

*OCCASIONAL PAPER*

**31**

***PRATYAHA***

**EVERYDAY LIFEWORLD**

**Prasanta Roy**

October 2011



**INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES KOLKATA**

**DD-27/D Salt Lake City, Sector - 1**

**Kolkata - 700 064**

**Phone : +91 (33) 23213120/21 Fax : +91 (33) 23213119**

**e-mail : [idsk1@vsnl.net](mailto:idsk1@vsnl.net), Website : [www.idsk.edu.in](http://www.idsk.edu.in)**

# *Pratyaha*

## Everyday Lifeworld

Prasanta Ray\*

### Abstract

*Everyday lifeworld is an urgent field of study as it focuses on ordinary things and repetitive practices. Classical social science epistemological positions stood in the way of analysing the quotidian until the formulation of new critical paradigms. The task envisaged in these new paradigms is to relate the micro to the macro formations and processes. This also stipulates openness to all kinds of texts and ways of interpretation.*

(1)

An interest in everyday life process is slowly gaining ground in the Indian social sciences. *Longue durée* and macro-structure have received almost the entire attention of the practitioners. The short term time-scale and ordinary events and experiences are pushed out into the domain of chronicles and journals, as if this is not worthy of serious scholarship. The marginalisation of interest in 'everyday' is due to a taken-for-granted belief that the realm of everyday is the site for common sense and common place, very well-known, may even be trivial. Henri Lefebvre wrote: "We live on familiar terms with the people in our own family, our own milieu, our own class. This constant impression of familiarity makes us think that we know them, that their outlines are defined for us, and that they see themselves as having those same outlines...But the familiar is not necessarily known [as Hegel had observed].<sup>1</sup> Later, Garfinkel pointed out the 'seen-but-unnoticed' character of everyday lifeworld.<sup>2</sup> It is readily and obviously unthinkingly accepted, as the

---

\* Honorary Visiting Professor at the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata

'natural', 'normal' and the 'only possible' order of things. Common rules of interpersonal conduct and unexamined shared assumptions about the world produce such beliefs. Obviously, this late attention to the everyday lifeworld is not peculiar to the non-western cultural frame and academic engagements. Such beliefs underscore the mainstream western social sciences which are happily enclosed within the system frame. Their positivist and post-positivist paradigms take descriptive accounts of the phenomenal world as the purpose of knowledge formation. It is only with some space gained by the constructivist and critical paradigms, that a critical focus on everyday became possible; with it an attention to the individual in 'free' society in the West. It is to be noted that despite about five centuries of multi-level transformations which produced the notion of the individual as a legal, political and economic entity, the mainstream western social science scholarship remains unimpaired by occasional anthropocentric surges. Many of these like Exchange Theory and Symbolic Interaction Theory eventually succumbed to the power of the notion of system. Not all explorations which take everyday not only as the analytical point of departure but also as the substantive site which they reach and dwell in, begin with a radical intent and remain committed. For example, ethnographic accounts usually remain at the descriptive level with the ontological premise that the everyday lifeworld has either least contradiction or none. Garfinkel and more specially Lefebvre, take everyday as a field of investigation to locate the potentialities for the extraordinary and creative agency, and theoretical reflection. Alvin W. Gouldner locates 'everyday' as 'a counterconcept... (because) it gives expression to a *critique* of a certain kind of life, specifically, the heroic, achieving, performance-centered existence.' He points out also an implicit notion of social change in everyday perspective: 'change (which) does not come about primarily through the initiatives of elites and heroes but by massive movement in the collective minutiae of existence.'<sup>3</sup> The foci of the other scholars of 'critique of everyday' genre are evidently various.

It is not very surprising that the 'critique of everyday' has not as yet received any significant attention in the Indian academia. Most of us celebrate the mainstream western social science template. India's traditional ontology, evidently premised on *anonto kal* (eternity) and predestination, and socio-centric underpinnings of selfhood had

possibly made it easy for us to pursue social knowledge following the path set by western social science classics. It has produced the same result, namely, negation of small pieces of time and whatever we do during the brief period of time. Left out with the miniscule time frame called 'every day', are also the individuals on the ground that they daily reproduce the behaviour typical of 'cultural dopes'. This is because they internalize passively roles and behavioural norms which are socially set and enforced through culture and power. Here again the absence of the notion of individual for the greater part of Indian history unwittingly facilitated our easy acceptance of western socio-centric theories of life.

The acceptance has been mediated by the Indian sociologists who committed themselves to any variant of the system perspective in western social sciences (Comte, Durkheim, Parsons, and orthodox Marxism). The epistemological enclosure has been very firm because Indian sociologists and anthropologists have been rather shy of following even the classical interpretative turn in western social sciences (Dilthey, Rickert, Weber); or the phenomenological, ethnomethodological, symbolic interactionist and dramaturgical turns (G. H. Mead, Shutz, Garfinkel, Berger and Luckmann, Goffman); or more recent cultural turn (Lefebvre, Certeau, Bourdieu and Bauman) trying to solve the enigma of life every day. Despite a close proximity between the classical systems perspective and the interpretative turns which emerged within its folds with the promise of a micro-sociological alternative, few Indian sociologists have ventured in to what is a radical departure from the classical positions. The two are close to each other because, while the 'every day' happenings in the realm of human behaviour and the human individual have been decimated by an exclusive attention to macro-structure and processes over a long period of time in the former, the micro-sociological tradition which emerged as reaction to it, has taken the position that every day is 'a paramount reality', something taken-for-granted and unalterable by individuals. In critical response to both, a new theoretical position, which is in no way monolithic, has emerged. It takes the position: "Although everyday life can display routinized, static and unreflexive characteristics, it is also capable of a surprising dynamism and moments of penetrating insight and boundless creativity. The everyday is... 'polydimensional': fluid, ambivalent and labile."<sup>4</sup> Most of the sociologists and social

anthropologists in India more readily dismiss it than show a curiosity about testing its analytical power.

A brief and incomplete overview of researches on everyday life in India will establish the potentiality of concerted enquiries in the quotidian. Jan Breman offers ethnographic accounts of meeting of workers every day at Tower in the centre of the town where they gather every day for possible recruitment in Valsad in Gujrat, or of the process of 'interest bargaining', securing protection of the powerful and other wherewithal in return of the services to high caste families (*Wage Hunters and Gatherers: Search for Work in the Urban and Rural Economy of South Gujrat*). His 'A Chronicle of Joining and Failing in Mainstream Society'; or his, narrative in 'Staying Alive at the Bottom in Calcutta' (*The Labouring Poor in India: Patterns of Exploitation, Subordination, and Exclusion*) portray the everyday life of the labouring poor.<sup>5</sup> Both his reconstruction of Manu's murder and Ranajit Guha's retrieval history of Chandra's death<sup>6</sup> show how the everyday miseries of low caste status and of gender articulate with the larger structures of caste and patriarchy. Unlike Breman's critical ethnography or Guha's critical historiography, M. N. Srinivas's structural-functional anthropology analyses disputes within the frames of village, caste and joint-family.<sup>7</sup> A focus on social contradiction and an interest in ethnographic approach in the above cited social explorations is found in more recent works on Indian society also. Margaret Trawick's *The Person Beyond the Family* argues how 'Indian people act to overcome the constraints of family ties, to resist and transcend family-based determination of their meaning and value as persons'. She locates 'a continuum from prescribed ways to forbidden ways of overcoming family constraints.' Further, she considers renunciation a religious form of resistance and feminism as a non-religious form in Veena Das edited *The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology* (2003).<sup>8</sup> In the same edited work, Masakazu Tanaka shows, in his *Religion in Everyday Life*, how 'in *bhakti* votive rituals... a dichotomy between the transcendental and the pragmatic is not relevant'. It is argued that 'everyday life is itself the subject of transcendent reflection' when religion does not concern 'mundane activities in the domain of economics and politics' because 'a subtle transfiguration of the everyday reciprocity between gods and men/women' takes place'. F. G. Bailey's *Stratagems and Spoils:*

*a social anthropology of politics* (1969) is about how the game of power is actually played. Power and politics in their widest senses are at the centre stage as James C. Scott in his *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (2009)<sup>9</sup> discovered the agency of people every day in their resistance to the state. Everyday subversive practices within the walls of a prison are located by Mahuya Bandyopadhyay in her *Everyday Life in a Prison: Confinement, Surveillance, Resistance*. (2010)<sup>10</sup> *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India* (2009) edited by C .J. Fuller and Véronique Benei examines the impact of the state on everyday life.<sup>11</sup>

The everyday beyond the framework of economy and power is grasped in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* by Arjun Appadurai<sup>12</sup>, in *The Sari* by Mukulika Banerjee und Daniel Miller<sup>13</sup> and in *Transactions in Taste: The Collaborative Lives of Everyday Bengali Food* by Manpreet K. Janeja.<sup>14</sup> What holds true about power and submission/evasion is true also about all aspects of everyday life. Food for example is not merely an edible, and eating is not only a biological process of consumption. The 'big issues' of any period of time find their reflections in the 'most mundane and intimate aspects of people's ordinary lives'.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond the social science frame, Somnath Hore's *The Tea Garden Journal* (1943) is a visual narrative of every day resistance in the course of workers' union movement in tea gardens of Bengal in mid-1930s.<sup>16</sup> So is his *TEBHAGA: An Artist's Diary and Sketchbook* about peasant resistance in Bengal (1946).<sup>17</sup> Nikhil Sarkar's album of famine sketches in *A Matter of Conscience: Artists bear witness to The Great Bengal Famine of 1943*<sup>18</sup> brings out the everyday indignities in struggles for survival; so do the sketches by Chittaprasad Bhattacharya. Parthiv Shah and Sana Das in their *Art as Witness* have reproduced images and words about 'wounds' in the daily struggle for survival and dignity by the poor and the victims of rightist forces in recent times in India.<sup>19</sup> Cartoons by Kesava Shankara Pillai, better known as Shankar, use another language to bring out the 'ridiculous' in everyday life in India. Universally, humour, irony and satire have been powerful ways of critiquing an order of relations which normally escape the wrath of the individuals and institutions under scrutiny.

The everyday negotiations to maintain a façade of normalcy in the aftermath of an unanticipated incidence in middle class homes are reconstructed in movies like Mrinal Sen's *Ek Din Pratidin (And Quiet Rolls the Day)* (1979) and *Ek Din Achanak (Suddenly, One Day)* (1989). We do have a range of texts which take every day at least as a point of departure. Needless to say, the foregoing review is far from exhaustive; and this has left out reference to the rich Indian creative literature on this subject. Turning to aesthetic creations beyond the social sciences is necessary not only because these are sources of unobtrusive data but also because they represent human sensitivity so vital for understanding the everyday life world.

We have to acknowledge that there is always a vast repertoire of both qualitative and quantitative data which reveal aspects of everyday life of individuals and communities in India as elsewhere. It is for the curious mind to discover meanings in them through either one's 'raw' wit or categories and theories of the humanities or the social sciences. 'Data' normally carries a connotation of something lying outside of an individual or a collectivity. But individual and collective memories are significant repositories of data; these are retrievable also.

## (II)

There are 'reasons' why most of us here in India do not appreciate an interest in everyday behaviour. These have to do with our epistemological upbringing; we often show signs of closure. Some of us feel threatened by post-classical paradigmatic 'turns': the post-modern turn, or the cultural turn, or the linguistic turn because many of us are fundamentalists in terms of some orthodox canonical positions. For many of us 'every day' is at most a puzzle, if it is at all one, which can be solved within the positivist/neo-positivist paradigm or a reigning critical paradigm. Our own lethargy to acquaint ourselves with emergent developments in the western academia outside the standard frames of reference, also explains our reluctance to take up 'every day' as a problematique worthy of careful attention.

Apart from our conservative rearing up in classical Sociology, a few more 'things' stand in the way of consolidating our curiosity about what we do as we live our daily lives. First, we tend to equate

'every day' as 'each day'. We forget that 'every' is 'used to express distributively the sense that is expressed collectively by 'all'; that 'every' directs attention chiefly to the totality, 'each' chiefly to the individual composing it'.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes some of us forget to look at it as either an adjective meaning daily [everyday] or as a compound of an adjective [every] and a noun [day], implying a regularity or a routine. We uncover nonetheless how every day is a constituent of the *longue durée*; how the processes of living every day generate durable structures of whatever we are intrigued by: structures of inter-personal and inter-group relationships like structures of domination and subjugation, or structures of cultural practices. This could also be because our vernacular languages do not make the fine distinction.

At a more fundamental level, three confluences preempt curiosity about our every days: the conflation of 'individual' and 'every day', the conflation of 'every day' and 'commonsense' and the conflation of 'every day' with the 'commonplace'. The first one is misconstrued, because (a) of the reality of intersubjectivity that is, the sharing of subjective states by two or more individuals; (b) human collectivities (classes, *jatis*, tribes, gender, refugees/displaced persons) also have their collective daily lives within a common framework of interests and identity which submerges the individual qua individual. We need to remember that intersubjectivity helps in the constitution of objectivity because the experience of the world is available not only to oneself, but also to others; because a bridge between the personal and the shared, the self and the others, develops.

This conflation makes the seeking of knowledge of every day unduly vulnerable to the critique of methodological individualism. But the risk is worth taking, and the contrived conflation unwittingly brings back the individual at the center of social enquiry. This is restoring by default the individual capable of considerable autonomy in choice of his/her behaviour to its rightful place in social science analysis. Kenneth Arrow in his Richard T. Ely Lecture, *Methodological Individualism and Social Knowledge (The American Economic Review, vol. 84, issue 2, May 1994)* observes: "The starting point for the individualist paradigm is the simple fact that all social interactions are after all interactions among individuals. The individual in the economy or in the society is like the atom in chemistry; whatever happens can ultimately be described exhaustively in terms

of the individuals involved. Of course, the individuals do not act separately. They respond to each other, but each acts within a range limited by the behavior of others as well as by constraints personal to the individual, such as his or her ability or wealth."<sup>21</sup> This is anthropocentric Economics, but not entirely so. Sociology is similar because *socius* refers to the individual.

The second conflation hurts the claim of 'every day' as an analytical take-off point because common sense is usually dismissed as biographical and as un-verifiable/un-falsifiable knowledge. This reflects on 'every day' which is also dismissed by many as an unreliable source of knowledge about regularities in human behaviour in society. This may be called the Durkheimian (*The Rules of Sociological Method*, 1964) embargo on Sociology drawing on 'crudely formed concepts', that is, common sense, on various social phenomena before the formation of Sociology as a discipline. The Althusserian (*For Marx*, 1969) imperative of a break between science and ideology which includes common sense sends the same message.<sup>22</sup>

But how we can be oblivious of the fact that intersubjectivity refers to the 'common-sense,' that is, shared meanings constructed by people in their interactions with each other which they use as an everyday resource to interpret the meaning of elements of social and cultural life?

Peter Winch in his *The Idea of Social Science*, (1958) was at a complete disagreement with the conservative position in Sociology. For him the 'the conceptual structure of actor's common sense' is not to be overruled in sociological understanding. On the other hand sociological formulations must be translated into actors' statements. Foucault in his *Madness and Civilization*, (1971) goes deeper when he argues that the conceptual structure of an episteme unifies scientific/theoretic/specialized disciplines and commonsense/ everyday practices.

Ethnomethodology takes the position that ordinary people carry out social actions according to their largely practical interpretations of meaning about who and what is around them. The focus is naturally on the small scale. The particular aim of Harold Garfinkel's *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967) is to show that social order is locally produced - "just this way by just these participants" and only their understandings matter. But because the world is received as it is,

and reciprocity is involved, meaning is constructed within un-negotiable boundaries. These meanings are in no way individualist. Indeed each person expects others to be members of the social order, and their non-adherence to shared meanings in action raises questions of their membership. So Ethnomethodology could not de-centre the search for social knowledge away from impersonal cultural order persisting over a long period of time.

The commonplace, whatever it is, has similarly been dismissed as not worthy of exploration until the emergence of cultural studies, particularly studies of material culture.<sup>23</sup> A sense that something – an object, a practice or an idea – is ordinary, is born out of everyday exposure to it. Life goes on with long-held meanings. Imaginative minds, perceptive eyes, deep listening ears, detecting noses and sensitive hands occasionally figure out a meaning beneath a meaning. Then the commonplace is located as sites of extraordinary meaning. Let us consider a few examples. The Barbie<sup>24</sup> signifies much beyond a child's plaything. 'Happy birthday to you', a song composed and set to tune in 1893 for children in America, and currently rated to be the most recognised song in English, has eclipsed countless indigenous expressions of well-wishing across the cultural zones. It has also eluded political opposition to American cultural imperialism in the third world metropolis; at least the Indian Shiv Sena famous for its opposition to Valentine Day celebrations. Like 'Happy birthday to you' chocolate universalises everyday desire of children and adolescents. But *Bitter Chocolate* (2008) recounts the story of thousands of indentured children who pick the beans but have never themselves known the taste.<sup>25</sup> A 'house' "wherever it may be, is an enduring thing, and it bears perpetual witness to the slow pace of civilizations, of cultures bent on preserving, maintaining and repeating."<sup>26</sup> The Akan drums, made in West Africa, crossed the Atlantic on a slave ship, because 'such drums were used to 'dance the slaves' on the ships to fight depression, and on the plantation sometimes rallied the slaves to revolt'. Neil MacGregor observes: "If one of the purposes of an object history is to use things to give voice to the voiceless, then this slave drum has a special role – to speak for millions who were allowed to take nothing with them as they were enslaved and deported, and who were unable to write their own story."<sup>27</sup> Many read books, framed by our 'historico-social-cultural milieux'. But we have to recognise

also the agential in reading. The latter guides us the discovery of how the reader superimposes an interpretative framework on a text; how he/she gives fluidity to meaning of a text.<sup>28</sup> We experience an ever proliferation of 'practical objects' or 'ordinary artefacts', each in its way mediating our relationships, and in the process redefining human sociality. But along with commonplace objects are also everyday emotional expressions. Some common emotional expressions like crying<sup>29</sup> or 'speaking of sadness'<sup>30</sup> need not be dismissed as much too ordinary.

### (III)

The 'everyday' focus has to struggle at the methodological level also, particularly if one opts for the hermeneutic frame. So long as a student of everyday life process can find his/her observations on digitised narratives of everyday behaviour, the orthodox positivist is contended. But every other tool in an interesting repertoire of ways of looking deep into human subjectivities is contested.<sup>31</sup> Take for example, ethnography which 'offer(s) fine grained descriptions of events and provide an in-depth examination of everyday situations'. Some would readily dismiss it as journalism without realising how it explains social life in 'new and compelling ways'.<sup>32</sup> Pierre Bourdieu in his *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myth of our Time* (1998) answers in the affirmative the question whether he thinks that individual and anecdotal testimonies can enlighten us on a collective malaise.<sup>33</sup> The question is prompted by the fact that he has conducted a survey on sufferance in 1990 in which he relied on such articulations. In fact, he writes *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* (2000).<sup>34</sup> This is his critique of the 'senior state nobility', oblivious of everyday lives of ordinary citizens who are locked in the silence of despair. Almost about the same time, he has produced another work *Pascalian Mediations* (1997/2000)<sup>35</sup> in which he questions scholastic reason and its celebration of detached view and ethical neutrality. He explains his appreciation of Pascal in the following lines, which implies his position on knowledge and common sense. "...I had always been grateful to Pascal...for his concern, devoid of all populist naivety, for 'ordinary people' and the 'sound opinions of the people'; and also for his determination, inseparable from that concern, always to seek the 'reason of effects', the *raison d'être* of the seemingly most illogical or derisory human behaviours – such as 'spending a

whole day in chasing a hare' – rather than condemning or mocking them, like the 'half-learned' who are always ready to 'play philosopher' and to seek to astonish with their uncommon astonishments at the futility of common-sense opinions."<sup>36</sup> In this spirit he has written *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society* as if he writes series of short stories; may be, to avoid the 'unnatural' scholarly form of writing.<sup>37</sup>

Evidently, *testimonio*, that is testimonial narrative, is one of the appropriate research resources for studies of everyday life process. It is at its authentic best if there is no interlocutor transcribing and editing oral accounts of an individual engaged in everyday life process. It is best because the 'author' is erased. As John Beverley correctly points out, *testimonio* is a 'fundamentally democratic and egalitarian narrative form' because it does not draw its strength from any 'narrative authority'. The reader or the listener of a *testimonio* encounters the voice of 'a *real* person rather than a fictional person'. Positivist and post-positivist enquiry fictionalises the real respondents who answer questions rather than raises questions. Further, the *testimonio* strategy is not vulnerable to the critique of methodological individualism because each 'individual *testimonio* evokes an absent polyphony of other voices, other possible lives and experiences'.<sup>38</sup>

On *testimonio* Rancière takes a more radical position when he comments on his work *The Nights of Labour: The Worker's Dream in Nineteenth Century France* (1989).<sup>39</sup> He observes: "In order to show the subversive power of their work (workers' nightly intellectual engagements) I needed to break with the conventions of the social sciences for which their personal narratives, fictional writings and essays are no more than the confused expressions of a social process which only they can know. I needed to remove the conventional labels from these texts – of testimony, or symptoms of a social reality – and to exhibit them as writing and thought that worked towards the construction of an alternative social reality."<sup>40</sup>

At another end is the realm of aesthetics. Lisa Jardine in her *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (1996) shows how renaissance paintings of the sacred as well as secular paintings reveal 'unashamed enthusiasm for belongings': 'from wife to pet, to bed-hangings and brasswork', indeed the 'desirable material possessions across the globe'; how 'the everyday functional

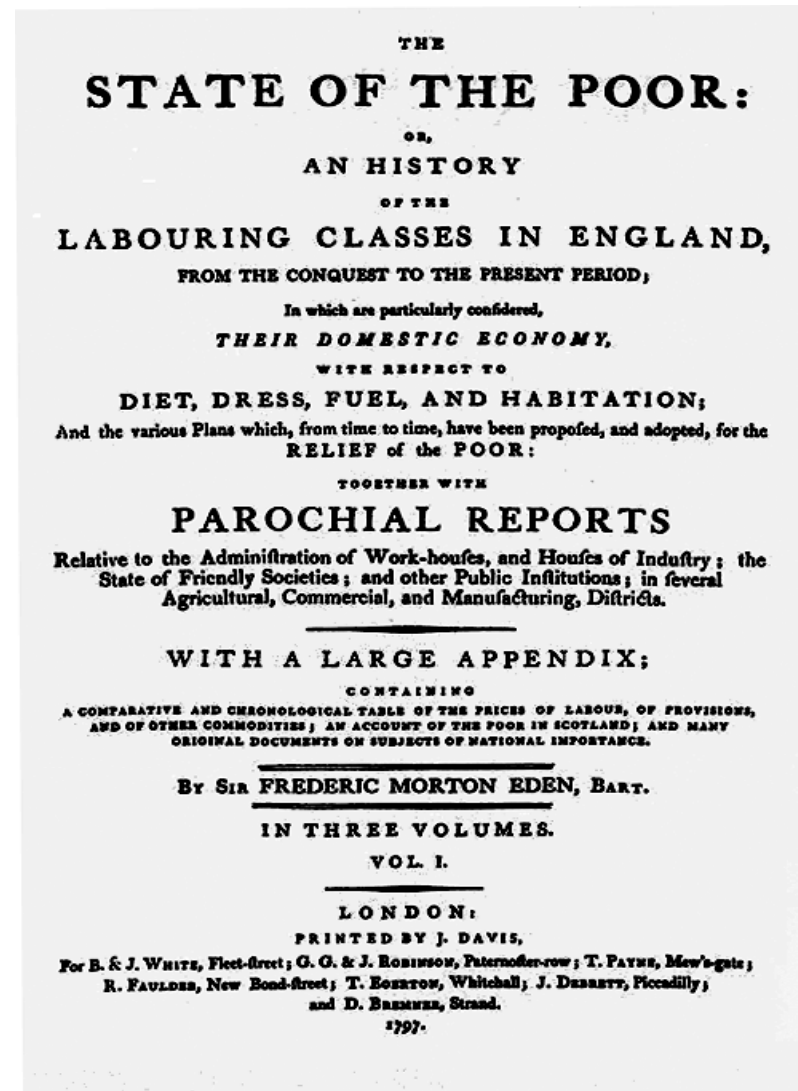
possession (was turned) into something to be admired and valued for itself'. She raises a question: "Was the Renaissance admirer of these (sacred paintings of Virgin Mary) being encouraged to want to be in the Virgin's spiritual likeness, or was he or she seduced by all that lavishness to inhabit her surroundings, wonderfully cluttered as these are with the booty of international trade?"<sup>41</sup> Vincent Van Gogh's painting *The Potato Eaters* (1884) is about the nineteenth century peasant life, about another class Lisa Jardine did not explore. This also establishes the connection between the consumer and the international order; in this case, between the common peasantry's everyday life and consumables brought into their frame of daily consumption by colonialism and modernity resting on slave labour. "The peasants cultivate and eat the American potato, while they drink coffee perhaps grown in the Dutch East Indies and illuminate their meal with a lamp burning sperm whale oil".<sup>42</sup>

The etchings and the lithographs which help us visualise the rise of the working class in Europe evidently may not be rated by some people as 'high art'. But these match the Renaissance paintings in their narrative power. Jürgen Kuczynski makes masterly use of them in his *The Rise of the Working Class*.<sup>43</sup> While Lisa Jardine takes us through the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery in London, E. Roystone Pike takes us through the Hogarth Picture Gallery in the same country to depict the everyday life of 'the labouring poor' when Adam Smith was conjuring up the invisible hand engaged in the creation of wealth.<sup>44</sup>

Other than and along with various kinds of non-digital texts, one can draw on a range of unobtrusive quantitative data. Richard Stone's Mattioli Lectures published as *Some British Empiricists in the Social Sciences: 1650-1900*<sup>45</sup> offer a brilliant analysis of economic, demographic and social statistics composed and interpreted by twelve pioneers<sup>46</sup> in empirical studies. Many of them were not trained in Statistics, and they came from a wide range of professions. In most of the cases we obtain statistical accounts of everyday life of the nation and the people in diverse class locations; a few focussed on the poor and the sick in England.

The statistical accounts by Frederick Morton Eden (1766-1809), Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) and Charles Booth (1840-1916)

come closest to the class-centric critique of everyday life approach. They were the ‘three people for whom helping the underdog was of central importance. They found out that ‘soup kitchens and poor relief, though better than nothing, were only palliatives, and that it was time to find out what the real state of affairs was and tell the world. Their tool of analysis and the instrument they used to broadcast their findings was statistics.’<sup>47</sup> The sheer breadth of his enquiry is evident in the title page of his three volumes *The State of the Poor* (1797), which moved Karl Marx. The works fall short of a *critique* because Eden took his ‘aim...to provide information but not to draw conclusions from it.’ So must Charles Booth’s seventeen volume work on poverty, *Life and Labour of the People* (1902-3). Hints of inequalities in everyday life in London abound when he lists by earning capacities those ‘In poverty’ and those ‘In comfort’; when he refers to ‘Questions of habit’(drunken or thriftless wife) as a cause of poverty; or relates crowding with poverty. He took the most rigorous and intellectually honest ways of knowing the poor. For his ‘London street by street’ he walked through 3,400 streets or places. “When he was in London he went for long exploratory walks and even spent periods as a lodger in some of the poor districts, choosing his lodgings at random as he saw the room advertised in a window and living with the family as one of them.”<sup>48</sup> In between the works by Eden and Booth, one can situate Marx’s first volume of *Capital* in whose Preface he wrote: “The social statistics of Germany and the rest of Continental Western Europe are, in comparison with those of England,



Frederick Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor*.  
Title page of first edition, 1797.

Reproduced from Richard Stone: *Some British Empiricists in the Social Sciences: 1650-1900*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.276.



wretchedly compiled. But they raise the veil just enough to let us catch a glimpse of the Medusa head behind it... Perseus wore a magic cap that the monsters he hunted down might not see him. We draw the magic cap down over eyes and ears as make-believe that there are no monsters. Let us not deceive ourselves on this."Marx made us take off our 'magic cap' by using numbers to measure extraction of labour from tender factory hands every day.<sup>49</sup> These he found in good measure in official reports. For example, he quotes an official report to give an idea of "truly fearful" over-work: "It is impossible for any mind to realise the amount of work described in the following passages as being performed by boys of from 9 to 12 years of age ... without coming irresistibly to the conclusion that such abuses of the power of parents and of employers can no longer be allowed to exist."<sup>50</sup> It helped him vindicate his moral critique of capitalism.

The everydayness of everything and practice can be located and reflected through a wide variety of texts. The challenge has been to mingle them in a way that will generate a graphic account and also bring out the quintessence of a phenomenon. In understanding everydayness, an attention to small components is an imperative. But nobody is to stop there. Rolf Tiedemann in 'Dialectics at a Standstill: Approaches to the *Passagen-Werk*' quotes Walter Benjamin: "In what way is it possible to conjoin a heightened graphicness to the realization of the Marxist method? The first stage in this undertaking will be to carry over the principle of montage into history. That is, to assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components. Indeed, to discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event."<sup>51</sup> In 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', Benjamin wrote: "A chronicler who recites events without distinguishing between major and minor ones acts in accordance with the following truth: nothing that has ever happened in should be regarded as lost for history."<sup>52</sup>

#### (IV)

How is everyday life conceived? It has been conceived variously depending on the understanding of social reality position of the conceptualiser. His/her theoretical position and his/her partisan understanding of his/her times count as much as an announced or

implicit political agenda. Apart from the Durkhemian-Parsonsian<sup>53</sup> frame on which structural-functionalism stands, the perception of the everyday has been in the nature of a critique. It is this genre of analysis which has given the 'everyday' perspective an intellectual pre-eminence. Much of it critically engaged Marxism.

For the construction of a genealogy of the conception of everyday life, it is best to turn to Alvin Gouldner.<sup>54</sup> He credits Plato (ca. 427-347), who in his negative conception, locates everyday life as 'pursuit of things of lesser value – of wealth, of fame, of ordinary appetites and earthly loves, rather than manifesting more reflective and rational concerns.' It is a "Cave" where men are essentially sleepwalkers, not yet awakened to the good and true.' For Plato they were the multitude. Within the same Greek tradition, Euripides (ca. 480 BC-406 BC) however was focused on the anti-hero: 'the "ordinary" people ... those excluded from power and fame, the weak and the stigmatized, the lowly, who were unworthy of heroic pursuits.' This 'residual world' comprised the women, the children, the old, the slaves.' The two radically different perceptions evidently disclose contrasting normative positions rather than different sociological texts. The tradition of the moral critique continued in early Christianity in which there was an evident demeaning of everyday life 'as the sphere of the worldly, the fleshy, the appetites.' Another tradition in Christianity was an implicit continuation of the disrespect for men because they had an imperative to fulfil, namely, to conform to the Christian duties of 'love, charity and brotherliness.' Only that way they could secure welfare of their soul. Everyday life was subordinated to the sacred. The Enlightenment both critiqued the Christian damnation of everyday and brought the masses and their everyday search for this-worldly happiness to the fore. The Enlightenment perception of everyday life ended up projecting it as characterized by 'ugliness and boredom' because it did not acknowledge the heroic and the extra-ordinary, and the possibility of sacred redemption. The romantics found the heroic extra-ordinary men at the centre of everyday. Evidently, construction of everyday was a site for struggle over the question who were of critical importance in everyday life, the extra-ordinary individuals or the ordinary people. The two answers found in two competing discourses on power actually revealed two contrasting normative positions. Thus, the notion of everyday was from its very beginning 'a *critique*

of a certain kind of life, specifically, the heroic, achieving performance-centered existence.'

It is as a critique of capitalism that reflections on everyday revealed their analytical and moral power. Marx analysed what he called 'The Working Day' in the first volume of *Capital* (1876).<sup>55</sup> This is obviously one clue to his perception of the working class everyday in early nineteenth century. He quotes an official report to give an idea of "truly fearful." over-work: "It is impossible for any mind to realise the amount of work described in the following passages as being performed by boys of from 9 to 12 years of age ... without coming irresistibly to the conclusion that such abuses of the power of parents and of employers can no longer be allowed to exist."<sup>56</sup> It helped him vindicate his moral critique of capitalism. Some he found in public statements made by the employers like Messrs' Naylor & Vickers, the steel manufacturers:

"The boys do not suffer from the heat. The temperature is probably from 86° to 90°.... At the forges and in the rolling mills the hands work night and day, in relays, but all the other parts of the work are day-work, *i.e.*, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. In the forge the hours are from 12 to 12. Some of the hands always work in the night, without any alternation of day and night work.... We do not find any difference in the health of those who work regularly by night and those who work by day, and probably people can sleep better if they have the same period of rest than if it is changed.... About 20 of the boys under the age of 18 work in the night sets.... We could not well do without lads under 18 working by night. The objection would be the increase in the cost of production.... Skilled hands and the heads in every department are difficult to get, but of lads we could get any number.... But from the small proportion of boys that we employ, the subject (*i.e.*, of restrictions on night-work) is of little importance or interest to us." And what would the lads say: "George Allinsworth, age 9, came here as cellar-boy last Friday; next morning we had to begin at 3, so I stopped here all night. Live five miles off. Slept on the floor of the furnace, over head, with an apron under me, and a bit of a jacket over me. The two other days I have been here at 6 a.m. Aye! It *is* hot in here."<sup>57</sup> Lenin wrote: "In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday relation of

bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities."<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, none of us have the power of Mortimer, a character created by novelist Cornelia Funke in the famous *Inkworld* trilogy, who had the mysterious ability of reading aloud a book and bring 'characters and items' into the real world.<sup>59</sup> If one had, one could encounter those miserable characters in some etchings reproduced in Jürgen Kuczynski's *The Rise of the Working Class*.<sup>60</sup>

Marx's notion of 'polyscopic' alienation inspired<sup>61</sup> Henry Lefebvre's (1901-1991) three volume work *Critique of Everyday Life*, a profound critique of capitalist everyday.<sup>62</sup> In years (1928-1948)<sup>63</sup> when he was highly appreciated by the French Communist Party, his work (the first volume) was hailed as 'philosophy (which) no longer scorns the concrete and the everyday.' Ironically, when he became a 'vulgarizer' of Marxism and was critiquing the 'socialist' everyday, he was drawing on the same.<sup>64</sup> How does he perceive everyday? "Everyday life is profoundly related to *all* activities, and encompasses them with all their differences and conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which make them human – and every human being – a whole takes its shape and its form. In it are expressed and fulfilled those relations which bring into play the totality of the real, albeit in a manner which is always partial and incomplete: friendship, comradeship, love, the need to communicate, play, etc."<sup>65</sup> Metaphorically: "...everyday life is compared to fertile soil. A landscape without flowers or magnificent woods may be depressing to the passer-by; but flowers and trees should not make us forget the earth beneath, which has a secret life and a richness of its own."<sup>66</sup> Modernity has *despoiled* the everyday of former times...it is modernity which has caused everyday life to degenerate into 'the everyday (*i.e.* producing one's life like a work.'<sup>67</sup>).' "If modernity is the brilliant, even gaudy, side of the new, the everyday is its insignificant side, 'what is humble and solid, what is taken for granted and that of which all the parts follow each other in such a regular, unvarying succession that those concerned have no call to question its sequence."<sup>68</sup> The capitalist modern everyday is the negation of human authenticity – 'beauty'<sup>69</sup> – by poverty and power. "Naples, Baghdad, Calcutta: the same sun shines down on the same rags, the same running sores."<sup>70</sup>

What about the socialist everyday? “According to the productive and technical forces, certain social needs arise in bourgeois society which capitalism is unable to satisfy; they modify everyday life in a positive way, while at the same time introducing negative elements such as dissatisfaction, disappointment, alienation. On the other hand, in the socialist countries, or in the countries in which socialism is being built, the real social needs – which socialism should stimulate, detect and satisfy – lag behind ideology and the superstructures.”<sup>71</sup> Evidently, as in the long European tradition of thought, the concrete and the visionary interpenetrate each other. The vision demands ‘at once a rejection of the inauthentic and the alienated, and an unearthing of the human which still lies buried therein.’<sup>72</sup>

To make sense of that he proposes a philosophically grounded Sociology. He has written a whole volume for reconstruction of Sociology unhindered by any official dogma.<sup>73</sup> That reconstruction should also avoid “‘quantitative’ sociology ... for sticking to enumerations and classifications that cannot exhaust reality” and “equally ‘participatory’ sociology, the sociology of surveys and questionnaires postulating a spontaneity of the social...”<sup>74</sup> He has another important stipulation: “...critical knowledge of daily life does not require a special or perfect knowledge, distinct from everyday discourse...we should use only such words as possess meaning – and only one meaning only...there is no need to invent a different vocabulary, syntax, or paradigm from the one that is present in the discourse...This rules out ‘proof’, but does not preclude the element of play and risk inherent in any conversational discourse.”<sup>75</sup> Ranciere’s most basic assumption is very simple: ‘everyone thinks, everyone speaks’.<sup>76</sup>

About the researchability of his ideas regarding everyday life, he makes a candid admission that ‘a programme of empirical and theoretical research’ presented in the first volume ‘has proved too difficult to achieve.’ He observes: “The real difficulty begins when concepts which are new and as yet not fully clarified come into confrontation with a mass of empirical documentation, and our thinking is prepared neither to give up those concepts in return for innumerable observations, nor to give up facts in return for a conceptual abstraction...it must blaze its own trail between philosophical reflections and fragmented and specialized research.”<sup>77</sup>

He is confident: “Knowledge and genuine thought pass methodically from the individual scale to the social and national scale (by a process of thought comparable to the mathematical integration of very small elements).”<sup>78</sup> Both also transcend the temporality and locality of specific everyday experiences. “Things have not been transfigured [‘the wheelbarrow is still creaky and cumbersome’]...And yet our consciousness of these things [which represent the ‘brutal reality of capitalist production] becomes transformed and loses its triviality, its banality, since in each thing we see more than itself – something else *which is there* in everyday objects, not an abstract lining but something enfolded within which hitherto we have been unable to see.”<sup>79</sup>

Evidently Lefebvre has an explicit political project which lends a specific nuance to his notion of the critique: ‘not simply knowledge of everyday life, but knowledge of the means to transform it.’<sup>80</sup> “The true critique of everyday life will have as its primary objective the separation between the human (real and possible) and bourgeois decadence, and will imply a *rehabilitation of everyday life*...Man must be everyday, or he will not be at all.”<sup>81</sup> This ‘real and possible’ human needs the ‘archaeological mode of reading the everyday’ because the human is located in ‘humble, familiar, everyday objects.’<sup>82</sup>

The *critique* as Lefebvre developed retained its unmistakable political flavour when he wrote the second volume (published in 1961) despite his break with ‘official Marxists’ after experiencing ‘various extremely powerful, predominantly political upheavals’. Michel Trebitsch writes: “These prefatory texts, or inventories, are at one with Henry Lefebvre’s approach: the desire constantly to link the conceptual with the experiential; the autobiographical dimension of theoretical reflection; a relationship to ‘experience’ in Hannah Arendt’s sense of the word.”<sup>83</sup> The *critique* has to become the *radical critique* because ‘The moment to realize philosophy was missed’. In post-Lefebvre scholarship on everydayness, much of the frame has moved beyond his non-communist French Marxism; indeed, beyond Marxism.

Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984)<sup>84</sup> is an example of that. He also talks about the centrality of human agency in acts of resistance to bureaucratic reason, but does not conceive of revolution of a grand scale as Lefebvre has done. His attention

is to the marginal group which has now become 'a silent majority'. The ordinary man engages in 'tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices'. The acts of resistance take place 'within the consumer grid' leaving 'various kinds of room' for consumers to 'exercise their art'.<sup>85</sup> Or, fundamentally: "If it is true that the grid of "discipline" is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also "miniscule" and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, ...to reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production".<sup>86</sup> 'The ordinary man'/'the common hero' uses strategy ('the calculus of force-relationships') and tactics ('watching for opportunities'/'manipulating events to turn them into "opportunities"'/'talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.) in their everyday practices. Like Lefebvre, Certeau cherishes the potentiality of Sociology and Anthropology to mount researches particularly "on the uses of space, on the ways of frequenting or dwelling in a place, on the complex processes of the art of cooking, and on the many ways of establishing a kind of reliability within the situations imposed on an individual, that is, of making it possible to live in them by reintroducing into them the plural mobility of goals and desires – an art of manipulating and enjoying."<sup>87</sup>

Dorothy E. Smith in her *The Everyday World As Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* shares with Lefebvre and Certeau the critique perspective on capitalism and the potentiality of re-worked sociology to locate power and resistance on the part of the common people, but takes 'a peculiar eclipsing: women's exclusion from man's culture' as her point of departure.<sup>88</sup> She disapproves of 'a consciousness (typical of "established" Sociology) that looks at society, social relations, and people's lives as if we could stand outside them, ignoring the particular local places in the everyday in which we live our lives."<sup>89</sup> Logically, power conceptualised as "relations of ruling" is a vital part of her analytical frame. "'Relations of ruling" is a concept that grasps power, organization, direction, and regulation as more pervasively structured than can be expressed in traditional concepts provided by the discourses of power."<sup>90</sup> She traces the roots of eclipsing of women to capitalism which creates

and institutionalises 'extralocal, impersonal, universalized forms of action ('constituted by a market process')(which) became the exclusive terrain of men, while women became correspondingly confined to a reduced local sphere of action organized by particularistic relationships.<sup>91</sup> Dorothy E. Smith harnesses Paul Ricoeur's 'depth hermeneutics' that directs us to understand "how everyday practices are connected to wider social institutions and processes that are themselves historically situated, and a heightened awareness of our locatedness in these activities and organizations, as subjects with particular gender, class and racial affiliations and experiences."<sup>92</sup> What we need is 'a delicate balancing act' between cognising 'integrity of the experiences of actual human subjects ('bodily being and activities of looking, touching, smelling, hearing, etc.) and (their) ... proximate settings' and grasping 'underlying structures and processes that reinforce relations of domination in ways that agents may not be fully cognizant of.'<sup>93</sup> Her 'institutional ethnography' is towards reorganization of "*the social relations of knowledge of the social* so that people can take that knowledge up as an extension of our ordinary knowledge of the local actualities of our lives. It is a method of inquiry into the social that proposes to enlarge the scope of what becomes visible from that site, mapping the relations that connect one local site to others... (and) to 'the extended social relations of ruling and economy and their interconnections."<sup>94</sup>

#### (V)

Does not everyday include everynight, particularly when a day is measured between one midnight to the next? Do we need a specific mention of everynight? Does everyday life represent 'the culture of daytime rather than of the nighttime? A specific mention of everynight occurs in writings of Dorothy E. Smith when she makes it a part of a compound expression, 'everyday/everynight'.<sup>95</sup> But she has not problematised everynight.

It is in Jacques Rancière's<sup>96</sup> *The Nights of Labor: The Worker's Dream in Nineteenth Century France* (1989), a specific attention is paid to night. The work is about 'the thinkers of the night invad(ing) the territory of Philosophy'/'the proletariat of the night' producing the first newspaper 'made by the workers themselves. It recounts 'those nights wrested from the normal sequence of work and sleep',

'that sleep which will restore the powers of the servile machine'. The nights were times of 'imperceptible, ...inoffensive breaks in the ordinary course of things, where already the impossible was being prepared, dreamt and seen: the suspension of that ancient hierarchy which subordinates those dedicated to labour to those endowed with the privilege of thought.' These workers in 1830s in France were not "demanding the impossible but making it happen themselves: of appropriating the time they did not have, either by spying opportunities in the working day or by giving up their own night of rest to discuss or to write, to compose verses or to work out philosophies."<sup>97</sup> In those 'mad' 'nights of study and intoxication', they were trying to shake off the identity imposed upon them by a system of class domination and to establish themselves 'as independent inhabitants of a common world, capable of all the refinement of self-denials that previously had been associated only with those classes that were released from the daily concern of work and food'; trying to represent their claim 'that proletarians have to be treated *as if* they have a right to more than one life'. A reordering of time took place when workers wrested away the 'intellectual nights of the writer' to 'challenge the assumption that labour exhausts the labourer and hence is not able to participate in intellectual life'.

The most insightful and historically grounded analysis is in *Cultures of Darkness: Night Travels In The Histories of Transgression [From Medieval to Modern]* (2000) by Bryan D. Palmer. He brings out "the long resilience of everynight resistance and refusal, which remains underappreciated in the world capable of canonizing ideas of the great tradition but blind to the dark doings of the marginal and the transgressive. Darkness... was never *only* a time of evil, even in the most unfortunate historical periods of reaction and retribution."<sup>98</sup> He argues: "On the one hand, night's darkness could be imposed, self-destructive living out of alienation's ultimate negativity. On the other, freed from certain conventions of the day, its shadows shielding the oppressed from the glare and gaze of power, night could be the positive moment of alienation's transcendence, a space for the self's realization in acts of rebellious alternative. That these dualisms might, as well merge is a possibility few historians have considered."<sup>99</sup> The focus is again on capitalism. "In their nocturnal lives these disparate people<sup>100</sup> have accommodated and resisted,

transgressed and tithed, challenged and sustained the varied but reinforcing powers of a capitalism that has the ultimate project of subordinating the vast majority of humankind."<sup>101</sup>

The necessity for a historical analysis of capitalist everynight of various subaltern people arises from Marxism's inattention to night's ambiguous position in the capitalist frame. "Marxist critique has nevertheless looked inadequately into the night and paid insufficient attention to dimensions of subordination, marginalization, and transgression not directly and unambiguously connected, via the wage and struggles over its contents, to the labor-capital relation. But that relation was central to the evolution of other arenas of social contestation. Running through the dense darkness of histories of the night, then, lie the undeniable connective tissues, materialist links in the chains that men and women must shed if their days, as well as their nights, are to be truly free."<sup>102</sup> But the analysis does not follow the post-modernist paradigm. It "does not so much champion marginalization and transgression (as the postmodernists would do) as acknowledge their *coerced* being, explore their cultural resiliencies, and suggest that their historicized presence, constrained limitations, and capacities to articulate a challenge to ensconced power are never islands unto themselves. They are always reciprocally related to the material world of production and exchange, where oppression and exploitation are universal attributes of night's freedoms and fears as well as day's more transparent politics of inequality."<sup>103</sup>

## (VI)

The foregoing genealogical outline above highlights only a certain genre of narration and reflection which focuses on the negatives in everyday existence making the lives of the people in the 'lower depth' sordid: 'immersed in everyday and submerged by it'. Based on his definition of everyday as a *level* of social reality, Lefebvre distinguishes the people in the 'upper sphere' as "men and women who have no sense of the everyday, detached, external, devoted to exceptional or artificial activities, integrated into groupings set up above society, 'society' people, 'pure' intellectuals, statesmen etc."; have "much more adventure, more openings, more play: but people are always in danger of losing themselves, some in abstraction, others in artificiality, and others in pointless subtlety and

refinement.”<sup>104</sup> Studies on everyday must not be exhausted by an exclusive attention to the people in the ‘lower depth’. Every day in the ‘upper sphere’ deserves as much attention. Further, class locations and styles of living are not the only axes on which social differences in any order of inequality rest; nor it is the case of a dichotomy between two social groups, each with an exclusive set of attributes. Inequality is a complex phenomenon. There is a greater attention to the subalterns in the genealogy of studies on everyday from the critique perspective because for the larger part of history their visibility and audibility were shut out except when needed by the elite. This must not mean that we leave out the everyday lifeworld of the social elite. The thick description<sup>105</sup> of the social lives of the peoples occupying contradictory locations<sup>106</sup> is more challenging. Bricolage<sup>107</sup> in their cultural practices stands in the way of categorising their identity. It consists of mixing styles of living through appropriation from cultures/sub-cultures of others. Needless to say, that there are universals in everydayness across space, even time. But all kinds of particularities — temporal, spatial, cultural and historical – add to the challenges of everyday studies.

1. Lefebvre, Henri: *Critique of Everyday Life: Introduction* (1947), vol. 1, Verso, London, New York, 1991, p. 15.
2. Garfinkel, Harold: *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Prentice Hall, New York, 1967.
3. Gouldner, Alvin W.: ‘Sociology and the Everyday Life’ in Coser, Lewis A (ed.) *The Idea of Social Structure: Papers in Honor of Robert K. Merton*, Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1975, p. 421, 422.
4. Gardiner, Michael E: *Critiques of everyday life*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, p.6.
5. Breman, Jan: *The Jan Breman Omnibus*, with an introduction by Sujata Patel, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2008.
6. Guha, Ranjit: ‘Chandra’s Death’ in his edited: *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, Oxford, New York, 1987, pp. 135-165.
7. Srinivas, M. N: ‘The study of Disputes in an Indian Village’, ‘A Caste Dispute among the Washermen of Mysore’ and ‘A Joint Family Dispute in a Mysore Village’, reproduced in *The Oxford India Srinivas*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009.

8. Das, Veena (ed.): *The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003.
9. Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Orient Black swan, New Delhi, 2010.
10. Bandyopadhyay, Mahuya: *Everyday Life in a Prison: Confinement, Surveillance, Resistance*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2010.
11. Fuller, C .J.andBenei, Véronique (eds.): *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, Social Science Press, New Delhi, 2009.
12. Appadurai, Arjun.:*The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 1986.
13. Banerjee, Mukulika und Miller, Daniel: *The Sari*, Oxford, UK: Berg, 2003.
14. Manpreet K. Janeja: *Transactions in Taste: The Collaborative Lives of Everyday Bengali Food*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2010.
15. Watson, James I and Caldwell, Melissa: *the cultural politics of food and eating*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Malden, Oxford, Carlton, 2005.
16. Hore, Somnath:*The Tea Garden Journal*, Seagull Books, 2009.
17. Hore, Somnath: *TEBHAGA: An Artist’s Diary and Sketchbook*, Translated from Bengali by Somnath Zutshi, with an introduction by Samik Bandyopadhyay, Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1990.
18. Sarkar, Nikhil:*A Matter of Conscience: Artists bear witness to The Great Bengal Famine of 1943*, Punascha Publication, Kolkata, 1998.
19. Shah,Parthiv and Das, Sana: *Art as Witness*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2010.
20. The Oxford English Dictionary, vol. v, second edition, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 465.
21. Arrow, Kenneth: ‘Methodological Individualism and Social Knowledge’, *The American Economic Review*, vol. 84, issue 2, May 1994, p.3.
22. For a critical review of competing positions on Sociology-common sense relationship, see David Thomas: ‘Sociology and Common Sense’, *Inquiry*, 21, pp. 1-32. Also: Geertz, Clifford: ‘Common Sense as a Cultural System’ in his *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology*, Fontana Press, London, 1983; Houle, Gilles: ‘Common Senses as a Specific Form of Knowledge: Elements for a Theory of Otherness’, *Current Sociology*, vol. 43, No.

- 2/3, Autumn/Winter, 1995; Garfinkel, Harold: 'Common Sense Knowledge of Social Structure: The Documentary Method of Interpretation' (1962) in Manis, J and Meltzer, B: *Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology*, 2nd edition, Allyn and Bacon, Inc, Boston, 1972; Jacques, Hamel: 'Sociology, common sense, and qualitative methodology: the position of Pierre Bourdieu and Alan Touraine', *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 22.1, 1997, pp.95-112. *Expanded Academic ASAP.Web.2 Mar.2011.*
23. Hicks, Dan and Beaudry, Mary C. (eds): *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010. There is a strong research interest in small things. A few examples are: Petroski, Henri: *The Evolution of Useful Things: How everyday Artefacts – From Forks and Pins to Paper Clips and Zippers – came to be as They are*, Vintage Books, New York, 1994; Kittler, Friedrich A.: *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, Stanford UP, Stanford 1999; Rybczynski, Witold: *One Good Turn: A Natural History of the Screwdriver and the Screw*, Scribner, New York: 2001; Hoskins, Janet: *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives*, Routledge, London 1998; Petroski, Henri: *The Pencil: A History of Design and Circumstance*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1992; Petroski, Henri: *The Book on the Book Shelf*, Vintage Books, New York, 2000; Melchior-Bonnet, Sabine: *The Mirror: A History*, Routledge, New York, 2001.
  24. Rogers, Mary F: *Barbie Culture*, Sage Publications, London, 1999.
  25. Off, Carol: *Bitter Chocolate: The Dark Side of the World's Most Seductive Sweet*, New Press, 2008; the book with the same title is an exposition on child sexual abuse, another reference to the dark side of society: Virani, Pinki: *Bitter Chocolate: child sexual abuse in India*, Penguin Books, 2000. The story of everyday is not of uncontested continuity only. It is about change also. The French film *Chocolat* (2000), based on the novel of the same name by Joanne Harris, is 'the story of a young mother...who arrives at (a) fictional, repressed village with her six-year-old daughter and opens *La Chocolaterie Maya*, a small chocolaterie. Her chocolate quickly begins to change the lives of the townspeople...The store imbues both wonder and angst within the classical villagers as it opens during the forty days of Lent..(because the principal protagonist's) allure and confections enliven a married couple's sex life, encourage an elderly man's secret love, bring rapport with a wilful diabetic, and comfort an awkward woman who longs to leave her drunk and abusive husband. Nevertheless, the devout village mayor... sees (her) as an immoral provocateur and quietly contests against her. 'This evidently is a story of a woman's courage and vulnerability in a new social space. This is true about other women in other contexts and other cultures as, for example, the contemporary young Chinese migrant women workers negotiating their lack of social protection (nakedness) in the face of pressures from modern urbanity as well as traditional rural imperatives and trying to cope with the stress by using eroticism and intimacy (nakedness) to create a space for self-expression. Ma, Eric and Cheng, Hau Ling 'Helen': "'Naked" bodies: experimenting with intimate relations among migrant workers in South China', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Sage Publications, 2005, pp. 307-328, reproduced in During, Simon (ed.): *The Cultural Studies Reader*, Third edition, Routledge, London and New York, 2008, pp. 202-215.
  26. Braudel, F: *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992 [1979].
  27. MacGregor, Neil: *A History of the World in 100 objects*, Allen Lane, Penguin Books, 2010, p. xxiii.
  28. Manguel, Alberto: *A History of Reading*, Flamingo, London, 1996.
  29. Lutz, Tom: *Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears*, W. W. Norton & Company New York, 2001.
  30. Karp, D: *Speaking of Sadness: depression, disconnection, and the meanings of illness*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996.
  31. Increasing constraints imposed by IRBs is brought out by Lincoln, Yvonna S: 'Institutional Review Boards and Methodological Conservatism: The Challenge to and from Phenomenological Paradigms' in Denzin, Norman K and Lincoln, Yvonna S (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, third edition, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 165-181.
  32. Puddephatt, Anthony, Shaffer, William and Kleinknecht, Steven: 'Exercise in reflexivity: situating theory in practice' in their edited *ethnographies revisited: constructing theory in the field*, Routledge, London and New York, 2009, p. 1-34.
  33. Bourdieu, Pierre: *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myth of our Time*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998.
  34. Bourdieu, Pierre: *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, Stanford University Press, 2000.22 researchers under his guidance spent three years locating and analysing the contemporary forces of social suffering—the daily suffering of those denied the means of acquiring a socially dignified existence and of those poorly adjusted to the rapidly changing

- conditions of their lives. Social workers, teachers, policemen, factory workers, white-collar clerks, farmers, artisans, shopkeepers, whom Bourdieu calls minor state nobility in his *State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998.
35. Bourdieu, Pierre: *Pascalian Mediations*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California/Polity Press, Cambridge, 1997/2000.
  36. Ibid., p.2
  37. "Confined in their governmental ivory towers, their actions largely dictated by public opinion polls, politicians and state officials are all too often oblivious to the everyday lives of ordinary citizens. These persons, who often experience so much hardship in their lives, have few ways to make themselves heard and are obliged either to protest outside official frameworks or remain locked in the silence of their despair. The book can be read like a series of short stories, which include: a steel worker who was laid off after 20 years and now struggles to support his family on unemployment benefits and a part-time job; a trade unionist who finds his goals undermined by the changing nature of work; a family from Algeria living in a housing tract on the outskirts of Paris who must cope with pervasive forms of racism; and a schoolteacher confronted with urban violence."
  38. Beverley, John: 'TESTIMONIO, SUBALTERNITY, AND NARRATIVE AUTHORITY' in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Third Edition, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi, 2005, p. 548-549.
  39. Rancière, Jacques: *Nights of Labour: The Worker's Dream in Nineteenth Century France*, tr. John Drury, Philadelphia, Pa: Temple University Press, 1989.
  40. Excerpt from Rancière drawn from the 'Preface' to the Hindi translation of *The Nights of Labor*, posted by Hydrarchy, January 2009, and the 'Preface' written by Rancière.
  41. Jardine, Lisa: *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance*, Macmillan, 1996, p.12.
  42. Mirzoeff, Nicholas: *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999, pp. 70-71.
  43. Kuczynski, Jürgen: *The Rise of the Working Class*, World University Library, Widenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1967.
  44. Pike, Royston E: *Human Documents of Adam Smith's Time*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1974.
  45. Stone, Richard: *Some British Empiricists in the Social Sciences: 1650-1900*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997.
  46. William Petty, Charles Davenant, Gregory King, Bishop William Fleetwood, Arthur Young, Patrick Colquhoun, John Graunt, Edmond Halley, William Farr, Frederick Morton Eden, Florence Nightingale and Charles Booth.
  47. Stone, Richard: *Some British Empiricists in the Social Sciences: 1650-1900*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.277.
  48. Ibid, p. 349.
  49. Marx, Karl: *Capital*, vol.1, chapter 10. (1876) [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm)
  50. Ibid.
  51. Tiedemann, Rolf in 'Dialectics at a Standstill: Approaches to the *Passagen-Werk*' in Eiland, Howard and McLaughlin, Kevin: *The Arcade Project* by Walter Benjamin, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 2002, p.931.
  52. Benjamin, Walter: *Illuminations*, Fontana Press, London, 1992, p. 246.
  53. An example of standard textbook is Karp, David A. and Yoels, William C.: *Sociology in Everyday life*, second edition, F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., Itasca, Illinois, 1993; A textbook which draws on the 'critique' perspective is Weigert, Andrew J.: *Sociology of Everyday Life*, Longman, New York and London, 1981.
  54. Gouldner, Alvin: 'Sociology and the Everyday Life' in Coser, Lewis A (ed.): *The Idea of Social Structure: Papers in Honor of Robert K. Merton*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, 1975, pp. 417-432.
  55. To refresh our memory, in the Chapter Ten of volume one, the sub-sections of the titles are: The Limits of Working Day; Greed for Surplus Labour. Manufacture and Boyard; Branches of English Industry without Legal Limits for Exploitation; Day and Night Work: The Relay System.
  56. Ibid.
  57. Ibid.
  58. Lenin, 'On the Question of Dialectics', quoted by Lefebvre, Henri: *Critique of Everyday Life* (1947), vol. 1, Verso, London, New York, 1991, p. 3.
  59. *Inkheart* (2003) , *Inkspell* (2005) , *Inkdeath* (2008)



60. Kuczynski, Jürgen: *The Rise of the Working Class*, World University Library, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1967, p. 97, 211.
61. Lefebvre, Henri: *Critique of Everyday Life: Introduction* (1947), vol. 1, Verso, London, New York, 1991, pp. 61-62.
62. Lefebvre, Henri: *Critique of Everyday Life: Introduction* (1947), vol. 1, Verso, London, New York, 1991; *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (1961), vol.2, Verso, London, New York, 2002; *Critique of Everyday Life: from Modernity to Modernism* (1981), vol. 3, Verso, London, New York, 2005. All the three volumes were translated by John Moore and carried a Preface by Michel Trebitsch.
63. Eventually expelled by the Party in 1957.
64. He called for critical analysis of 'new alienations' and the urgency of developing 'a newly conceived revolutionary theory' 'no longer... based on the poverty of workers in 1850, but on the concrete sufferings of the men'. He took this position in the Forward to the second edition written between December 1956 and February 1957. Lefebvre, Henri: *Critique of Everyday Life: Introduction* (1947), vol. 1, Verso, London, New York, 1991, p. 46.
65. Ibid. p. 97.
66. Ibid. p. 87.
67. Ibid. p. xxvii.
68. Ibid. p. xxvi.
69. Ibid. p. 44, 'the primitive diversity of everyday man, the generosity of his nature, the many-faceted local eccentricities, the brutal, swarming tumult'.
70. Ibid. p. 44. For threats to everyday life from technology and politics, see *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (1961), vol. 2, Verso, London, New York, 2002, pp. 2-4.
71. Lefebvre, Henri: *Critique of Everyday Life: Introduction* (1947), vol. 1, Verso, London, New York, 1991, p. 49.
72. Ibid. xxiv.
73. *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (1961), vol. 2, Verso, London, New York, 2002.
74. Ibid. p. xi.
75. *Critique of Everyday Life: from Modernity to Modernism* (1981), vol. 3, Verso, London, New York, 2005, p. 20.
76. Hallward, Peter: 'Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery', *Paragaph*, vol. 28, no. 1, March 2005, pp. 26-45.

77. *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (1961), vol. 2, Verso, London, New York, 2002, p. 5, 15-17.
78. Lefebvre, Henri: *Critique of Everyday Life: Introduction* (1947), vol. 1, Verso, London, New York, 1991, p. 135.
79. Ibid. p. 134.
80. Ibid. p. x.
81. Ibid. p. 127.
82. Ibid. p. xxiv, p. 132.
83. Trebitsch, Michel: 'Preface: The Moment of Radical Critique' in Lefebvre, Henri: *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (1961), vol. 2, Verso, London, New York, 2002, p. x.
84. Certeau de, Michel: *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London (1984), 1988.
85. Ibid. p. xvii.
86. Ibid. p. xiv.
87. Ibid. p. xxii.
88. Smith, Dorothy E.: *The Everyday World As Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1997. For Lefebvre's comparable position on women, see *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (1961), vol. 2, Verso, London, New York, 2002, p.80-87.
89. Ibid. p. 2.
90. Ibid. p. 3.
91. Ibid. p. 5.
92. Gardiner, Michael E: *Critiques of everyday life*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, p. 199.
93. Ibid.
94. Smith, Dorothy E., *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*, Altamira Press, Lanham, New York, Toronto, Oxford, 2005, p. 29.
95. Ibid. p.39.
96. Rancière, Jacques: *The Nights of Labor: The Worker's Dream in Nineteenth Century France*, tr. John Drury, Temple university Press, Philadelphia, Pa, 1989.
97. All excerpts from/about Rancière are drawn from the 'Preface' to the Hindi translation of *The Nights of Labor*, posted by Hydrarchy, January 2009, and the 'Preface' written by Rancière. Read also

- Interview with Jacques Rancière conducted by Lawrence Liang, Delhi, 2009.
98. Palmer, Bryan D: *Cultures of Darkness: Night Travels In The Histories of Transgression [From Medieval to Modern]*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2000, p. 456.
99. Ibid. 9.
100. "peasant dissidents and witches in the moment of feudalism's dissolution; pornographers, libertines, monsters, and Jacobin conspirators in the Age of Revolution; pirates and slaves in the ascendancy of mercantile capitalism; debased trades and dishonourable work, the sociability of the tavern and fraternal order, the dangerous classes of the urban, industrial order, and the traumas of Third World proletarianization in the global reach of the Industrial Revolution; revolutions of the right and left, and their respective uses of the night; cultures of erotic, musical, cinematic, and poetic disaffection, many of which consolidate in capitalism's material and cultural chaos. These are the narratives of marginality that follow, pieces of a larger, yet-to-be-collectively constructed puzzle, in which we see moments of alternative, times of acquiescence, and blank spaces of invisibility." Palmer, Bryan D: *Cultures of Darkness: Night Travels In The Histories of Transgression [From Medieval to Modern]*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2000, p.9.
101. Ibid. p. 458.
102. Ibid. pp. 456-7.
103. Ibid. p. 457.
104. *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (1961), vol. 2, Verso, London, New York, 2002, p. 53, 55.
105. Geertz, Clifford: *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books, New York, 1973. Doing a thick description is itself a challenging task. It requires locating 'a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which' a certain practice is 'produced, perceived and interpreted' (p. 7); 'sorting out the structure of signification' (p.9); grasping and rendering 'a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit...' (p.10); it "is like trying to read (in the sense of "construct a reading of") a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior." p. 10. For further reflections on anthropology/ ethnography, see Geertz, Clifford: *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 1988.
106. Wright, Erik Olin: *Classes*, Verso, London, 1985, chap.2.
107. Dick, Hebdige: *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, Methuen & Co. Ltd, London, 1979.