. French people believed that they could establish a new national comnuty based on reasion & nature (p. 213).
27. Furet 'The interpretation of the French revolution' has done more than anyone else to revise the historioghaphical debates & point then in new directions
28. Drawn from chapter on Nationalism in 'Thought & Change (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1965) pp. 147-179 & his book 'Nation's & Nationalism' (onford, Basel Blackwell, 1983)

29. Role & location of members into certain roles
30. Gellner, *Thought & Change* p. 153-156
31. This point is extremely interesting & Indicates the importance of such activities as census etc. which help people to concretely 'know' about each other & this 'Information' becomes a matter of general knowledges.
32. "If a man is not firmly set in a social make niche whose relationship as it were endows him with its identity, he is obliged to carry his identity with him in his whole style of conduct & expression; in other words, his 'culture' becomes his identity. And the classification of men by 'culture' is of course the classification by 'nationality'" Ibid., p. 157
33. Anthony Giddens in 'Nation-State & Violence' Vol. 2 of contemporary critique of HM (Oxford, Cambridge Polity Press, 1985) Ch. 4, Ch. 6, Ch.8) has argued that the traditional 'states were marked by segmental autonomy p. 201. For him the emergence of nation-states is a change in the mode of surveillance which is such so as to increase the reciprocal relations between the government & governed.
These began to form the practical consciousness of the sharing of concepts & ideas belonging to that nation state the creation of a common sense of moral & political identity.
34. Ibid. pp. 158-159
35. Gellner *Nations & Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 63-64
36. Ibid., p. 63
37. This distinction relates to the differences in their relationship of civil society to the state.
38. Buci Glucksmann, has shown that between 1927 to 1930 Gramsci came to a real deepening of his critique of economism leading towards a radical and complex conception of the revolutionary process in the West. op. cit., pp. 242-243.
39. C Mouffe 'Hegemony and the Integral state in Gramsci towards a new concept of politics' in George Bridges and Rosalind Brunt (eds.) *Silver linings : Some strategies for the 10s* (London, Lawrence and Wishart 1981) p. 172
40. This emphasis on leadership by being national - popular is brought out for the 1st time in a selfconscious manner in *Some aspects of the Southern question*
41. In politics the error occurs as a result of an inaccurate understanding of what the state (in its integral meaning : dictatorship and hegemony) really is SPN, p. 239.

- 42 . Concerned to find the correct relation between organic or conjunctural he relates it to the analysis of relations of force SPN, pp. 178-180, The three relations of force are the material forces, political forces and military forces pp. 180-183.
- 43 . SPN, p. 180-181.
- 44 . Ibid.
- 45 . Ibid, p. 181-182
- 46 . This phase involves the class hegemony investing the sum total of superstructures.
- 47 . SPN, p. 181-182.
- 48 . Ibid, p. 182.
- 49 . SPN, p. 182.
- 50 . It is the problematic of hegemony which is at the root of this enlarging of the state whose importance has been stressed by Buci - Glucksmann as well as pointed out by C Mouffe.
- 51 . Gramsci distinguishes two different senses of the state concept, or as Buci-Glucksmann points out : two moments, in the articulation of the state field : the state in the strict unilateral sense and the state in the broad integral sense. Even the coercive role cannot be understood narrowly as every state, combines functioning by, coercion with functioning by ideology by economics.
- Moreover the educative national-popular role of the state cannot be understood on its own for the moment of coercion is behind it.
- 52 . SPN, p. 242.
- 53 . SPN, p. 244.
- 54 . Leonardo Paggi argues that it is the ethico-political element which explicates the way in which the shift from the economy to the political takes place to develop a theory of hegemony, L Paggi Gramsci's general theory of Marxism' in Mouffe (ed) Gramsci and Marxist theory, pp. 139-140.
55. Buci-Glucksmann p 182.
56. It is clear, then, that what will happen after the seizure of power depends on what has happened before. " It becomes dominant, but it must continue to lead." Notebook I, 44 quoted in Buci-Glucksmann, p. 184.
57. Gramsci wrote on 10 Sept 1925 in Unita that the dictatorship of the proletariat was 'a political fact of mass leadership' while also being a coercive fact. (quoted in Buci-Glucksmann, p. 431).
58. Quoted in Buci-Glucksmann, p. 187.

59. The questions which Bernstein raised were: what were the implications for socialist strategy of the fact that the other classes and strata were not disappearing or being merged into the industrial and agricultural proletariat 2nd - what would the movement do if by any chance the prospect of a single dramatic seizure of power - proved unrealistic 3rd the movement's position on reforms as more palliatives.
60. The other route through which class can become hegemonic, is that of transformism a 'bastard form of hegemony' and it was a 'passive revolution' (two say distinction.)
The consists in the creation of an active, direct consensus resulting from the genuine adoption of the interests of the popular classes by the hegemonic class, which would give rise to the creation of a 'genuine national-popular will'.
61. S.P.W. II, 1921-26, p. 211.
62. Ibid., p 212.
63. This corresponds to the two way distinction found in Gramsci. Which is one of the most significant aspects of his theory. This relates fundamentally to the different ways/modes of transition to capitalism. The first way is the 'normal' way which was the mode in the European countries of England and France. The second which Gramsci terms as the 'passive revolution' refers to the mode of transition in peripheral, backward countries and involves state-directed change. The method is *transformism* the way in which the Moderate party during the Risorgimento managed to secure its hegemony over the forces fighting for unification.
This distinction is also found in Marx - its economic complement in Capital Vol. 3 pp 334-337 and its political expression in 'Bourgeoisie and the counter-revolution in Marx & Engels, SW, p. 138-142.
In Lenin it is found in Collected works vol 3 June 1907-April 1908 pp 238-242.
64. Buci-Glucksmann, op. cit. p. 72.
65. SPN, p. 161.
66. Buci-Glucksmann 'Hegemony and Consent: A political strategy' Buci-Glucksmann in Sassoon (ed.) Approaches to Gramsci, op. cit. p. 119.
67. SPN, p. 198.
68. One such idealist interpretation is Bobbio's.
69. SPN, p. 161.
70. SPN, pp. 60-61.
71. Mouffe 'Hegemony & Ideology' op. cit. p. 183.

CHAPTER THREE
NATIONAL-POPULAR WILL AND INDIAN NATIONALISM:
A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to explore some of the themes raised by our study of Gramsci in the context of historiography of colonial South Asia.

The aim and purpose is to look at the concrete historical processes of a concrete society namely India in the sight of these theoretical ideas. In view of the claim of this study that Gramsci's concept of national-popular will enables us to make sense of the historical world, it would be interesting to see how Gramsci's concept can be applied to an understanding of the historical experience of Indian Nationalism. The attempt in this chapter would be to confront Nationalist history with certain questions raised by our study of Gramsci's thought. We shall attempt to see how certain themes have been taken up and answered by prevailing modes of *nationalist history writing*. As a result the historical narrative of Nationalism is opened up in interesting ways.

The history of Indian Nationalism can be told in many different ways. The story of the national movement has been viewed from a wide variety of historiographic perspectives. This socialism is intended in part to be a general review of the various approaches and part to assess and rethink the issues raised.

There are two ways of looking at the approaches to Indian Nationalism. One follows the taxonomical principle of placing these approaches according to their views. In this mode of classification the nationalist and neo-nationalist could be placed together. The early Marxist perspectives as well as later attempts represented by Sumit Sarkar to renovate it could be another paradigm. The subaltern project would be a recent intervention to

challenging all other approaches. But it would have more to share with the Marxist than the nationalist school with whom it differs sharply on most questions. Nonetheless they should be seen as a separate perspective as they have a distinctive position on the questions raised.

If looked at historically or chronologically the Cambridge school would be followed by the early nationalists historians like 'Tara Chand P. Sita Ramaiya, B.B. Majumdar etc'. The early Marxist position represented mainly by R.P. Dutt's still-impressive India Today offered a counterpoint.

The historiography of Indian Nationalism took a new turn from the early 1970s with the sudden data expansion as a result of the opening of archives and private papers and the coming in of more detailed province or locality based research.

The disquiet with received categories followed the realization that Nationalism is a more complex, contradictory phenomenon than earlier analysis suggested. A whole *spate* of scholarship emerged challenging the conventional understanding of the history of Nationalism.

This dissatisfaction found expression in two different, indeed mutually-opposed, ways in the more recent work of Bipin Chandra and some of his colleagues broadly referred as the neo-nationalist school.

The Subaltern project, the other major departure offers, a radically new and specific historiographical perspective underlying which are specific idea about the nature of national struggle and subaltern consciousness.

There is an interesting and valuable point of insertion which claims to put each of the other approaches in a certain perspective.

Equally significantly some of these approaches claim to use Gramscian concepts and employ them to understand the historical processes during colonial India and Nationalism.

Interestingly the neo-nationalist school as well as the opposing approach of the Subaltern studies self consciously follow Gramsci's ideas, though with startlingly different consequences.

Very briefly the themes with which we propose to approach and interrogate these historiographical approaches are: Their position on :-

(A) The nature of the 'national revolution' represented by the national movement - was it a hegemonic national-popular revolution in a Gramscian sense? This relates to two questions (1) Class nature of the national movement, (2) Relationship of the national movement represented by the Indian National Congress. That is the question: Was the national movement genuinely popular or 'jacobin'? How were the various classes integrated in the movement for example, the peasants?

(B) The question of leadership. Was the leadership national? How did the peasants relate to the leadership? Did they form an autonomous subject position and activity and did they bypass nationalist leadership? What is the dynamics of 'spontaneity' and 'leadership' in a movement?

(C) How did the consciousness of the peasants articulate or express itself into a collective hegemonic consciousness or will?

This analysis would try to look in some detail at the neo-nationalist and the subaltern projects especially their relationship with the Marxist framework.

The Subaltern project is a heterogeneous collection of positions *having little* by way of a shared "presupposition" except a certain dissatisfaction with current historiographical orthodoxies.¹ Hence this analysis would focus on Ranajit Guha's work and Pantha Chatterjee's writings in Nationalist thought and the colonial world - A derivative discourse and his writings in the Subaltern studies.

The Neo-Nationalist School

The neo-nationalist school has attempted to launch a complex and simultaneous initial offensive against the Cambridge historians, some constituent arguments or traditional Marxist perspective as well as the Subaltern project. It claims to use a Gramscian perspective to defend the Indian National Congress as a national-popular hegemonic movement leading to a successful national revolution. Some of its major premises and theoretical presuppositions, deserve serious critical attention. Let us look briefly at the argument presented.² The two aspects of the argument regarding its nature and its claim to lead nation would be looked into. The Congress is seen as the leader of *the national-popular anti-imperialist* movement of the *people* and its activities constituted the movement.

This school uses concepts and categories drawn from an explicitly acknowledged Gramscian framework.

Hence the congress is seen to be representing a 'hegemonic'³ popular national⁴ movement.

And further "The Indian national movement, infact, provides, the only historical example of a semi-democratic or democratic type of political structure being successfully replaced or transformed. It is the only movement where the broadly Gramscian theoretical perspective of a war of position was successfully practised where reserves of counter hegemony were built up over the years, through progressive stages;"⁵ This brought the colonial state into a state of crisis, 'a crisis of authority' from the beginning of the 30s and again the employment of a Gramscian idea. "... A crisis of authority is invoked: this is precisely the crisis of hegemony or general crisis of the state"⁶

The national-popular character of the movement is linked to the argument which considers the primary contradiction to be the colonial one and congress as organising a

'national' response to it in the form of an anti-colonial ideology. The national movement was based on the growing recognition of the character of colonialism and this central contradiction formed the basis of the appeal to all national groups.⁷

This argument is put forward to defend the unified commonality of interests that was responsible for their union into the anticolonial national movement rather than see the 'autonomous' or independent motive and action on the part of peasants based on their relation with landlords etc.⁸

The congress is seen as representing the wider interests of all the sections of the people based on the theory of Imperialism forming 'the central, and primary contradiction' in society⁹ understood in terms of objective economic interests¹⁰ and more recently of culture¹¹ as well.

Related to this is the argument which relates to the class nature of the national movement. The neo-nationalist school sees the Indian National Movement as an all-class people's movement and denies its bourgeois character. They do admit at places that the aim of the movement was to bring about the capitalist development of the economy and to institute a capitalist society. However it was not led by the bourgeois.¹²

These historians stress the ideological elements that provided the programmatic dynamics of the Indian national movement. The anticolonial ideology combined with a vision of a civil libertarian, democratic, secular, socially radical, economically developing independent and united polity and the pro poor radical orientation enabled the congress to base the national movement on the masses and to give it the character of a popular, people's movement.¹³ Hence while the vision was that of a bourgeois/capitalist development the congress continued to define itself in a radical direction in terms of the popular element. Accordingly to these writers the movement was not bourgeois in character, but an all people's movement with an all class nature.¹⁴

It is to be noted that this group of scholar while claiming to be within the broad Marxist tradition¹⁵ defer significantly on this question from the more orthodox Marxists' position.

Their failure to characterize the movement's class basis can be subject to criticism even if the alternative position is not an orthodox one.

On one hand they derive, their analysis from a 'structural' primary contradiction (against colonialism) and its socio-economic determinants. Yet for them the dominant vision within the movement was contingent, and not arising from the 'structural' contradiction. This vision of bourgeois development is attributed to its ideological structure for "it was open to the alternative hegemony of socialist ideas."¹⁶

On this point the approach suffers from a unfair task of consistency.

Firstly it admits that a movement brought into being a capitalist model of development. However it disclaims that it was led or controlled by the bourgeoisie (a stronger claim) or that the bourgeoisie exercised decision influence over it. (a weaker claim.)

Secondly, It sees the colonial contradiction to be primary and structural and the national movement a result of this fundamental contradiction. However despite the recognition of this 'material basis'¹⁷ of the movement in colonialism their analysis accords an indeterminacy to the hegemony of the bourgeois ideas within the movement.

Their use of the Gramscian idea of the hegemonic struggle is *not entirely in time with Gramsci's analysis*. It evades what for Gramsci was a crucial question: the class basis of the movement. Gramsci theorized the concept of hegemony to amplify the class basis of a struggle or the state not *to* escape it.

"The fact of hegemony undoubtedly pre-supposes that account is taken of the interests and groups over which hegemony is exercised, that a certain balance of compromise is formed, in other words that the leading group make sacrifices of a corporative economic nature; but *it is evident that such sacrifices and compromise cannot*

involve what is essential. For if hegemony is ethico-political, then it cannot *but be economic; it cannot but have its basis in the decisive function that the leading group exercises in the key sectors of production.*¹⁸ At the heart of their analysis lies a misunderstanding of Gramsci's analysis.

Secondly its explanatory potential regarding Indian Nationalism is rather limited.

In relation to the first it could be argued that this account mistakes the relation between war of position and passive revolution. In Gramsci can be found two partially conflicting sense of the concept of "war of position". Sometimes it is the form of political struggle which alone is possible in periods of relatively stable equilibrium between the fundamental classes i.e. when frontal attack on war of manoeuvre, is impossible. It is in such periods that Gramsci poses the question does there exist an absolute identify between war of position and passive revolution? Here war of position will give way to war of manoeuvre at a certain point.¹⁹

However in "political struggle and Military war"²⁰, war of position is related to the west, where there is a "proper relation between state and civil society". The two positions are only reconciled in one passage, and that with considerable qualifications, Gramsci suggests that in the west civil society resists i.e. must be conquered before the frontal assault on the State.²¹

The neo-nationalist school are not sensitive to the two notions of war of position and implicitly equate war of position with hegemony.

In the Prison Notebooks the reference of the Indian National movement²² Gramsci is referring to types/forms of political strategies adopted. His reference is not about the nature of the national movement.

Neo-nationalists seem to read Gramsci as attributing, the²³ nature of the national movement. They take up Gramsci's reference to the type of political strategy and deduce

from the characterization of the movement as such.

In the discussion of passive revolution²⁴ Gramsci characterizes it as passive with religious overtones.

The analysis found in Bipan Chandra contributes to ambiguous thinking on the internal tensions within colonial Indian society as well as the contradictory nature of nationalism. An apriori and absolute 'primacy' is given to the so-called major contradiction with Imperialism. This leads them to equate the congress with the entire "popular anti-imperialist movement of the Indian people,"²⁵ and virtually every action of the congress leadership is sought to be justified. Sumit Sarkar²⁶ makes a similar point when he argues that while the language employed is closer to standard Marxism²⁷ the content is closer to official nationalism.²⁸

The contradictory nature of nationalism is smoothed out and an implicit teleology can be found in their analysis. This refers to evaluation in terms of alleged consequences or end products alone. The present is determinedly read back into the past.²⁹

This charge of denying the complexity and contradictory nature of the nationalist process has been made by the Subaltern historiography too. They argue that nationalist historiography... "imposes an ideological unity on the processes of politics in late colonial Indian from the standpoint of the emergent national state."

The sovereignty of the colonial state, it asserts, was illegitimate, rejected by an entire people whose political consciousness was gradually awakened in the course of the national movement.

Following from their theory of two domains of politics they argue that the neo-nationalist approach does not recognize the split between two domains during colonial India. For them the sphere of politics was not split in the colonial period because politics then was the struggle of an entire nation against an illegitimate alien power, it is not split in the post-colonial period because with the removal of that alien power the nation is now

fully represented by the national state.

Hence this approach imposes a history, *a narrative of Indian nation-hood teleologically* being realized from the first moment of inception. A remarkably unified picture emerges which holds firmly to the assumption of a unilinear development of popular consciousness in a progressive direction. So politics in 20th century India is seen as a process that is unified by the historical formation of the Indian nation state.

The national movement is equated with Indian National Congress.. The congress is seen to be the leader of the popular, anti-imperialist movement of the Indian people and its activities constituted the movement.

Thus, as we have noted the neo-nationalist school's use of the Gramscian framework is problematical. Moreover their understanding of Indian nationalism has also been subjected to serious criticisms.

In recent years, the new perspective opened up by the Subaltern project claims to understand Indian history a new. It has opened a radical terrain of research. And more significantly linked it up to arguments regarding the trajectory of Indian nationalism.

In order to understand their perspective and position on the question of the national revolution I would focus attention on two major advocates of this approach - on Ranajit Guha in his *Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency* and Partha Chatterjee's work on nationalist discourse.

This limitation is necessary for two reasons. Firstly the subaltern project constitutes a heterogeneous groups of scholars and positions. Hence the need to be specific. Secondly these two represent the most developed theoretical accounts of the problematic and hence attention is focused on these two.

Walter Benjamin's dictum that the past itself is at stake in political struggles³⁰ is illustrated forcefully in the writing on Indian nationalism.

The subaltern project is a radical intervention which contests the historical terrain of nationalism. It asks questions and problematizes areas which had been considered settled. Its contribution lies in re-opening the historical narrative of nationalities as well as its real history, to questions³¹ drawn from a different analytical perspective.

These claims relate implicitly as well as explicitly to the issue of nature and dynamics of the national movement.

In Partha Chatterjee's account can be found an explanation about the historical outline of transition in pre-capitalist societies. The complex argument presented is part of an analytical framework different from that conventionally used. It takes its point of departure from Robert Brenner's contribution to the debate on the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Drawing from Brenner's analysis Partha Chatterjee³² emphasises the distinctive nature, of pre-capitalist mode of production.

Significantly Chatterjee uses Brenner to challenge the argument which explains the transition, in terms of techno-economic factors. Brenner's argument cuts across the terms of Dobb-Sweezy debate.

It showed that both sides of the argument were based on one form or another of economic determinism³³ and begged the question of the specific process of struggle between the contending forces vying for supremacy i.e. the process of class struggle. Illustrating his argument by a comparative analysis of eastern Europe, Western Europe and England, Brenner showed that 'the whole question "of the specific form of transition is extricated from the bog of techno-economic determinism-depopulation, declines in productivity, dissolving impacts of external trade, etc. and posed as a problem of politics i.e. of class struggle".³⁴

In arguing, for an element of 'indeterminacy' Brenner argued that the outcomes were bound up with certain 'historically specific patterns of development of the contending

classes. This was linked to their relative strength in terms of self-consciousness, organisation, their relation with allied classes and to the state.³⁵

This is an argument of the most far-reaching implications. It not only highlights the different dynamic of pre-capitalist mode from that of capitalism but brings out "The Theoretical importance of locating the element of 'indeterminacy' in the transition problem in the specific political form of the class struggle."³⁶

Chatterjee argues that Brenner's intervention demonstrates that the path of transition is not uniquely determined by the techno-economic terms of evolution of a certain mode of production. He takes it upon himself the task of defining in theoretical terms in which this *political question* of the transition problem can be attacked³⁷. This is an aspect of the incompleteness of the capitalist transformation, the, 'variable social forms of capital'. P Chatterjee tries to come to grips with this problematic theoretically. According to him this necessarily leads him to develop an alternative theoretical framework and a corresponding choice in method.

According to him the theoretical framework of Marx's capital does not allow one to talk about the variable social forms of capital.³⁸ In that framework, capital is the universal category, the most general category' that is known to us in the historical evolution of economic categories.³⁹

Following from this the incompleteness of the capitalist transformation can be seen in two ways. One is to see it as a question of lag in time but there was no question about the historical direction of change. Lenin in his famous debate with the Populists argued that if Capitalism was still backward in Russia, it was a question of time lag.

To him, as to Marx, Capital was indeed the universal category, the only social form that had generalised itself throughout the world. This view regarded "the problem of "retarded" or "infirm" capitalism i.e. of the incompleteness" of the transition as simply incomplete".⁴⁰

Alternatively the problem could be theorized as incompleteness in the sense of never to be completed that is these 'retarded' forms are precisely the expressions of the historical limits of capital which it is beyond its powers to transcend.⁴¹

Chatterjee refuses to follow the procedure outlined in Grundrisse⁴² for it represented the idea that capital was indeed the universal category. "Every other particular social form represented the others of capital, marked by its difference from capital and hence becoming pre-capitalist⁴³ Instead he offers an 'alternative 'project' that enables us to identify and explain the limits to the historical actualisation of capital as a universal economic category.⁴⁴

What is interesting for our argument regarding the history of Indian nationalism is the attempt to look at it as an incomplete process and to point to the particular form of the Indian society in transition. This posing of the problem links up with Partha Chatterjee use of Gramscian concept of passive revolution.

It could be argued that the theory of passive revolution represent the political complement to this 'incomplete' capitalism. Infact our study of Gramsci has altered us to the fact that the two way distinction points precisely to the historical limits of Capital to follow one single course of development.

Chatterjee argues that the task must be to conceptualize the nature of the transition process. These societies are marked by the continued existence of pre-capitalist forms during capitalist-colonialist.

Looking at the form of transition in the social formation of India in the historical context of confrontation with a different mode of production (in the form of colonialism) Chatterjee notes the continued existence and 'reliance' of the community. The ideological forms of the communal mode of power, as well as politics conducted on that basis are evident.

Looking at the form of politics-the 'political aspect of the mode of production in this period Chatterjee puts forward the picture of two emerging 'domains of politics'. One is the

unorganized autonomous world basing itself on the community. The other the area organized politics among the propertied and educated in Bengal, with contending parties and factions each seeking to mobilize support among the rest of the population.

The relatively unorganised world of politics continued to exist autonomously but left an impact when it came into contact with organised politics. According to Partha Chatterjee the notion of the community continued to act as a live force in the consciousness of the peasantry. These involved norms of reciprocity which laid down the principles of political ethics and were coded-through religious beliefs, myths etc - into a series of acts and symbols denoting authority and obedience, benevolence and obligation or oppression and revolt.⁴⁵ This may vary according to whether the 'outsider' was the feudal or bureaucratic state authority. However when a community acts collectively the fundamental political characteristics are the same everywhere⁴⁶ i.e. it reveals the same political phenomenon at work.

This point is significant for Partha Chatterjee's argument. It goes on to illustrate his point about the paradigmatic form of peasant action⁴⁷. Moreover it links up with the implicit conception of the process of nation-state formation in his writings.

For Chatterjee the distinction which he makes between two kinds of politics leads him to conclude that it is the *nature of the linkage of peasant*. Communal politics with the structures of organised politics which designates one movement as 'Gandian' or 'terrorist' or 'communalist'⁴⁸. Hence the categories of parties, factions, leaders apply only to linkages between the two.

Chatterjee's argument (Which is also the Subalterns) about the 'autonomous' role of the peasantry with norms, symbols and code of political action - the paradigmatic form of peasant consciousness-is a path breaking insight against 'elitist historiography'.

However in the above formulation of the linkages Partha Chatterjee recognizes that peasant activity, is only 'relatively autonomous' and recognizes that it is the linkages which bear scrutiny.

This raises a problem which has been left unaltered in Ranajit Guha's work as well as the other Subaltern contributors. Briefly it may be posed as follows: In order to look at the politics of nationalism as well as any attempt at socialist transformation it is not enough to concentrate attention on the Subaltern consciousness. It is equally significant to pay attention to the theory and practice of collective action.

That is to ask the question: Were these peasant movements able to offer a coherent theory of national popular politics? Could they give a cogent programme for their entry into modernity? This is not a question of privileging the action of leaders or parties. All leadership are not of the same kind. This confuses two issues one is a mistaken assumption about spontaneity in movements- Gramsci has warned in a insightful observation against the notion of "pure" spontaneity.⁴⁹ He argues that in the "most spontaneous movement" it is simply the case that the elements of "conscious leadership" cannot be noted.⁵⁰ Hence in such movements there exist multiple elements of "conscious leadership" but no one of them may be predominant or transcends the level of a given social stratum's "popular science", its commonsense. In fact, to believe in the *myth of 'spontaneity'* leads one to ignore the role of charismatic demagogic leaders. For spontaneity is more often, not accompanied by demagogic or reactionary movements.

To pose a dichotomy between 'spontaneity' and 'organized' politics is to fall into the trap of believing in the myth of spontaneity. At worst it tends to assume that leadership per se is 'elitist'. Partha Chatterjee does claim that the two domains are not conceived as separate realm but they interpenetrate. However to conceive them as autonomy on one hand and organization on the other is based on the presumption that peasant action is

intrinsicly 'spontaneous' and 'autonomous'.

Second question relates not to the necessity of leadership, but their desirability. Leadership is desirable to develop the elements of common sense in a "historically effective" and active manner.

The need is for a theory or science of action to provide the institutional conditions for ensuring their responsiveness to the masses. Gramsci argued that leadership must not be 'abstract' but must apply itself to real men formed in specific historical relations, with specific feelings, outlooks, fragmentary conceptions etc. For Gramsci, the element of "spontaneity" was not neglected or even less despised. It was educated, directed, purged of extraneous contaminations. The aim was to bring it into line with modern theory-but in a living and historically effective manner. Gramsci, in his theory of intellectuals emphasized their role as carrying forward the movement from 'popular science' to modern philosophy. In addition he stressed their national-popular character i.e. they must be able to express the interests of the people. He indicated an organic relationship as well as their rooted-ness in the national tradition of culture and national life.

Gramsci's relations on leadership intellectual and the Modern Prince⁵¹ neglect the procedural, institutional checks on leadership.

The famous statement drawing the distinction between bureaucratic democratic Centralism⁵² fails to address an important question. That is, what are the institutional condition which distinguish between the two. Any national-popular movement must be able to offer a programme- a political strategy and package for procedural and institutional checks.⁵³ It is not enough for a leadership to bring the people into a movement from below.

The peasant movements through political strategy institutional thinking should seek to develop linkages with organised or national politics and hence be 'national-popular'.

The peasant movements during colonialism did not show themselves to be hegemonic or thought in terms of hegemony. They did not have a national-popular agenda. Why they couldn't or didn't have is linked to certain structural as well as material factors that deserve attention otherwise the attempt to record 'any trace of independent initiative of the subaltern would end in Utopian optimism. The peasant movements in colonial India were not able to propose a whole package deal for an entry into modernity.

The question: could they or did they have a plan for leading the nation to nation-state formation i.e. forming an intellectual-moral bloc. They did form the popular aspect of national politics. But the conditions for national-popular politics were missing.

This question acquires its significance when we look at the question of nature of the 'national revolution' represented by the national movement. The contribution of the work by the Subaltern project lies in alerting us to the myriad forms of 'autonomous' subaltern action. However the question of its relationship with national-popular life must be posed in all its seriousness. This would mean the identification of the precise structural and political conditions in which community and class become active- ideological elements in the politics of the peasantry and unite with national-popular politics.

Partha Chatterjee's work on modes of power works with an implicit argument at a very general level about the process of nation-state formation. He writes of a process of aggregation of communities, of their perceived inclusion into membership of larger communities. "In most agrarian societies there would infact be a hierarchy of possible communal identifications, the largest such cultural community being the nationality united by a common language and a common literary tradition".⁵⁴ The ideological significance of these identification would depend on specific elements of politics. Nonetheless the smaller identification would be included in the larger one.⁵⁵

This argument is at a very general level which notes the process of nationality formation. The question needs to be posed concretely: What happens to the community in confrontation with colonialism. How does the process of nationalism effect the nature and constitution of this communal mode of life in India. What is exact dynamics as well as political consequence of this confrontation? The Subaltern intervention has made it clear that it was a two way process. But the complex articulation of the changes in the process of nation formation need analysis. The inclusion of the community into a larger one' was a complex contradictory process. Even more so because colonialism as well as nationalism changed the nature of community itself.

Partha Chatterjee does talk of the differentiation among the peasantry which "tends to undermine the material basis of the existence of the sense of community...."⁵⁶

Ideologically the notion of the community is surprisingly resilient but a fragmentation of the original idea of the community, an imposition of older cultural symbols of communal identity on a truncated collectivity, such as for instance a caste takes place. According to Chatterjee processes of organised mobilization would then aggregate these truncated communal units into larger political movements.

Nationalism, according to Chatterjee operates both within and outside the political processes instituted by the colonial state. In as much as it remains a bourgeois political movement it shares with the colonial power the same conception of the legal political structure of the state and participates in the same processes of the making, administering and adjudication of laws. On the other hand, the political necessity of mobilising the "people" into an oppositional movement against the colonial state.

In order to come to grips with this political question of the transition problem, Chatterjee has tried to develop appropriate concepts to categories revolving around the concept of mode power. Drawing from Balibar⁵⁷ in Reading Capital Chatterjee defines the mode of

production as an articulated combination of three elements - labourer, non-labourer, and means of production-combined, according to both a 'property' connection, (the relations of production) and a 'real appropriation' connection (the forces of production). He is concerned to theorize the concept of mode of power as relevant to the analysis of the '*property*' connection i.e. the question of rights or entitlements in society, of the resultant power relationships, of law and politics, of the process of legitimation of power relations etc.⁵⁸

Chatterjee, distinguishes between three modes of political power, which may exist (even co-exist) in a particular state formation or structure of power relationships. These are *communal mode* of political power, *feudal* and *the bourgeois* modes. These modes are "distinguished in terms of the *basis of particular power relationships* in the ordered and repeated performance of social activities, e.g. the particular pattern of allocation of rights or entitlements over material objects in a definite system of social productions."⁵⁹

Briefly the communal mode of power (having a special relevance for countries like India) arises typically in agricultural societies where there is a 'natural unity of labour with its material pre-suppositions' and forms the base of the community. Whatever the specific institutional forms of individual right over land (Marx mentions four forms - Asiatic or Oriental, the classical, the Germanic and the Slavonic) it flows from the prior authority of the community over the entire land; the place of the individual in the social ordering of rights is determined by his membership in the community; the collective is prior to the individual parts. Political power in such a community would therefore be organised as the authority of the entire collectivity. It may not have an institutional form or may not be democratic. Yet political power may be based on a community.

Chatterjee stress on theorizing the notion of 'community' through his concept of 'communal mode of power' is an attempt to pose the problem of "*the forms which the*

*political relation of domination/resistance take in particular modes of production.*⁶⁰ Especially in the transition from one mode of production to another where a contradictory combination of two modes of power may be found. For Chatterjee 'community' does not imply some sort of egalitarianism and absence of exploitation.⁶¹

The feudal mode of power is characterized fundamentally by sheer superiority of physical force i.e. a relationship of domination. In Partha's conception it denotes not just the state formation which accompanies the feudal mode of production, but may in fact serve to 'describe political institutions corresponding to a whole range of forms of organisation of production based on direct physical control over the life processes of the producers. It may involve peasantry or varying forms of serfdom "Political domination in all these forms of production-organisation is the prerequisite for rights or claims on the social product⁶²" and conceptualized as feudal mode of power.

In some societies the two modes of power may be entertained in a social formation. Chatterjee sees this as a contradictory process which allows him to conceptualize the political process of struggle in terms of domination/resistance.

A brief comment: Chatterjee's concept of mode of power points to a significant area of life in a social formation which needs attention. However it could be argued that to theorize a new concept to point to the political aspect of mode of production is to over-extend the concept. Mode of production in Marx's theory refers to an organising principle to periodize history. Similarly *Mode of power* as a developed theoretical tool makes sense only when we use it to categorise societies across time. The concept of mode of production cannot be understood in an abstract sense. Its context is a theory of history. To theorize an analogous concept of mode of power is not enough. It must be possible to relate it to a theory of social formations across history. Hence Javeed Alam's criticism of Chatterjee is misplaced as mode of production does not only refer to the organisation and unification

"of a large number of relational activities in a society".⁶³ However must be understood in a limited sense. To employ it to periodize history would mean challenging one of the base tenets of Marxist theory. But Chatterjee does not claim to do so. He infact repeatedly stresses that mode of power is not intended to replace the concept of mode of production. If Chatterjee's intention is merely to "restore to the concept of production its potential richness as a basic tool of analysis..."⁶⁴ then his attempt to propose a 'new' theoretical schema around the concept of mode of power tends to lead to a misunderstanding.

[Chatterjee's elaboration of the concept seems to suggest that the concept is situated as a regional political structure in the wider concept of the mode of production.⁶⁵ That is, it constitutes a regional theory of politics. If so then certain problems are encountered in the application of the concept of mode of power to historical modes of power. Thus while Partha Chatterjee considers the concepts of modes of production and modes of power to be compatible the precise relation of these two concepts needs reformulation and rethinking.

However, this is not to deny that the concept raises an important question about a lacunae in reductionist accounts of Marxist theory. It is an argument "against the common tendency to reduce historical explanation in terms of mode of production to a single dimension of change, that of forces of production."⁶⁶

Partha Chatterjee's implicit understanding of the dynamics of India nationalism is worked out in greater detail in his book nationalist thought and the colonial world: A derivative discourse? Chatterjee's originality lies in that it opens a new terrain of research, a new line of investigation about the trajectory of Indian nationalism.

Its starting point is the claim that analysis of the class structure or in India's case an explanation in terms of the bourgeois nature of nationalism does not offer an exhaustive and relevant framework of analysis. Rather his claim is about the discourse of nationalism

and the constitution of meaning which acts of social agents acquire through it. Chatterjee does not explain historical events by class analysis but points to the complex articulation of nationalist ideas at the level of the discursive. Posing the problem in this way is to already take a step towards rethinking and breaking down the ideological unity of Indian nationalism.⁶⁷

Chatterjee deals with the dilemma which confronts liberal, conservative and even Marxist attempts to theorize nationalism before he evolves a theoretical strategy himself.

Liberal theory he argues, regards nationalism, cognate as it is with the rise of industrialism and democracy as the political expression of a universal urge to freedom and progress and in essence, therefore, nationalist and secular-modern. While nationalism is seen as an episode in the story of liberty yet it also gives rise to some of the most illiberal and authoritarian regimes.⁶⁸ According to Chatterjee Liberal rationalist thought confronts the dilemma by constructing a dichotomy between a normal and a special type deviant or impure.

These deviations are then explained sociologically. Thus Liberal theory displaces the burden of explanation to empiricist sociology: in the non-European 'context' nationalism has to emerge in uneven and difficult conditions. Hence this understanding proceeds towards a teleology i.e. a theory of political development. Hence the call is for rational attempts towards the "now universally accepted ideals of the Enlightenment"⁶⁹ reason and progress. Conservative thought represented in its paradigmatic form by Kedourie⁷⁰ considers nationalism to be irrational one of 'Europe's most pernicious exports, a child, not of reason and liberty but of their opposites.

Chatterjee notes that liberal rationalism does seem reduced, when confronted in this way to a feeble defence.⁷¹

If the contradiction had simply been one of 'bourgeois thought' we could have set it aside and turned to historical materialism. However Marxist theory exhibits a similar problems conventional accounts judge 'its probable historical consequences.'⁷²

Examining B. Anderson's account Chatterjee notes that his chief contribution is to emphatically pose the ideological creation of the nation as a central problem in the study of national movements. In doing this he highlights the social process of creation of modern language communities. Yet, argues Chatterjee he also ends up in sociological determinism. He too sees nationalism as profoundly 'modular' and shaped according to prevailing historical models.⁷³

Hence Marxism too is unable to escape the liberal dilemma of reducing the progressive nationalism to its sociological determinants and judging then according to its consequences.

In Indian historiography Marxist in interpreting the evolution of Indian thought as a conflict between two trends, 'westernist' or 'modernist' on the one hand and 'traditionalist' on the other had gone for Westernism as historically progressive.⁷⁴

Chatterjee goes on to consider the recent challenge to the "role of Renaissance" in Indian political life. He notes that these have gone to show the highly contradictory nature of the Indian Renaissance.⁷⁵ Some of these essays saw the split between modernity and what could be called 'national-popular'. By these standards the achievements, of the early 19th century 'modernizers' seemed limited. For Partha Chatterjee this goes on to reveal the 'partial', incomplete and contradictory nature of the Indian Renaissance. Thus what was meant to be modern became increasingly alienated from the mass of the people.⁷⁶

After having *examined liberal and Marxist perspectives* Chatterjee's argument takes an interesting turn. If Nationalism expresses itself in a frenzy of irrational passion it does so because it seeks to represent itself in the image of the Enlightenment and fails to do so'.⁷⁷

Chatterjee contends that it is not possible to pose the problem within the ambit of bourgeois-nationalist thought. Chatterjee looks at thought itself as a discourse of power. From this perspective the problem of nationalist thought becomes how does nationalist politics in a non-western society oppose the discourse the power in which it is itself constituted.⁷⁸ Nationalist thought then continues to be trapped in the discourse of Enlightenment and its universal ideals. His basic contention is that nationalist thought does not and *indeed cannot, constitute an autonomous discourse.*⁷⁹

What is important for our analysis is that Partha Chatterjee goes on to rethink the trajectory of nationalism as a 'body of writings on political theory ' and attempts to account for the contradictory and constantly contested task involved in creating an ideological hegemony and making a nation.

He takes up a line of enquiry provided by Gramsci's writings in his 'Notes on Italian history' where Gramsci outlines an argument about the passive revolution of capital'.⁸⁰ Chatterjee attempts to study the ideological history of the Indian state. His framework attempts to locate, within a historical context of 'passive revolution, the problem of autonomy of nationalist discourse as a discourse of power.⁸¹

It is his argument that given the contradictions of Nationalist thought, i.e. the fact that even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premises of 'modernity' on which colonial domination was based,⁸² passive revolution becomes the historical path by which a 'national' development can occur without resolving or surmounting those contradictions.

Partha Chatterjee, would argue that passive revolution is the general form of the transition from colonial to post colonial national states and he puts together his arguments to explain the nature of anti-colonial movement in India.

At the level of the "objective structure" an aspiring bourgeoisie faces the problem of low level of productive forces as well dominance of metropolitan capital. Its task is to ensure capitalist development. Which involves a two fold struggle against domestic force and the political struggle with the colonial power. Moreover it must be able to project this fold struggle as something going beyond the narrow corporate interests of the bourgeoisie and give to it the form of a national-popular struggle.

The nationalist leadership in such situations cannot resort to a war of movement', a war of position' becomes inevitable'. This takes the form of the state creating the precondition for capitalist development and 'modernization'.

Chatterjee traces the evolution of this passive revolution through there successive stages- 'moments' each having a certain distinct historical possibility⁸³ in terms of the relation of 'subjective forces'. This is through the thought of Bankim Chandra which is the encounter of a nationalist conscioues with past - Enlightenment nationalist thought.

The moment of manoeuvre involves a potential for national-popular possibilities and is represented by M.K. Gandhi. It consists in the 'consolidation' of the 'national' by denying the 'modern'.

The moment of arrival represented by J. Nehru reaches its fullest development and is a 'passive revolution' uttering its own life-history.

According to Chatterjee the promise of Gandhism failed to materialize because there was a fundamental incompatibility between the utopianism which shaped the moral conception of Gandhian politics and the realities of power within a bourgeois constitutional order. Gandhism suggested a certain method of political practice but once the tasks of exercise of political power became imperative it was not easy to determine what this political practice was going to be. ⁸⁴ Gandhism provided for the first time an ideological basis for including the whole people within the political nation. It did so by bridging cultural barriers

and through the base of network of symbolic acts. However eventually in terms of historical effectivity of Gandhism it mobilized the peasants but they did not participate. They were part of a nation yet distanced.⁸⁵

Here Chatterjee makes the point which goes on to draw the distinction between populist mobilization and national-popular politics. This leads us to pose the question the 'Jacobin' nature of the national movement. The specific political form of Indian capitalism was a caesrist political organisation and an ideology of populism.

Chatterjee goes on to show how the moment of arrival in the development of nationalism reconstructed nationalism, within the domain of a state ideology. It was a supremely modernist and rationalist discourse which assimilated the Gandhian moment so that the Gandhian intervention became one episode in the passive revolution of capital'. The national state could appropriate the political consequences of the Gandhian Intervention without accepting its truth. For Chatterjee this was not a fraud but the Gandhian intervention was a necessary stage in that process. And in the Nehruvian worldview it was the logical, the rational, the scientific which had to be the basis for one's understanding of the real progression of history⁸⁶ To resort to arousing the masses was functional, a necessary detour into the domain of the irrational and the unknown.⁸⁷

Partha Chatterjee's analysis is extremely suggestive for, it gives in some important insights into the nature of the national revolution in the Indian context.

Nationalist thought by setting itself an agenda of the discovery of the nation was responsible for the formation of the 'nation' as much as changes in socio-economic conditions. How did this nation come to be constructed in nationalist discourse is part of the question which Partha Chatterjee deals with. Chatterjee has followed an extremely interesting line of inquiry to suggest an account of the contradictory and constantly contested task involved in creating an ideological hegemony and making a nation. It tries

to study the nature of the national leadership and its consolidation through a process of contestation, in which a whole range of discourses are invoked and deployed. However this intellectual-moral effort to establish a national-popular universal is left incomplete and hence ends in a passive revolution. The three moments represented by Bankim, Gandhi and Nehru constitute the process through which a hegemony is sought to be established. It ends in a passive revolution for it is unable to reconcile its modernist discourse with what was national-popular. The net result is that the national state now proceeds to find for 'the nation' a place in the global order of capital while striving to keep the contradictions between capital and the people in perpetual suspension. In politics a identify is established between the people-nation and the state representing the nation and any challenge to it denied. This analysis raises some questions about enlightenment and its relationship with nationalist thought and culture.

Drawing on the words of Anvar Abdel Malik and Edward W Said, Partha Chatterjee had noted that the post-enlightenment age in Europe produced an entire body of knowledge in which orient appeared as a "system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought te orient into western learning, Western consciousness and, later, western empire" As a style of thought orientalism was based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and "the Accident". On this basis was created the enormously systematic discipline of orientalism which in turn, created 'the Oriental': it was a body of knowledge in which the oriental was 'contained and represented by dominating frameworks'. This dominating framework of orientalism profoundly shaped the nationalist thinking. In the east Nationalism in colonial countries was, of course, premised on opposition to alien rule, but, Chatterjee argued, this opposition occurred within a body of knowledge about the East which had the same representational structure and shared the same theoretical framework as Orientalism. Thus there was an inherent

contradictoriness in nationalist thinking, because it reasoned within a framework of knowledge whose representational structure corresponded to the very structure of power nationalist thought sought to repudiate.

Significantly for Chatterjee, it was this contradictoriness which signified in the domain of thought, the theoretical insolubility of the national question in a colonial country or the extended problem of social transformation in a post colonial country within a nationalistic framework.

According to this argument nationalist thought owing to its inbrication in the post enlightenment body of knowledge is unable to forge a national-popular alternative. However a question arises on observing the historical experience of the Chinese national movement.

Chinese nationalist thought also was waged within the same representational structure of post enlightenment thought. It was a body of thought in colonial country. Moreover its intellectual roots were derived from Marxism, a post-enlightment ideology. However despite this 'contradiction' it was able to forge a viable national-popular alternative. In Partha Chatterjee's argument there is a necessary connection between the orientalist framework of knowledge and the inability of nationalist thought to reconcile, the 'modern' with the 'national'. However it needs to be supplemented by a comparative analysis of communist discourse in China which appears to offer an alternative resolution to the problematique. This is not to argue that there are no problems with the Chinese path but, this does question the claim that to be placed within a post enlightenment orientalist knowledge leads necessarily to a non-national-popular solution.

Partha Chatterjee sensitizes us to the question of challenging and rethinking the category of enlightenment. His theses leads to the realization that nationalist thought is itself caught in its categories. However to be cheaply anti-enlightenment would ignore the immensity of the transformation let loose by modernity. The massive transformation

brought by modernity even at the cognitive level needs to be taken account of. For that there is need to break down and disaggregate the category of post enlightenment itself. One needs to be sensitive to the often autonomous internal processes within a country. That is with the question: How do these enlightenment ideologies get with indigenous revolutionary traditions?⁸⁸

The distinctive merit of the Subaltern position is that they re-locate in any project of radical social transformation the question of the peasantry. Recognition of the importance of the social category of the peasantry is not a question of socialist strategy alone. Infact their contribution lies in integrating the peasantry as a key social agent as well as its revolutionary potential. In Marxist theory, what is important is that the subaltern project by their theoretical selfconsciousness about the peasant has forced socialists to pay attention to the core, category of *working class as the bearer of rationality universality*. It has forced a re-questioning of *the enlightenment ideals* themselves. The primacy attached to the working class as the embodiment of these ideals needs to be rethought in light of the extremely rich historical evidence unearthed. Moreover it forces us to rethink the *categories of rationality itself*.

The urgency and theoretical importance of looking at the peasant question is particularly crucial for a thirdworld agricultural country like India, the majority of whose 'people-nation' form the peasantry. The lessons of revolutions in China and Vietnam point to the need of independent thinking on the historical outline of non-capitalist transition which poses the problem of peasantry anew.

The subaltern studies in paying theoretical attention to this question have made an invaluable contribution which is a permanent gain in South Asian historiography and social science. As a noted commentator on peasant movements has said "It is one of those serious pieces of social science scholarship which has raised many theoretical and

methodological issues that must not only be acknowledged but also debated seriously.

This perspective takes its point of departure from a critique of colonialist and nationalist historiographies about the character of the movement for national independence.

The problem was formulated specifically in Guha,⁸⁹ the intellectual mentor of this study, who criticized the colonialist historians for claiming that colonial rule bequeathed independent nationhood upon India.

The nationalist historians did not doubt the intrinsic value of the institution of 'modernity' which accompanied colonial rule ; they only emphasised the need' to remove the exploitative nature of the colonial connection and to establish selfgovernment as the necessary means for the full development of 'modernity'.

Moreover they shared the same premises about the peasantry, which meant that the peasant was denied recognition as a subject of history in his own right even for a project that was all of his own.⁹⁰ The result was to exclude the insurgent as the subject of his own history⁹¹. Although proceeding towards opposed political objectives, both colonial and nationalist politics thought of the peasantry as an object of their strategies, to be acted upon, controlled and appropriated within their respective structures of State Power.⁹²

What the various studies brought out was that the meeting of the two domains of politics-of formally organised political parties and associations and the other domain of peasant politics was marked by an unresolved contradiction. There was interpretation and yet the very union of these two domains was a form which required that they be kept apart. Hence the nationalist politics sought to mobilize the peasantry yet kept their participation limited to the forms of bourgeois representative politics in which peasants would be regarded as a part of the nation but distanced from the institutions of the State. The peasants on the other hand made sense of it not in terms of the discursive forms of modern

bourgeois politics but rather by translating it into their own codes so that language of Nationalism underwent a quite radical transformation of meaning in the peasant domain of politics.⁹³

The second aspect of the meeting of the two domains was that it did not bring about a linear development of the consciousness of the peasantry into a new sense of nationhood. The participation of peasants in the national movement was uneven and contradictory.⁹⁴

Both these pointed to a critique of both nationalist and colonialist historiographies and the need for bringing in the peasantry as a subject of history endowed with its own distinctive forms of consciousness.

Guha undertook to isolate the ideological invariants of peasant consciousness and their relational unity i.e. its paradigmatic form. In spelling out his 'subaltern approach' Guha hits out at the conventional discourses, at the colonialist one for converting peasant history into an element of administrative concern⁹⁵. At the same time Guha draws upon Gramsci's insights on the question of spontaneity and leadership⁹⁶ to criticize those accounts which deny any autonomy to spontaneous movements and hence make the elitist claim of the indispensability of leaders, organisations or upper classes.⁹⁷ These studies emphasize 'organisation' 'leadership' and 'ideology' as the key elements in the formation of rebel consciousness and have tended to treat the insurgencies as 'pre-political' and pre-historical phenomena.

According to Guha these accounts err for, "there is no room for pure spontaneity" in history. This error arises from equating consciousness with organisation in the sense of a conscious leadership, aim and a programme.

This claim is an extremely suggestive one for it is trying to counter the myth of spontaneity as well as reinstating the autonomy of peasant activity. It does so by arguing that it was conscious, although unstructured as well as political. Although modern party

leadership was absent, it was not leaderless but could be seen as having 'multy elements' of "conscious leadership" but no one of them predominant".⁹⁸

What is equally significant about Guha's analysis is that he recognizes that resistance was not restricted only to the domain of legal political relations. He pays attention to the specific form of peasant resistance and the different logic of its action. The fact that it was expressed in a religious idiom, language of folklore and other forms' of expression is recognized. It hence challenges rationalist accounts of peasant activity and gives importance to the *mediating role of religion*.

The implication is that peasant consciousness cannot be understood in its own constitutive aspects if it is reduced to the paradigm of bourgeois nationality. Partha Chatterjee argues that not only does peasant consciousness have its own paradigmatic form which is not only different from that of bourgeois consciousness, but in fact is its very other.⁹⁹ This is a central theoretical proposition brought out by Guha's book and it poses a basic challenge to the methodological procedures followed only by bourgeois economists and sociologists searching for the national peasant, but also by many Marxist scholars writing on the agrarian question.¹

The emphasis on non-national category of collective behaviour and action forces us to re-question enlightenment goal not only of the bourgeoisie variant but also the enlightenment of Marxism.

However it raises some key questions. This perspective may deny organisation and criticize the dominant historiography's emphasis on leadership. But they can't evade the question of leadership. It could be argued that this approach lacks organisational thinking. Any analysis of the subjectivity of the peasant consciousness must link it up with an alternative organisational theory for peasant movements. Only then is it possible to think of a theoretical as well as political strategy which links up to a national-popular politics.

Gramsci too speaks of the need for leadership which is educated and transforms common sense into a higher and coherent conception of life. Gramsci hence spoke of the unity between “spontaneity” and “Conscious leadership” as the real political action of the subaltern classes.²

Guha criticizes the characterization of these movements as pre-political. It is a valid point, yet Guha must be able to make the distinction between the pre-modern political and later forms of political life what is the notion of 'political' they have in mind.

A historical view would be sensitive to how colonialism has an impact on the political forms of activity. It is unhistorical to have just a static notion of the 'political' untouched by other national processes. If the argument is that the difference between the two sets of movements, that we designate 'pre-political' and 'political' is to be seen essentially in relative degrees and not in absolute terms, then it is possible to agree with him. However if such a difference does not exist then it is difficult to agree with him.³

Guha sums to argue that there was a continuous, unbroken subaltern tradition “going a long way back before the Mahatma’s intervention in Indian politics” This continuity of the paradigmatic form through the ages presents an unhistorical and static picture.

The question which has not been addressed in Guha’s analysis is why didn’t the peasant consciousness transform itself into national-popular consciousness. Hence the issue of the linkage of these revolts to an alternative agenda or politics of action is not posed. Why couldn’t a national-popular will be forged on the conditions or a hegemonic collective will be established.

Another important issue which must be raised is the Subaltern project’s relationship to Marxism. It has not been made very clear in their writings but their engagement with Marxist theory needs to be posed in all its seriousness.

This analysis would take up only one point, briefly. The subaltern project is a valuable attempt to explain the role and the elementary aspects of human agency in history. However it cannot be a complete project of social theory unless they combine an analysis of consciousness and peasant subjectivity with an analysis of the role of social structure. Their account of the collective consciousness of the peasantry would be incomplete if it is not supplemented by a look into the structural determinants of consciousness. This is not necessarily a determinist quest for the attempt is to see 'the relationship of structure and action, the structural conditioning of action and the effects of action on structure'⁴

At this point it could be worthwhile to turn to the lucid presentation of Marx's argument in G.A. Cohen, 'History, labour and freedom in Marx' about the determinants of working class consciousness.

Drawing from arguments of the Dialectic in Hegel, Cohen shows the influence of the notion of unity, differentiation and disunion and differentiated unity.

For Marx Capitalism breaks the proletariat from the 'engulfment' of his life and 'betokens' a birth of freedom. The 19th Century worker is propertyless, which explains his misery, but signifies an independence too. Capitalism socializes labour and insults craft pride, but because it makes the labourer cooperate 'systematically with others he strips off the fetters of his individuality and develops the capabilities of his species.'⁵

Hence Capitalism alienates and exploits but it also provides the conditions for growth of consciousness. The abstract aspect of labour gains precedence in fact and in consciousness. This diminishes the concrete difference between kinds of labour and hence has a liberating aspect⁶. He becomes aware of his capacity and his need for a full and unspecialized life.

The main point here is not to agree or disagree with Cohen's interpretation of Marx. The aim is to show the mode of argument which looks at the material conditions of labour

under capitalism.

The Subaltern project must be able to study the conditions of peasant consciousness. The 'material' determinants in a pre-capitalist society would be different. An independent exercise into its 'determinants, needs to be gone into.

For as Dipankar Gupta has pointed out Guha's work is liable to the charge of essentialism 'an ethnicised history' in Guha's conception of a primordial and autonomous insurgent peasant tradition running right through Indian history which implies in almost Hegelian fashion, the independent organising principle of the insurgent's mind' is what moves the historical process forward.⁷ Gupta pinpoints the historiographical difficulties in this tendency towards idealism.

It shuts off the whole field of external structural interaction and determination. Rosalind O'Hanlon argues that through culturological style of explanation found in Guha's works renders weak his attempts to document any of the 'real' structures outside the subjective world of the insurgent.⁸

In conclusion it may be said that the subaltern project has raised and involved themselves in a implicit radical theoretical questioning of some core concepts of the Marxist worldview. Hence their insights and evidences can prove to be subversive of the traditional Marxist understanding. One may not agree with the subaltern project on every issue but their intervention in Indian historiography is a permanent gain. However it does await a full theoretical clarification.

NOTES

1. Partha Chatterjee himself a formative and prominent member of the school has stated this. See Partha Chatterjee, 'Peasants, Politics and Historiography: A Response' in *Social Scientist*, 120, vol 11, no.5, May 1983, p. 58.
2. The argument is drawn from Bipan Chandra 'Longterm dynamics of InC Press.
3. Sashi Joshi, proposes that the Gramscian concept of hegemony 'applies to the Congress's attempt to represent *the national interest of the entire people*, (national-popular) and to the extent they can be said to have acquired a hegemonic position over the national movement and its mass following pp.2-3.
4. Sashi Joshi, *Studying National Movements: Concepts and Categories*, Unpublished Paper presented at the Indo-German seminar ctis, JNU, p.1.
5. Bipin Chandra, et al, *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* New Delhi, Viking, 1988, p. 13.
6. Gramsci., *Prison notebooks* (SPN) p. 210.
7. Bipan Chandra 'Nationalist historians' interpretations of the Indian national movement' essay in Romila Thaper and S. Bhattacharya (ed.), *Situating Indian history*.
8. Debate with the Subaltern Project.
9. 'Chandra, Long Term Dynamics...'
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. It certainly need to be stressed as later Marxist writings recognize that a reductionist formulation of class instrumentalism would not do. Nonetheless one cannot escape from characterization of the social basis of the national movement, without bliding into unrealistic idealism. The nature of the NM needs to be analyzed in a very complex manner drawing out the complex linkages with the social forces and the relations of the force' of the Indian society of the time as well as its capacity and the form of its popular mobilization.
13. Bipan Chandra, *Long Term Dynamics of the INC*, Presidential address to the IHC 27-29 Dec 1985, Amristsarm, p.8.
14. "The Indian National Movement" was a Popular, Multi Class Movement. It was not a movement led or controlled by the bourgeois, nor did the bourgeois exercise exclusive influence over it. Moreover, its multi-class, popular, and open ended character meant that it was open to the alternative hegemony of socialist ideas". Bipan Chandra and others, op.cit, p.26.

15. Ibid., p. 22.
16. 'Chandra, India's Struggle ...' op. cit., p. 26.
17. B Chandra, 'Long Term Dynamics' op. cit., p.4.
18. Gramsci, SPN.
19. Gramsci, SPN, p. 106-110.
20. Gramsci, SPN, pp. 229-38.
21. Introduction to State and civil society' in Gramsci, SPN, P. 206-207.
22. Gramsci, SPN, *op.cit.*, pp. 229-30.
23. See Bipan Chandra.
24. Gramsci, SPN, *op.cit.*, p. 107.
25. Chandra, 'Long Term', op. cit.
26. Sumit Sarkar Challenges the eclectic use of concept.
27. Chandra Longterm Dynamics.
28. Benjamin argued that the perspective from which we view the past will be shaped by the struggles in which we engaged in the present.
29. Histroy, then becomes a contested terrain. The claim of established historiographic schools to 'historical truth' is challenged. Ranajit Guha intention is to expose how 'historiography served colonialism as a vital discourse of power' as well as the elite historiography's claim to their 'own' history.
Ranajit Guha, *Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983. 1983, pp. 2-3.
This point draws attention to the link between knowledge and power a therefore to the epistemological basis of any worldview, trying to be hegemonic.
30. Partha Chatterjee, 'More on Modes of Power and the Peasantry' in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian history and society*, Vol II, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983.
31. Ibid, p. 312. Sweezy's explanation was in terms of impact of external trade on a static feudal economic or the crisis of rent caused by long term declines in productivity and depopulation in ferdal agriculture. - an economic thesis., Dobb's argument relied on the question of crisis of seigneurial revenues. Dobb argued in terms of a single form of resolution; the breakdown of ferdal relations in the countryside and the rapid emergence of a superior mode of production. According to Brenner this assumed and linked the technical superiority of one mode of production to its victory. Hence it was also based on determinism.

32. Ibid., p. 314.
33. Brenner 'Dobb on the transition from Feudalism and Capitalism', Cambridge Journal of Economics, 2: 2 (June 1978) Rp. 121-40. quoted in Partha Chatterjee, More on ..., *op.cit.*, p. 314.
34. Chatterjee, More on ..., *op.cit.*, p. 315.
35. Ibid.
36. Partha Chatterjee, 'Peasants, politics and historiography: A response' in *Social and Scientist*, No. 120, May 1983, p. 63.
37. Chatterjee is referring to the famous methodological injunction of Marx in the Grundrisse.

"... Ground rent cannot be understood without capital. But capital can certainly be understood without ground rent Capital is the all dominating economic power of bourgeois society. It must form the starting point as well as the finishing point, and must be dealt with, before landed proerty ..." "It would therefore be unfeasible and wrong to let the economic categories follow one another in the same sequence as that in which they were historically decisive. Their sequence is determined, rather by their relation to one another in modern bourgeois society, which is precisely the opposite of that which, seem to be their natural order or which corresponds to historical development. The point is not the historic position of the economic relations in the succession of different forms of society..."

Marx *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political economy*, Penguin Books, 1973, Second edition, trans. Martin Nicolaus., p. 107.
38. Partha Chatterjee 'Peasant, politics in *Social scientist*, *op.cit.*, p. 64.
39. Ibid.
40. Marx, Grundrisse, *op.cit.*, p. 107.
41. Chatterjee, 'Peasants, politics...', in *Social scientist*, *op.cit.*, p. 64.
42. Ibid., p. 65.
43. Partha Chatterjee, Agrarian relations ... in *Subaltern vol I*, *op.cit.*, p. 18.
44. Ibid, p. 35.
45. The most pioneering contribution has been made by R. Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. He has been the intellectual mentor of the Subaltern studies.
46. Chatterjee Agrarian relations ..." in *op.cit.*, p. 36.
47. Gramsci, SPN, *op.cit.*, p. 196.
48. Ibid.
49. See the section on bureaucratic and Democratic Centralism, Gramsci, SPN, pp. 187-191.

50. Gramsci, SPN, *op.cit.*, pp. 188-189.
 "...democratic centralism is ... " centralism" in movement - i.e, a continual adaption of the organisation to the real movement, a matching of thrusts from below with orders from above ..."
 "... The prevalence of bureaucratic centralism in the state indicates that the leading group is saturated, narrow cheque ..."
51. N Bobbio, in recent years has raised the questions of institutions and procedure and attempted to bring them to the centre of debates on Socialism and Democracy.
52. Partha Chatterjee, "Agrarian Relations ..." SSI, *op.cit.* p. 16.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., p. 18 Also see pp. 34-38.
55. Etienne Balibar, 'On the Basic concepts of Historical Materialism, in L. Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading Capital*, London, 1970, pp. 201-308, esp. pp. 212-216.
56. Chatterjee, 'More on Modes ", *op.cit.*, p. 316.
57. Partha Chatterjee, 'Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1926-1935', in Ranajit Guha (ed.) *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Delhi, OUP, 2nd edition, p. 12 (emphasis added).
58. Partha Chatterjee, 'Modes of power: Some clarifications in *Social Scientist*, 141, vol 13, No.2, Feb 1985, p. 57'.
59. Ibid, p.58.
60. Chatterjee, 'Agrarian Relations and Communalism,.....' *op.cit.* p., 14.
61. Javed Alam, 'Peasantry, Politics and Historiography: critique of, New Trend in relation to Marxism, *Social Scientist*, No. 117 Vol 11, No.2, Feb 1983, p. 51.
62. Chatterjee, Modes of Power: Some Clarification *op.cit.*, p.54.
63. This point finds discussion in Sanjay Prasad, 'Modes of Power : Some Ambiguities' No. 151, Vol. 13 No. 2, Dec. 1985, p. 63.
64. Ibid.
65. This argument is part of the claims that politics during late colonial period was constitutive of two domains. Nationalist and other historiographies do not recognize this split in this national process and reject an autonomous domain of politics. Hence they challenge the unity represented by the national movement. Partha Chatterjee in the preface argues that the ideological history of Indian nationalism is marked by shifts, discontinuities, complexities the 'jagged edges' of Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist thought and the Colonial world : A Derivative Discourse*, Delhi, OUP, 1986, p. vii.

66. Ibid. p. 2-3.
67. Chatterjee, Nationalist thought ... *op.cit.*, p. 10.
68. Elie Kedourie, (ed.), Nationalism in Asia and Africa, London, Werdnfeld and Nicolson, 1970.
69. Chatterjee, Nationalist thought, *op.cit* p.7.
70. Ibid., p. 18.
71. Ibid., p. 21.
72. Ibid, pp. 23-24.
73. A intense debate has developed around this question involving Sumit Sarkar. A critique of colonial India, Asokan, Iswar Chandra, Vidhyasagar and his Elusive Milestones, Barun De in V.C. Joshi (ed.), Rammohan Ray and the process of Modernization in India. This took place in the 1970s and represented attempts to question the earlier applications of Marxism to Indian intellectual history.
74. An important perspective as a counterpoint to this re-examination of the role of Renaissance deserves mentions, Ashok Rudra, Non-Eurocentric Marxism and Indian Society, Calcutta, People's Book Society, 1988, pp.91-102. His argument is: This debate which reduces the role of R. Roy and other reformers to dust was against the norms of historical justice. Progressive or revolutionary practice is one which is historically feasible, otherwise it is Utopian. If one charges R. Roy for not being 'national' enough or for not showing sympathies for the masses, then this ignores that "organising any kind of nationalist movement itself was beyond, the limits of historic feasibility, given that 'nations' had not been born, there was no kind of nationalism anywhere" nor were there real chances of peasant struggles succeeding in bringing any basic changes. Modern form, of politics (p. 95). Whether of nationalism or socialism had not entered the consciousness of persons. One small yet significant fact which forces us to place historical context of the time would be to note that Hegel and R. Roy belong to the same historical period. Hence this criticism against R Roy is unhistorical.
- To use Gramsci to examine a fresh the so-called Renaissance in 19th Cent India i.e. in terms of the ability of a new class to assault its intellectual, moral leadership over a modernizing Indian nation forgets that for Gramsci the central diction is that only those forces realize which have material in the womb of the society. "... that no society sends itself tasks for whose accomplishment the necessary and for sufficient conditions do not either already exist or are not at least-beginning to emerge and develop." (SPN p. 177).
75. Chatterjee, Nationalist thought *op.cit.*, p. 17.

76. This problem is of a general nature established in the post-Enlightenment period of European intellectual history. Nationalist thought, in agreeing to become 'modern' accepts the claim to universality of this modern framework of knowledge. Yet it also asserts the autonomous identify of a national culture. Ibid. p. 11
77. Ibid., p. 10.
78. Gramsci, SPN, pp. 44-120.
79. Chatterjee, Nationalist thought ..., *op.cit.*, p. 30.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid, p. 49-51.
82. Ibid, p. 113.
83. Ibid, p. 125.
84. This was embodied by the ideals of scientific control and planned development, industrialization and all this through state action in its march towards progress and reason in history.
85. The split between two domains of politics, was replicated in the sphere of nature nationalist thought by an explicit recognition of the split between a domain of nationality and a domain of unreason a domain of science and a domain of faith, a domain of organisation and a domain of spontaneity. But it was a national understanding which by the very act of its recognition of the other, also effaced the other." Chatterjee, *op.cit.*,p. 153.
86. See Teodor Shanin, Capitalism and the late road to Marx.
87. Ranajit Guha, Elementary aspects of Beasant Insurgency in colonial Indian, Delhi Oxford University Press, 1983.
88. Ibid., p.4.
89. Ibid., p. 5.
90. Partha Chatterjee, For an Indian History of Peasant Struggle, Social Scientist 186, vol. 16 No. 11, Nov. 1988, p.7.
91. Shahid Amin, 'Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP 1921-1922' in Ranajit Guha (ed.) Subaltern Studies III, Delhi, OUP, 1984, pp. 1-61.
92. Chatterjee, 'For An Indian history ...'p. 8.
93. Chatterjee, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.
94. Gramsci, SPN, pp. 196-200.
95. Guha, *op.cit.*, pp.4-5.
96. Ibid., p. 10.
97. Chatterjee, 'For An' *op.cit.*,p.11

98. Ibid.
99. SPI, p. 198.
1. P. Abrams, *Historical Sociology* quoted in Alex Callinicos, *Making History: agency, structure and change in social theory*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1987 P.1.)
2. Marx, *Capital*, i, 447, Sec. also pp. 927-8 quoted in Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 192.
3. Ibid, p.194.
4. Dipankar Gupta, 'On Altering the Ego in Peasant History; Paradoxes of the Ethnic option', *Peasant Studies*, vol. 13, no.1 Fall 1985). ' p.9.
5. Rosaland O'Hanlon, 'Recovering te Subject : Subaltrn Studies and Histories of Resistance in colonial South Asia, *Modern Asian Studies* 22, 1(1988).

CONCLUSION

This study has been concerned with exploring the theoretical historical potential of the concept of national-popular will. The task has involved us in locating the concept in the theoretical schema worked out by Gramsci in his practical & theoretical reflections. In addition we have tried to see the historical relevance of the concept in understanding the phenomenon of 'nation-state' formation, the significance of culture & tried to make sense of the perspectives on Indian nationalism. In short to examine the theoretical capital of the concept, in speaking to certain questions of our age.

In the course of our study we have been alerted to the theoretical novelty of this concept. It represented a significant theoretical breakthrough in thinking of the category of 'nation' and its relationship to a socialist revolution. As his reflections on the nazionale-populare (national-popular) show, he connects the problem of social revolution with that of Italian revolution. The other questions on which the concept reveals innovative insight are: the importance of non-economic factors; extension of ideology, the centrality to culture in thinking of socialism.

The unique position that the concept of national-popular occupies in Gramsci's conceptual system causes important modifications to the socialist worldview & the roads that should lead to it.

Through out this study we have noted the presence of an innovative problematic in approaching & 'recasting' Marxism. The aim of this study has been to bring out the creative potentials of the concept of national-popular will. Gramsci, in pushing against the boundaries & limits of conventional Marxism, articulated a whole host of fertile insights. Gramsci affected a double critique against 'Idealism' & positivism of Historical materialism. This involved him in some real dilemmas & problems. Gramsci was sensitive to the

complexity of the task and therefore did not set in its place a shallow syncretism. His social theory is valuable because it offers us to treat it in an open, fertile, even contradictory manner. Gramsci's theoretical contribution is valuable precisely, because his works offer a complex, contradictory fertility. His analysis is at many places ambiguous & fragmentary yet marked by rare innovatory insights, historical glimpses of unique foresight & a rare independence of mind in thinking of 'fixed' questions 'Reading' him can be an exciting task if one does not look for precepts & principles to follow. In discussions the many aspects of his theory this study has tried to suggest the ways in which Gramsci was particularly original & penetrating as well as to point to the ambiguities of his thought.¹

In the course of this study we have been alerted to many unresolved questions & related issues, which it was not possible to deal in any great depth. Some of these questions do open up a new direction of research and are dealt with, in this conclusion.

One important research agenda opened up by this analysis of Gramsci's theory of culture is to place Gramsci's specific political practice of culture in its European & world context. This would involve a systematic study of the relations between Gramsci's idea of culture, that of the Prolet^tkult the movement for proletarian culture, initiated by Lunacharsky in Russia, as well as the Clartè group and Barbusse's writings in France. This could be part of a larger project of examining Gramsci's position in the Marxist tradition & ^{the} attempt by ^{the} Marxist tradition to encounter problems of culture in general & art in particular. What can be theoretical underpinnings of a Marxist theory that may account for the status of culture and art in the social world?

Gramsci's account of national-popular will raises a fundamental issue: the role of the radical intellectual in social change. For Gramsci this is two fold: organic intellectuals participate in the learning process itself, whereas others (both organic & traditional) may

be involved in the tactical leadership of the movement as a whole. The context is the revolution in the Jacobin sense. The intellectual must be national-popular^{and} not cosmopolitan i.e. able to bring the masses into an organic movement & to integrate their politics into an expansive relationship.

However a question arises: What can be the role of an intellectual today? It is the notion of the intellectual as a participant in an avante-garde, feasible, given the complex conditions of modernity? How do we place the political vanguard of Gramsci's vision in today's politics and culture? Do radical intellectuals necessarily have to be political vanguards. As is evident, these are crucial questions of contemporary relevance. We would like to suggest a possible line of thought/inquiry which could offer some interesting insights.

This relates to a comparative sketch of Karl Mannheim (1893-1947)^{his} thoughts on intellectuals as well as culture and Gramsci's analysis of the role of intellectuals. (1891-1937)

What is specially interesting about K.Mannheim is that, the questions, & themes that he raises bear a remarkable similarity with Gramsci's questions. Yet his answers are, in many ways, different. Both belong to the same period & both pose key problems & offer interesting perspectives on those issues.

Briefly, Karl Mannheim offers a significant point of reference to an understanding of the relationship between thought & its social milieu.

The problematique posed by Karl Mannheim in his 'Sociology of culture' bears a remarkable parallel to Gramsci's notion of culture & helps us to approach the issue of the cultural process & its diffusion or democratization. His question is:

How does the shape, the physiognomy of a culture change when the strata actively

participating in cultural life, either as creators or as recipients become broader & more inclusive.

Significantly his theory of the free-floating intelligentsia^a and the attempt to explain the (the social basis of modern mentality) rise of collective consciousness, present an interesting counter point to Gramsci's theory of national-popular intellectuals. Gramsci's theory of intellectuals is a complex & innovative account. It locates a theoretical concept of intellectuals in a Marxist analysis of society & yet reveals sensitivity to the specific role of this intellectual stratum.

This analysis of the roots of the social knowledge & the role of intellectuals in its production is one interesting & ^{un-}explored area opened up by this study.

The concept of national-popular will reveals a novel political perspective. This study has shown that 'national-popular' has important implications for redefining the content of politics. The concept has a double historical field, for it not only goes to elaborate a new theory of state & an extended conception of politics in capitalist society but reformulates a whole politics of socialism. Equally significantly, as Poggiⁱ too points out and as whole area of South Asian studies (using Gramscian categories) highlight, his characteristic innovation lies in providing us with new analytical tools to understand not only the East or west, but other countries belonging to the second way.⁴ It had to reintroduce the concept of the social relations of production in political science, according to Gramsci's analysis of power relations".²

The theoretical significance of Gramsci's elaboration of a theory of politics is that it throws into a critical light a whole mode of economic readings of historical materialism and hence implications for Marxist theory of politics.

It is not possible to go into the full implications of this idea in this study. However as

a future research agenda, it could be possible to develop this argument. In this connection a comparison with *Hannah Arendt's* theory of the political could be instructive. She emphasizes the dialogical character of 'action'.³ its public inter-subjectivity & argues that it may be crucial for giving us a sense of our bearings - of the real & of the possible. Inter-subjectivity grounded in political action is, to put the same point in Gramscian language the sine qua non of "commonsense Gramsci's analysis is focused initially at this point because he assumes that the collegial sociability of working class life is sufficient to produce a 'common sense'.

In denying this, Arendt implicitly suggests that when action is absent we must begin one step further back; with the theorization of the conditions under which common sense can be achieved. Once it has been achieved however, Gramsci & Arendt predict roughly similar consequences. Through collective action, people are capable, in Gramsci's view of raising their individual self through catharsis to an incipient critical consciousness. For Arendt, the public realm is significant concretely in locating the self thus opening the possibility of fully realized inter-subjectivity

Gramsci's analysis of the national-popular will indicates the tentative elements for this radical conception of politics. It could be argued that in Gramsci may be found a latent attempt to theorize the notion of the political which counters, the Marxist, emphasis on the labour productive logic of a social formation.

Gramsci seems to be sensitive to the task of thinking out the autonomous logic of the notion of 'political'. This is a partial attempt which seems to be breaking out of the economic determinism as well as the problematic of the relative autonomy of the political.

Both these positions share the principle by which all aspects of social life are traced to the economy. The level of the really 'real' is the economy & political & social or other

aspects of the social whole are read off from it. The determinist position establishes a linear causal link, while the position which defends a 'relative autonomy allows room for politics but ultimately it is traced to the realm of the economy in howsoever mediated or 'relatively autonomous' form.

There is another issue to which the concept of national-popular will sensitizes us but which has not been dealt with in depth. This is the complex & intractable question of the *relation between socialism & democracy*. Gramsci's theory of national-popular politics envisages a genuinely democratic & popular form of Marxism. More than any Marxist of his generation, he is sensitive to the question of popular or democratic politics. The question which has been posed in recent years is whether Gramsci's theory of politics is able to explain & integrate the new social movements & democratic struggles. The emergence of new political subjects - women, national racial & sexual minorities, antinuclear & anti-institutional movements are the expression of antagonisms that cannot be reduced to the relations of production. This poses a theoretical & political challenge to Marxism. What is the specificity of these contradictions that are not 'class' contradictions? What should be their place in the anti-capitalist struggle & in the building of socialism. *Does Gramsci's conception of national-popular will point towards a new conception of politics that can allow us to take account of these & articulate them to working class demands?*

National-popular will effectively involves the supersession of the classist & reductionist conception of politics which presents it as a simple confrontation of antagonistic classes. In contrast it embodies a conception of politics as an articulation of the interest of a fundamental class & those of other social groups in the formation of a national-popular collective will. As a result Gramsci is able to provide a non-revisionist response

to the problem confronting Marxist theoreticians when it became clear that, contrary to Marx's expectations, there was not going to be a growing proletarianization of society, but, on the contrary, a development of the intermediate sectors.

Secondly national-popular will indicates the supersession of the narrow conception of politics as an activity located, purely within political society and which is always more or less related to the aspect of domination. Gramsci recuperates another dimension of politics; the aspect of politics in civil society, as the ensemble of human relations & their ability to constitute themselves & their world through the meaning they attach to it.

Gramsci's concept of national-popular politics allows us to integrate the insight (revealed to us by recent changes) that each social agent is involved in a multiplicity of social relations - not only social relations of production but also the social relations, among others, of sex, race, nationality & vicinity. All these social relations determine positions & every social agent is the bearer of many subject positions and cannot be reduced to only one.⁴ This is supplemented by the Gramscian problematique of the peasant question, not merely as a question of strategy, but as a issue of great urgency in its own right.

The question arises whether it is possible to reconcile these elements of a popular democratic politics with the Gramscian idea of the working class as a universalist class, & his vision of socialism as a 'total' world view. It is possible to argue that Gramsci's concept of national-popular politics points to a democratic relationship but co-exists in a state of tension with his universalist stance. Two possible resolutions to this dilemma are possible. A recent tendency, in debates on Marxist theory & politics, in attempting to chart out a theory for a radical & plural democracy tends towards discursive pluralism & abandons every form of determinism.⁵ Their's is a relativist & ultimately vacuous resolution.

I think it is possible to argue for a democratic form of socialism without recourse to a discursive relativism. This should integrate the insight that the working class or for that matter the peasantry can be represented by more than one party. There need not be only one collective will but collective wills which nonetheless aim towards building alliances i.e. a national-popular politics for a socialist counter hegemonic struggle. It is true that this raises certain issues which in Gramsci are found in a latent undeveloped state. They do provide the beginning of a breakthrough but to see in him a fully developed theory with all answers would be erroneous.

It has not possible to think through the implications of these questions fully in this study & hence what is suggested is a tentative posing of the problem, which could be developed later. These latent insights in Gramsci point towards developing a theory & practice of politics which is distinctive & novel even as it remains on terrain of the world communist world view.

There is one issue which has not been explored in this study but which deserves serious attention. It is, important to theorise seriously on the question of populism. This in fact bears directly on the politics of Third world states & could be used to explain complex phenomenon of contemporary movements as well as state action. Gramsci uses the concept of national-popular to criticize populism. The distinction emerged sharply in his consideration of fascist ideology. In recent years Laclau's attempt,⁶ has been the one attempt to come to grips with this question & deserves further attention.

One issue sharply drawn to our attention in the course of this study is the importance, of interrogating categories like the 'nation', 'culture', 'class', 'rationality', 'popular', or 'people' and in the Indian context 'Nationalism'. It has been revealed to us that these concepts do not have historically immutable meanings but what they have come to mean

in the present discourse is a product of long evolution & change. An attempt at understanding socio-political phenomenon in all its multi farous dimensions must take account of the fact that the concept with which we attribute meaning to the world are changeable. 'Nation', for example, in its modern meaning is a 18th century invention & 'people' has come to acquire a value laden meaning only recently.

Our study of the historiographical perspectives on Indian National movement has revealed the need to problematize the central category of 'nationalism'. Thus concepts & words are not static, unchanging categories & cannot be applied in the same way to all countries & historical periods. Hence a project of Begriffsgeschichte i.e. conceptual history,⁷ is needed to understand how social & political concepts in their changeableness come to constitute the world we live in.

This examination becomes imperative given the complexity of the times inaugerated by modernity & calls attention to the extent to which past concepts do or do not persist in the way men think & communicate.

This project could acquire special significance if integrated in a Gramscian perspective; For then, the question of how the 'common sense' of a people is structured, undergoes mutation, or is transformed would reveal interesting insight. In the Indian context, for example, the recent attempt by the BJP to, fashion 'their', 'national-popular', is trying to re-structure the shared commonsense of the people regarding 'nation-hood' hinduism, 'hindu' or 'Muslim' & even 'democracy'. Hence concepts, have to be rethought - with aid of 'conceptual history - through a historicizing process which explores changes in material structures (social history) cultural traditions, symbolic mutations & patterns of every day life. A analogous exercize needs to be undertaken for concepts of other historical spaces, languages & would be an indispensable key to understanding modernity.

NOTES

- 1 . Gramsci does not offer as any miracles, he still believes in a too 'totalizing' view of the party & his analysis of hegemony & civil society are not without their ambiguities.
- 2 . Leonardo Paggi, 'Gramsci's general theory of Marxism', in C. Mouffe (ed.), Gramsci & Marxist Theory, p. 153.
- 3 . For Arendt, the realm of action is defined negatively by its dissociation from "Labor" (the cyclical perpetuation of the means of biological existence) & "work" (the creative transformation of nature into durable artefacts) If Hannah Arendt, The Human condition, Chicago, The University of Chicago press, 1958.
- 4 . Thus someone inscribed in the relations of production as a worker is also a man ^{or} a woman, white or black, Hindu or Muslim, Indian or French & so on Moreover these other social constructions of a person's subjectivity (& hence his or her politics) are constructed largely on the basis of the meaning which collective agents give to them (in the symbolic realm) & are affected more by relations of power in the political realm. This implies a set of practices that are not merely economic but political & cultural as well.
- 5 . Laclau & Mouffe, Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics, London, Verso, 1985. Their intervention has generated an intense debate.cf. E.M. Wood, The Retreat from Class, London, Verso, 1986 and Norman Geras, 'Post-Marxism' in NLR no. 163. Reply by Laclau & Mouffe, NLR no. 166.
- 6 . Laclau, P., Politics & ideology in Marxist theory : Capitalism - Fascism - Populism, London, Verso, 1977.
- 7 . In recent years this has emerged as a cogent sub discipline of historical writing in the works of Koselleck. See Koselleck 'Begriffsgeschichte & social history in Koselleck, Future's Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time, trans. Keith Tribe, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1985, pp. 73-92, (Nov 1986). Two German Encyclopedias - A Dictionary of Philosophy on Historical Principles (HWP) & Basic concepts in History: A dictionary on Historical Principles of Political & Social Language in Germany (GG) have appeared. See a review by Melvin Richter, 'Conceptual History & political theory', in Political Theory, Vol. 14, No. 4, Nov. 86.

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