

THE MARXIST- LENINIST-MAOIST PERSPECTIVE ON POST-MODERN THOUGHT

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A NAZARIYA MAGAZINE BOOKLET

Recommended Contribution- Rs 50

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INTRODUCTION

THE NECESSITY OF A MARXIST-LENINIST-MAOIST CRITIQUE OF POSTMODERN IDENTITARIAN THOUGHT

The present historical moment, characterized by the deepening crisis of imperialism and the ideological confusion sown among the masses, demands a rigorous theoretical intervention against postmodern identitarian thought. This booklet emerges from the urgent need to equip revolutionary activists with the analytical tools required to combat this corrosive tendency, which has infected not only bourgeois academia but also sections of the democratic-minded petite bourgeoisie and their movements. The purpose of this text is threefold: to systematically expose the class character of postmodern identitarian thought as a manifestation of petty-bourgeois ideology under imperialism; to reaffirm the scientific superiority of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as the only coherent framework for revolutionary practice; and to provide guidance for waging the necessary ideological struggle against postmodern deviations within communist organizations. Post-modern identitarian thought gained prominence in the late 1960s, particularly from France after the setbacks to student-worker uprising of spring of 1968 and in general, after the simmering down of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in China and Mao Tse-tung's demise. Though post-modern thought had existed as a minor linguistic and artistic undercurrent prior to this period, particularly in the views of the French philosopher Lyotard, the period after GPCR saw former "left" philosophers who were previously sympathetic to Marxism move towards developing what is now called post-modern identitarian thought, an anti-Marxist, reactionary school of thought that has continued to gain a hold among the petite bourgeoisie, including in India. The American imperialist's very own Central Intelligence Agency described this thought and its political nature very clearly in a 1985 research paper:

"There is a new climate of intellectual opinion in France—a spirit of anti-Marxism and anti-Sovietism that will make it difficult for anyone to mobilize significant intellectual opposition to US policies. Nor will French intellectuals be likely to lend their weight, as they did before, to other West European colleagues who have become hostile to the United States on broad issues like disarmament.... The wide acceptance of this more critical approach to Marxism and the Soviet Union has been accompanied by a general decline of intellectual life in France that has undermined the political involvement of leftist intellectuals.... This New Left activism is likely to increase bickering between the two leftist parties and within the Socialist Party, and it will probably increase voter defection from both Socialist and Communist camps."

This is also the true nature of the politics of post-modern identitarian thought, in that vehemently opposes Marxism, revolutionary activism and attempts to win over vacillating classes allied with the proletariat to break the unity of the oppressed and exploited classes against imperialism in a bid to preserve the existing rule of the ruling classes. Today, post-modern identitarian thought continues to serve as a tool of the ruling

classes in curtailing revolutionary class consciousness and it is thus imperative to understand what post-modern identitarian thought is and combat it with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

THE PRESENT STAGE AND HISTORICAL EPOCH

The current stage of capitalist development remains, as Lenin definitively established, that of imperialism - the highest and final stage of capitalism characterized by domination of monopoly capitalism, the export of finance capital, and the division of the world among the biggest capitalist powers. However, we must carefully distinguish between the concept of historical epoch/era and the particular stage within that epoch. The era itself is that of proletarian revolution initiated by the Great October Socialist Revolution, wherein the principal contradiction among the fundamental contradictions on the world scale is between imperialism and the oppressed nations and people of the world. While in 1960, the Moscow Statement of 80 communist parties, as well as the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of China declared this to be the era of total collapse of imperialism and the victory of worldwide socialist revolution, this conclusion was made on the basis of class forces and the strength of various communist parties at the time.

This was corrected during the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of China to once again reiterate that the present era is the imperialism and proletarian revolution. We live in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. War and revolution are the two prominent features of the motion of the era. They are not mutually exclusive. They inter-penstrate. Both trends usually exist together. An analysis of the imperialist era shows that revolution has been the main trend overall. What does it mean to say that revolution or war is the main trend? An evaluation of war as the main trend does not mean war has already broken out. Similarly, revolution as the main trend does not mean revolutions are going on all over the world. It shows the potential of the world situation. The sense of such an evaluation is that, overall, the trend of revolution sets the direction, the terms of the working out of the contradictions of the imperialist system. In times of global crisis of the system, like the present, this role is even more strengthened. The dynamics of the imperialist system forms the basis for this.

Some may be confused by this, questioning whether Marxism develops in relation to the stage and era of capitalism, and thus questioning whether Marxism-Leninism can advance further. This is an incorrect worldview as our understanding of a thing can deepen further without a change in the stage and era of the thing. The end of qualitative development of the subject does not mean the end of our ability to deepen our understanding of the subject. Therefore, while capitalism remains in the stage of imperialism and this is the era of proletarian revolution still, our understanding of it has advanced further and further, culminating in the development of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

WHY POST-MODERN IDENTITARIAN THOUGHT AND NOT “POST-MODERNISM”

Within this era, the present stage manifests as a period of imperialist decay marked by neo-colonial tactics, giving rise to various ideological mystifications including postmodern identitarian thought. This theoretical tendency must be understood not as a

coherent ideology but as a constellation of subjective idealist notions reflecting the petty bourgeoisie's vacillation and its inability to develop a systematic worldview capable of challenging capital. While many academic perspectives refer to it as "post-modernism," it would be incorrect to refer to this set of ideas with an "-ism" as post-modern identitarian thought are a category of ideas and philosophies that are by design, incoherent and non-analogous. There is no single unified ideological framework behind these philosophies and therefore referring to it as an "-ism" would give be giving too much meaning to what are essentially a series of ideas or a bunch of thoughts.

Yet, postmodern identitarian thought represents one of the principal ideological enemies of the proletariat today precisely because of its capacity to obscure fundamental class relations while presenting itself as radical critique. Its rejection of what it dubs all "grand narratives," particularly the "narrative" of class struggle as the motor of history, functions objectively to disarm the working class intellectually while providing left cover for imperialist ideology. If class struggle is to be tamed, by the sole force of theorization, into just one among many other forces that act on a person, perhaps it will become a thing of the past? This is what post-modernists think. If one theorizes that sun is a mere illusion that one can never understand, then its heat will fail to control our day, thinks the post-modernist philosopher. This is the post-modernist's liberation! Post-modernists refer to all theories with universalizing concepts such as truth or progress as "logo centrism."

The internal struggle against postmodern tendencies within revolutionary organizations therefore becomes not merely an academic exercise but a matter of political life and death for the communist movement, as these tendencies erode the theoretical foundations of revolutionary practice and undermine organizational discipline through their inherent individualism and relativism. To paraphrase Karl Marx from the German Ideology's Preface: This present publication has the aim of uncloaking these sheep, who take themselves and are taken for wolves; of showing how their bleating merely imitates in a philosophic form the conceptions of the middle class; how the boasting of these philosophic commentators only mirrors the wretchedness of the real conditions in the world and in India. It is its aim to discredit the philosophic struggle with the shadows of reality, which appeals to the dreamy and muddled Indian petite bourgeoisie. Come, let us uncloak this fashionable nonsense and cast their half-baked aspersions from our organizations into the dustbins of history, forever.

WHAT IS POSTMODERN THOUGHT?

FOUNDATIONS AND CLASS CHARACTER

The fundamental distinction between idealism and materialism, as class philosophies reflecting antagonistic social interests, provides the necessary starting point for understanding postmodern identitarian thought. Idealism, in its various forms, proceeds from the premise that consciousness determines material being, a philosophical stance that corresponds perfectly to the bourgeoisie's need to obscure the material basis of exploitation under capitalism.

Postmodern identitarian thought, while presenting itself as having transcended traditional philosophical categories, remains firmly entrenched in the idealist camp through its denial of objective material reality independent of discourse and its rejection of the possibility of scientific knowledge of social totality.

DIALECTICAL AND MECHANICAL MATERIALISM

Marx noted, *"the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general."* The Marxist philosophical tradition, developed through the successive contributions of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, establishes dialectical materialism as the only consistent materialist worldview. This must be distinguished from mechanical materialism which, while correctly asserting the primacy of matter over consciousness and ideas, fails to grasp the dynamic, contradictory nature of reality and the active role of revolutionary practice in transforming the material world. As Marx said, once materiality leads to the formulation of ideology, ideas too can become so powerful so as to become a motive force of history. This is the dialectical relation between matter and consciousness.

At the same time, metaphysics is a static and ahistorical philosophical approach that views reality as a collection of fixed and unchanging entities influenced by unknown, unknowable external forces, whereas dialectics is a dynamic and historical approach that views reality as a process of constant change and development, driven by the interaction of contradictory forces. Postmodern identitarian thought's frequent attacks on Marxism-Leninism-Maoism under the garb of attacking "determinism" deliberately conflates dialectical materialism with mechanical materialism, thereby creating a straw man argument that can be easily dismissed while evading engagement with the actual Marxist dialectical method. Postmodernists refer to Marxism as "class determinism" in this manner, trying to simultaneously reduce class as merely one among many social categories such as race, caste, sex, sexuality, colour, etc. instead of engaging with the comprehensive historical dialectical materialist analysis of Maoists through class analysis which provides the material and subsequently social understanding of all these categories in relation to class struggle.

PHILOSOPHICAL WORLD OUTLOOK OF POST-MODERN IDENTITARIAN THOUGHT

There are some metaphysical characteristics of postmodern thought in its analytical method, which systematically isolates phenomena from their historical context and material basis. Where dialectical materialism understands all phenomena as interconnected moments in a structured totality dominated by fundamental contradictions, postmodern thought reduces social reality to a collection of discrete discourses and identities, severing the necessary connection between, for instance, caste-based oppression and the capitalist mode of production. This methodological individualism reflects its petty-bourgeois class origins, as the petty bourgeoisie experiences capitalist crisis in the form of fragmented insecurity rather than through the collective discipline of industrial production.

Yet, categorizing post-modern thought as a metaphysical philosophical school would be incorrect. Post-modern identitarian thought, in its advanced and current form, finds inter-connections between various forms of oppressions. In fact, post-modern identitarian thought promotes permutations and combinations of various identities that it categorizes an individual to fall in and concludes that the form of oppression this person experiences is due to the result of the unique combination of social groups and identity categories that this person falls in. But throughout this exercise which uses dialectical outlook to look at how this person relates to the social categories that exist in society, it both separates the individual from the larger social whole and also actively obfuscates the historical context and material basis of these categories, focusing primarily on the experience of the individual in relation to these categories. Here, the ideal is determining the material and thus, this is idealism, not materialism.

It is important to establish that even within the idealist branch of philosophy, there are two different approaches, that is, objectivity and subjectivity. The idealists of pre-capitalist societies were predominantly objective idealists; in that they upheld the view that there was a phenomenon that was the objective basis of all things in the world. The objective idealists used various ideas to explain this, such as “world spirit” or various other metaphysical ideas. Philosophers such as Plato, Thomas Aquinas and Hegel were all part of this school. Subjective idealists, on the other hand, believe that all objects are merely the permutations and combinations of the sensations we feel when we come in contact with them. To subjective idealists, an object cannot exist without a subject. This approach to idealism started to become the dominant approach in the 18th century, though it had always existed as a minor undercurrent within idealist philosophy for centuries prior. So **while post-modern identitarian thought utilizes the dialectical method to explain the interconnectivity between subjects and objects, it always puts in primacy the subject as the defining and principal aspect of this contradiction. Thus, the philosophical world outlook of post-modern identitarian thought is subjective idealism.**

Key theoretical categories must be clearly defined to properly situate postmodern thought within the field of ideological struggle. Class nature refers to the objective position of any theoretical system within the broader class struggle, determined not by the subjective

intentions of its proponents but by its actual function in either revealing or obscuring the fundamental contradictions of capitalist society. The dilemma of post-modernists is reflected in Engels' words, "ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise, it simply would not be an ideological process."

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND CLASS BASIS OF POST-MODERN IDENTITARIAN THOUGHT

Political economy, as the scientific study of the laws governing the production and reproduction of material life, stands in direct opposition to postmodern thought's preoccupation with super structural phenomena abstracted from their economic basis. Philosophy itself, far from being a neutral pursuit of truth, constitutes a weapon in the class struggle, and postmodern philosophy's rejection of totality and objectivity serves definite counter-revolutionary ends. Mao Tse-tung said, "The struggle on the ideological front is a reflection of the struggle on the economic front." This holds true in the struggle against all reactionary ideas, including post-modern identitarian thought.

When subjected to thorough class analysis, postmodern identitarian thought reveals itself as the ideological expression of the petty bourgeoisie's contradictory position under imperialism in the era of proletarian revolution. Mao Tse-tung said, "The petite bourgeoisie is a class that is easily influenced by the bourgeoisie, and it is often a source of revisionism and opportunism." Therefore, while at face value, post-modern identitarian thought originates appears as a radical critique of imperialism, it actually serves as a pacifying counter-revolutionary force against Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and against all possibilities of struggling for change. Whenever faced with counter-revolution, temporary setbacks within revolutionary movements or the crisis of a mode of production, a section of the petite bourgeoisie inverts its gaze within itself, trying to find meaning, solutions and mere solace inside themselves instead of objectively analysing the conditions that led to these crisis and setbacks. Therefore, **the political economy of post-modern identitarian thought is that of imperialism as its class basis is among the reactionary petite bourgeoisie in service of the ruling classes: imperialists, comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie and landlords.** It tries to substitute cultural critique for analysis of imperialist production relations, while its philosophical worldview combines extreme subjectivism with a cynical rejection of revolutionary potential via subjective idealism. The task of Marxist-Leninist-Maoists is to relentlessly expose these reactionary characteristics while advancing the scientific socialist alternative grounded in dialectical materialism and the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Only through such theoretical struggle can the communist movement maintain the ideological clarity required to lead the proletariat in revolutionary practice.

Post-modern identitarian thought is therefore that series of ideas that is rooted in subjective idealism. It serves imperialism and stems from the reactionary petite bourgeoisie in service of preserving the rule of the ruling classes. By developing a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist critique of post-modern identitarian thought, we can promote a revolutionary alternative that serves the interests of the proletariat and oppressed peoples. As Lenin wrote, "the proletariat is the only class that is capable of leading the

revolutionary movement to victory." By rejecting post-modern identitarian thought and promoting a revolutionary alternative, we can build a stronger and more ddisciplined movement that is capable of snatching the state power from the sickly and crisis-riddled hands of the ruling class, achieving socialism and communism.

HISTORICIZING POSTMODERN IDENTITARIAN THOUGHT

The emergence of postmodern thought is not a unique phenomenon of the present era, but rather a recurring pattern that has manifested across various modes of production throughout history. This phenomenon is closely tied to the crisis in production relations, which gives rise to middle-class pessimism and the proliferation of pessimistic and jargon-laden philosophies. We will now look at the various precursors that came in history during such periods of crisis leading up to the formulation of present day post-modern identitarian thought.

THE CRISIS OF SLAVE MODE OF PRODUCTION

In ancient slave societies, the crisis of production relations was characterized by the contradictions between the slave-owning class and the enslaved. The *Fundamentals of Political Economy* textbook by the Shanghai People's Press states, "In primitive society, all able-bodied people participated in labour. There was no specialization in mental labour. In slave society, the situation was different. As a result of a large quantity of surplus products created by slave labour, it was possible for the slave owners to divorce themselves from production labour. At that time, the division between mental and physical labour was necessary and possible. This division between mental and physical labour was antagonistic right from the start. It was the privilege of the slave-owning class to enjoy cultural education. The slave-owning class tried its best to spread the fallacy that the mental workers rule others while the physical labourers are ruled by others." Slave society saw that prisoners of war were no longer killed en masse, but instead turned into slaves.

In India, this system developed slightly differently, with the Shudra-holding system developing in India where defeated tribes were subjugated into collectively owned labour (instead of the individually owned slaves as seen in other slave societies) where mental labour was promoted over physical labour. The textbook states the contradiction in this society as, "the broad masses of slaves could not bear the cruel exploitation and oppression of the slave owner any longer. They slowed their work, ran away in large numbers, and purposely wrecked production tools. On one hand, the slave owners increased their oppression, leading to massive early death of slaves. On the other hand, they substituted heavy tools not easily subject to abuse. But the development of productive forces was thus restricted. The restriction on the development of productive forces also resulted from the contempt toward physical labour generated by the system. Bankrupt small producers preferred to wander around than to engage in physical labour." Various slave uprisings eventually occurred. As the slave mode of production faced decline, a section of the middle class, consisting of slave owners, philosophers, and intellectuals, became disillusioned with the existing social order. This disillusionment gave rise to pessimistic and relativistic philosophies that dismissed the liberation struggles of the enslaved people as futile.

The Sophists: Sophistication or Sophistry?

One of the earliest examples of such pessimistic philosophies is the Sophist school of thought. The Sophists, such as Protagoras and Gorgias, argued that truth is relative and that knowledge is a matter of individual perspective. Protagoras famously stated, "Man is the measure of all things, of what is, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not" which was used to justify the idea that truth is subjective and that there is no objective reality. This ideology served to justify the existing social hierarchy and undermine the struggles of the enslaved people for freedom and equality. The Sophists sprang forth from the existing judicial system of the ruling class. Whenever a crime would occur, the state would call upon "wise men" to argue in the defence of the accused. These "wise men" would engage in word play, in sophistry (complicated argumentation) to contort the reality in a manner so as to save the accused. This is no different from the parasitic practices of lawyers in present-day societies. Truth becomes completely subjected or obscured, unattainable, through word play and complications.

Heraclitus: A Man Who Would Rather Eat Grass than Live Among the People

Another example is the philosophy of Heraclitus, who argued that change is the only constant and that all things are in a state of flux. Heraclitus stated, "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man." While this idea may seem innocuous, it was used to argue that social change is impossible and that the existing order is inevitable. Heraclitus' philosophy was a form of fatalism that discouraged people from struggling for a better future. The anti-slavery philosopher Pythagoras was considered a fool by Heraclitus for this reason. Heraclitus saw human existence to be so futile that he chose to live in isolation, spending his days eating grass and avoiding human contact. While Heraclitus displays an early form of dialectical thinking and is clearly appreciative of dialectics, in his understanding of the inter-relationship between the river and the man, he is unable to situate it in a materialist understanding. "Conflict is the mother of all happenings," said Heraclitus, clearly understanding the dialectical notion of unity and struggle of opposites. This confuses many a naïve reader about the political economy of Heraclitus' philosophy. It should be clear that Heraclitus opposed social action and he deems the notion of pursuing truth in itself as a futile practice. While most of Heraclitus' objective idealist contemporaries were trying to find out what was the basic organizing principle of the world which they termed the *arche* and later, *logos*, Heraclitus shunned this pursuit and considered it a foolhardy venture.

The Relativists: Dialectics Gone Wrong

The Relativists, such as the ancient Greek philosopher Cratylus of Athens, a disciple of Heraclitus, took this line of thinking further by arguing that language and meaning are arbitrary and that truth is impossible to attain. The Relativists emerged as a school of

thought among the Sophists. Cratylus argued that words are mere sounds and that meaning is a matter of individual interpretation. This ideology served to undermine the idea of objective truth and to create a sense of hopelessness and despair among the masses. For relativists, everything is relational but purely subjective. The best one can understand an object is by defining said object in relation to other objects. It cannot be understood as a thing-in-itself. For example, one can only understand the sun in relation to how you and I experience the sun. But one cannot understand the sun as a star in the solar system and as a product of various chemical processes resulting in its composition being largely in the state of plasma and gases, according to relativists. Also note how individual sensory experience is becoming more and more important in the philosophies of the reactionary middle class; this will come into play in further such philosophies.

From a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective, these philosophies are nothing but a reflection of the middle-class pessimism and lazy attempts at stopping anyone who struggled against the existing mode of production. They serve to justify the existing social hierarchy and to discourage the masses from struggling for a better future. As Marx and Engels noted in *The German Ideology*, "the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class." The Sophists, Heraclitus, and the Relativists all shared a common goal of preserving the status quo and maintaining the existing state of affairs. Heraclitus and his subsequent influences are the perfect early example of the fact that merely understanding and propagating dialectical thinking is not enough. Plato and Socrates engaged in the dialectical method, yet Socrates was a pro-slavery reactionary thinker. **Dialectics rooted in idealism will culminate in reactionary ideologies such as subjective idealism and will deny objectivity, thus, the political economy of this subjective idealist philosophy will always be reactionary and against social revolution.**

THE CRISIS IN FEUDAL SOCIETIES

In feudal societies, the crisis of production relations was characterized by the contradictions between the feudal landlords and the peasants along with an emerging bourgeoisie. The Shanghai Textbook elaborates on this crisis, *"In the process of polarization among the small commodity producers and the emergence of capitalist relations of production, commercial capital played an important role. The merchant was originally the middleman in commodity exchange. Later he became a contract merchant who contracted to sell the products of the commodity producers. He later supplied raw materials and even tools to the small producers who then produced products at specified times and of a certain quality, quantity, type, and specification. Thus, the small commodity producer was entirely controlled by the merchant and became a hired hand, and the merchant himself became an industrial capitalist. In the countryside, during the period of late feudal society, because of the development of a commodity economy, the landlord class gradually converted to money rents. This increased the peasants' dependence on markets and hastened their polarization. The majority of peasants went bankrupt and degenerated into hired farmhands. A few elevated themselves to become*

rich peasants and later agricultural capitalists. Thus, capitalist relations of production gradually established themselves in feudal society..... The birth and development of capitalist relations of production in feudal society was severely restricted by feudal relations of production and their superstructure. They were prevented from assuming a dominating role in feudal society because the feudal ruling class would never willingly retire from the historical stage. They inevitably used the state machinery in their control to protect the out-dated feudal system. The bourgeoisie and the intellectuals representing capitalist relations of production publicized capitalist relations of production as 'manifestations of eternity and rationality' and 'an eternal law of nature.' They championed so-called 'freedom, equality, and universal love' and denounced feudalism in their efforts to prepare public opinion for the bourgeois revolution to overthrow feudalism. In the bourgeois revolution, the major class forces were the peasants, the proletariat, and the bourgeoisie. The peasants were the major force, but not the representatives of the new productive forces. The proletariat had not formed its independent political force, so the bourgeoisie assumed the leadership of the bourgeois revolution."

The complete set of ideological frameworks that the bourgeois used in its challenge against feudalism and in its purpose of transforming society into a capitalist one was referred to as modernism.

It was in this period where the feudal ruling class was desperately clinging on to state power while the bourgeoisie took centre stage in leading the peasantry and the proletariat in seizing state power from the feudals. As the feudal mode of production faced decline, a section of the middle class, consisting of clergy, nobles, and intellectuals, became disillusioned with the existing social order. This disillusionment gave rise to pessimistic and nostalgic philosophies that romanticized the past and dismissed the struggles of the emerging bourgeoisie and the peasants as futile.

Pope Leo XII's Holy War to Save Feudalism

One example of such pessimistic philosophies is the ideology of Pope Leo XII, who argued that the Enlightenment and the rise of modernity were a threat to traditional values and social hierarchy. In his encyclical "Ubi Primum," Pope Leo XII stated, "it is necessary to repress the wicked and deceitful schemes of the enemies of God, who, under the pretext of liberty, are endeavouring to destroy the Church and the State." This ideology served to justify the preservation of feudal institutions, such as the monarchy and the church, and to undermine the struggles of the emerging bourgeoisie and the peasants for freedom and equality, who were promoting rationality over the metaphysical understanding of God, arguing for liberty over feudal extra-economic coercion.

Romantics: Nostalgic for the Landlord's Whip?

Another example is the Romantic Movement, which emerged in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Romantics, such as Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre, argued that the rise of modernity and industrialization was leading to the decline of traditional values and the dehumanization of society. Burke famously stated, "The age of chivalry is

gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever." This ideology served to romanticize the past and to dismiss the struggles of the emerging bourgeoisie and the peasants as futile. While during the slave mode of production, we saw the middle class focus on sensations and sensory experiences, the additions in middle-class pessimism made by the feudal reactionary middle classes was that of nostalgia.

This was visible in the romantic arts as well, which would emerge during the final days of feudalism and the early days of capitalist society. Romanticism stemmed largely as a cultural movement which displayed its influence in the musical and artistic fields. Romantics focused not only on the traditions of the past, it valorised them through heroic depictions of the past, a focus on a subjective and individualistic reading of history and a primary focus on what is called the "pleasure principle." This idea was put in contrast to the Enlightenment philosophy's focus on rationality, reason and scientific method which focused on the pursuit of truth instead of providing subjective pleasure. Immanuel Kant's philosophy had an impact on the romantics, who relied on his positivism [the philosophy that humans can never learn the totality of a thing, only some aspects of it] and his belief that reality is not unknowable but is actually spiritual. It shouldn't be surprising that the most popular musicians of this era were all romantics, such as Beethoven, Wagner, Chopin, Schubert, Liszt, Schumann, Verdi etc., as they championed the petite bourgeoisie's angst about the impending revolution and the vast changes being brought to feudal society via capitalism.

From a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective, these philosophies are nothing but a reflection of the middle-class pessimism and nostalgia for a bygone era. Ironically, as Lenin noted, "the bourgeoisie is incapable of understanding the struggle of the proletariat, and it regards the proletariat's struggle as a 'utopia' or a 'fantasy'." It seems what the bourgeoisie does today in relation to the proletariat is exactly what it faced and defeated during the feudal mode of production and in its period of class struggle when it wasn't the ruling class. Romanticism is also idealist and subjective in nature, as it holds the belief that truth is fundamentally unknowable. An example of the failure of this belief is in the views of the reactionary French philosopher August Comte, who argued that while humans can tell the shape, size and location of various objects in the solar system, they cannot tell their chemical composition (and thus, what those objects truly are). A few years after this claim, scientists were able to tell the chemical compositions of various objects in space through spectroscopes.

THE CRISIS IN CAPITALISM

The Shanghai Textbook describes the crisis in capitalist societies as, *“Capitalist economic crises are not characterized by insufficient production [as was the case with all previous modes of production], but by overproduction. The most notable features connected with capitalist economic crises are: large quantities of commodities cannot be sold, factories close down, banks fold, values of stocks fall, unemployment figures rapidly increase, productive forces suffer severe damage, and the whole economy is paralyzed and chaotic. Capitalist economic crises are crises of overproduction. But the so-called “overproduction” is not an absolute overproduction; it does not mean that things produced by society are more than what the masses can consume.... capitalist overproduction is relative overproduction. In other words, social production is excessive only in relation to the purchasing power of the masses. During economic crises, inventories pile up in the warehouses of the capitalist for lack of demand. Commodities may be rotting away or even artificially destroyed. On the other hand, the broad labouring masses are too poor to afford food and clothing and are struggling on the verge of starvation.”* The economic crisis of capitalism is rooted in the basic contradiction that exists within capitalism, elaborated by Stalin as *“the basis, the cause, of economic crises of overproduction lies in the capitalist system of economy itself. The basis of the crisis lies in the contradiction between the social character of production and the capitalist form of appropriation of the results of production.”* On one hand, the capitalist rapidly develops technological methods to increase production and thus maximize his profit; while on the other hand, it devastates the other classes, particularly the proletariat, by reducing their wages and squeezing profit out of their labour power. So while production increases, the purchasing power decreases. Big capital swallows small capital of the petite bourgeoisie. On one hand, the capitalist organizes production in his own factories, but only his individual factories. While on the other hand, the interrelationship between various classes is brought closer and closer as production attains a social character and this realm remains chaotic and unorganized by the capitalist. Xiaomi produces a mobile phone in their factory but that mobile phone requires camera from a Sony factory, battery from another factory, processor from another factory owned by another company etc. Production becomes highly social as various producing sectors become interdependent, as labour of various workers interacts, but capitalist appropriation remains individualistic. It is because of this fundamental contradiction within capitalism that it is permanently crisis-ridden system, causing a much larger proliferation of petite bourgeois cynical thought unlike previous modes of production. We will thus explore the crisis in capitalism, highlighting the initial stage crisis before the 1830s, and then examining the period from 1890 to 1960, when imperialism and anti-communism became the dominant ideologies of the ruling class. After this, we will finally tackle the emergence of post-modern thought as a political ideology (not just as a linguistic and artistic critique as it was in its nascent days) from 1960s to 1990s. We will then deal with the advancement of post-modern thought into its present form as post-modern identitarian thought from 1990s to the 2008 crisis.

Initial Stage Crisis (Before 1830s)

During the initial stage of capitalism, the ruling class ideology was characterized by liberalism and the emergence of capitalist thought. The project of modernity was in full swing. Thinkers like Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon played a significant role in shaping the ideology of the ruling class. While they did not explicitly articulate post-modernist ideas, some precursor tendencies can be identified in their works.

For example, Adam Smith's concept of the "invisible hand" can be seen as a precursor to the idea of decentralized, individualized power structures that are characteristic of post-modernist thought. Similarly, David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage can be seen as a justification for the exploitation of labour and the pursuit of self-interest, which are also themes present in post-modernist ideology. Proudhon, on the other hand, was a key figure in the development of anarchist thought, which emphasized individual freedom and the rejection of centralized authority. While Proudhon's ideas were not explicitly post-modernist, they did lay the groundwork for later anarchist and post-modernist thinkers who would emphasize the importance of individual autonomy and the rejection of "grand narratives."

During this period, the working class was still in the process of formation, and the early labour movements were focused on securing basic rights and improving working conditions. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, was still consolidating its power and establishing its dominance over the means of production. A deeper look into the theories of this period:

Adam Smith and the "Invisible Hand"

Adam Smith, a Scottish philosopher and economist, is best known for his concept of the "invisible hand." In his book "The Wealth of Nations," Smith argued that individuals acting in their own self-interest can lead to socially beneficial outcomes, such as economic growth and innovation. He claimed that when individuals pursue their own interests, they are led by an "invisible hand" to promote the greater good, even if that is not their intention.

For example, Smith argued that a baker who produces bread is not motivated by a desire to feed the hungry, but rather by a desire to make a profit. However, in pursuing his own self-interest, the baker inadvertently provides a necessary good to the community, thereby promoting the greater good.

From a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective, Smith's theory of the "invisible hand" is problematic because it ignores the exploitative nature of capitalism. By focusing on individual self-interest, Smith's theory obscures the fact that capitalism is based on the exploitation of labour by capital. The baker, in Smith's example, is not just a neutral actor pursuing his own interests, but is also a member of a class that is exploited by the capitalist class.

Furthermore, Smith's theory assumes that the market is a level playing field, where

individuals have equal access to resources and opportunities. However, this is not the case in reality. The capitalist system is characterized by vast inequalities in wealth and power, which distort the market and prevent individuals from acting as freely as Smith's theory assumes.

David Ricardo and the Theory of Comparative Advantage

David Ricardo, an English economist, developed the theory of comparative advantage, which argues that countries should specialize in producing goods for which they have a lower opportunity cost. Ricardo claimed that even if one country is more efficient at producing all goods, it is still beneficial for that country to trade with other countries that have a comparative advantage in producing certain goods.

For example, Ricardo argued that England should specialize in producing cloth, while Portugal should specialize in producing wine, even if England is more efficient at producing both goods. This is because Portugal has a comparative advantage in producing wine, and England can benefit from trading cloth for wine.

From a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective, Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage ignores the exploitative nature of international trade. By focusing on the benefits of trade, Ricardo's theory obscures the fact that international trade is often characterized by unequal exchange, where imperialist countries exploit semi-colonial semi-feudal ones, as seen in the stage of imperialism.

Furthermore, Ricardo's theory assumes that countries are equal actors in the world market, with equal access to resources and opportunities. However, this is not the case in reality. Imperialist countries often use their economic and military power to impose unequal trade agreements on weaker countries, which can lead to exploitation and underdevelopment.

In this period, the English ruling class faced a renewed crisis as the American bourgeoisie started to gain a competitive edge over it, creating economic crisis after a blockade of trade initiated during the period of the American war of independence. During this period, many bourgeois philosophers who had earlier advocated for modernity started to echo disenfranchisement with modernity. In Europe, art movements started to appear where artists showed people separated from machines (symbols of the bourgeoisie's modernity project). The bourgeoisie's failed promise of democracy and the subsequent exposure of capitalism made by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their work *Das Kapital* compelled the petite bourgeoisie to look at capitalism in a new light. Yet, many of them chose reactionary ideological outlooks over the emerging Marxism to deal with this crisis and the crisis of identity and insecurity that it impelled among the petite bourgeoisie.

1890-1960: Imperialism, Anti-Communism, and the Emergence of Post-Modern Thought

The period from 1890 to 1960 was marked by the rise of imperialism and anti-communism as the dominant ideologies of the ruling class. This period saw the emergence of various pre-cursor ideological frameworks to post-modern identitarian thought, including existentialism, phenomenology, and the school of thought associated with Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Martin Heidegger.

Existentialism, which emphasized individual freedom and choice, can be seen as a response to the alienation and disillusionment of modern life under capitalism. Capitalist mode of production, with its individual surplus appropriation and social production inherently alienates the proletariat from the products of its labour. This alienation manifests in all aspects of bourgeois society, which atomizes people into individuals and rapidly isolates them. While the proletariat engages in social production and weaponizes this into its ideology of social revolution, the petite bourgeois rationalizes this reality with irrational philosophies such as existentialism. Marx in his early essay *On the Jewish Question* wrote that “men have freed themselves from the incubus of religion by relegating it to the personal sphere, cut off from the public hurly burly of competition.” In such separation he saw an index of the alienation of man from man, making it impossible for the individual to be a full human being. Thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus argued that individuals must take responsibility for their own existence and create their own meaning in life, rather than relying on external authorities or “grand narratives.” You are what you make of yourself, existentialists will say, ignoring that each individual is also part of various social and economic units and plays a role in production as part of a class.

Phenomenology, which focused on the study of conscious experience and the structures of subjective experience, also played a significant role in shaping post-modernist thought. Thinkers like Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty developed a philosophy that emphasized the importance of individual perception and experience, and challenged the idea of an objective, external reality. Phenomenology is the culmination of the slave society’s relativists’ focus on individual sensations and experiences. This is an important precursor to post-modern identitarian thought as phenomenology will play a key role in influencing the thought of all subsequent post-modernist identitarian thinkers.

Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, among others, also made significant contributions to the development of post-modernist thought and emerged during the later end of this time period. Nietzsche's ideas about the death of God and the will to power, Freud's theories about the unconscious and the role of desire in shaping human behaviour, and Heidegger's concept of "Being-in-the-world" all laid the groundwork for later post-modernist thinkers who would emphasize the importance of individualized power structures, the rejection of grand narratives, and the fragmentation of identity.

MOVEMENTS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE EMERGENCE OF IDENTITY POLITICS

As capitalism developed across Europe and North America and the bourgeoisie consolidated its power, new social movements emerged that focused on issues like race, colour, sex, and other forms of oppression. The early movements that sought to combat them were largely based on demands of civil rights, that is, reformatory demands sought under the ambit of the existing state's citizenship laws. This was an important project in raising the class consciousness of the working class too and various communist parties led the proletariat in pursuing these demands, joined by the petite bourgeoisie.

For the first time, the petite bourgeoisie experienced unity with the proletariat and these deeply impacted petite bourgeois intellectuals who started to recognize within Marxism a way out of their class' crisis. The proletariat had already found success with these movements, winning the demand for the 8-hour workday. The early movements, such as women's suffrage movement and the American Civil Rights movement, against apartheid, also led to victories but also led to divergence between the proletariat's politics of revolution and the petite bourgeoisie's demand for merely reform. While the proletarian line would be to advance these movements beyond reformatory demands to a revolutionary struggle, the petite bourgeoisie would drag them back to mere reform and instead conceptualize identity politics. They would focus on specific identity-based grievances, rather than a broader critique of capitalism and the bourgeoisie, laying the groundwork for later identity-based movements that would prioritize individualized forms of oppression over class-based struggle.

The early alliance between the proletariat and the petite bourgeoisie against oppression under capitalism was also marked by tensions and contradictions. As the movement progressed, it became clear that the bourgeoisie was willing to concede certain civil rights and freedoms to but only within the framework of the existing capitalist system.

Friedrich Nietzsche and the "Will to Power"

Friedrich Nietzsche was a German philosopher who is known for his critiques of traditional morality and his concept of the "will to power." Nietzsche argued that life is a struggle for power and self-overcoming, and that individual should strive to become the "Übermensch" (or "Superman") by embracing their own individual strengths and abilities. To Nietzsche, all of reality is fiction. He bemoans that "God is dead," understanding that modernity struck a fatal blow into the metaphysics of the earlier modes of production but in this modern landscape, Nietzsche finds a world with no truth. In a way, Nietzsche's axiom regarding God is a lament of a lost petite bourgeois sheep who now finds himself lost without an anchor and stuck with an identity crisis in a mode of production that is constantly pushing the petite bourgeoisie to the brink of proletarianization or pauperization. In this situation, the Superman becomes Nietzsche's anchor to rescue himself from his own class suicidal ideations. Nietzsche preached eugenic breeding, hoping for the birth of the Superman. He eulogized what he called the "well-bred splendid stock" of the ruling class in Germany, France, England, Italy, Russia,

etc. He detested feminism, democracy, equality between man and woman. He thought that “splendid stock of ruling class” was corrupted, first by Catholic praise for feminist virtues secondly by the puritan and plebeian ideals or Reformation and thirdly by insufficient emphasis on “difference.” Nietzsche thus despised all changes that occurred in feudal society, harbouring deep nostalgia for feudalism in times of modernity. Going further in his hatred towards the rationality promoted by modern philosophy, Nietzsche theorized irrationality, which is a school of thought that believes the pursuit of truth via scientific method and reasoning is incorrect. Instead, irrationalists argue that the pursuit of truth is possible through mystical, spiritual and primarily subjective means such as “intuition.”

Nietzsche sees the world to have no aim; life have no meaning. The world is merely composed of disorder. Nietzsche's philosophy is centred around the idea that morality is based on a slave-master mentality, where individuals are taught to be meek, humble, and obedient. Nietzsche understands that this type of morality is harmful because it stifles individual creativity and initiative. Yet, Nietzsche sees all of society in light of this slave-master dynamic. Nietzsche advocated two ways out of this situation. The first is his new type of morality that is based on the "will to power." He argued that individuals should strive to exert their own individual strengths and abilities, and to overcome their own weaknesses and limitations by exerting them over others. Nietzsche believed that this type of morality would lead to a new type of human being, the "Übermensch," who would be capable of creating their own values and meaning in life. But Nietzsche also believes that this Superman is born very rarely in society. Instead, for others to survive, the only way is to subject oneself deeper into the existing morality, to submit oneself entirely as a slave so as to survive until a Superman emerges to turn the situation around. This is Nietzsche's nihilism. Nietzsche's concept of the "will to power" is closely tied to his idea of the "eternal recurrence." The eternal recurrence is the idea that the universe and all its events are destined to repeat themselves infinitely. It is only the Superman in Nietzsche's philosophy that can break this cycle, who can re-write the fiction of reality through sheer "will to power."

Nietzsche's fixation on difference is a key contribution to future post-modern identitarian thought as he seeks to will the natural world (reality) into fiction and desires a world where difference dominates, free from all its material limitations. Nietzschean difference is a free-floating, ever-changing contingent surface.

Critique of Nietzsche

Nietzsche's outlook champions the belief that only a select few in society will be capable of transforming society and changing the existing state of affairs. Nietzsche creates his own god-like figure, a messiah to rescue him from this crisis in the form of the Superman. Nietzsche's philosophy ignores the role of class struggle and the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class. Nietzschean philosophy is idealistic as it refuses to pursue the truth of the world, deeming all of it as fiction and incomprehensible. While he sees oppression and subjugation in society, his recourse is meek submission to the oppressor. This is classic petite bourgeois defeatism. For the petite bourgeoisie, the reality is that the proletariat class is the only messiah it will ever get, since the proletariat can be its only recourse out of capital's crisis. But Nietzsche's philosophy pushes the petite bourgeoisie towards fascism. This is why Hitler and the Nazi Party hoped that

Hitler was the Superman Nietzsche prophesized of.

Sigmund Freud and the "Unconscious"

Sigmund Freud was an Austrian psychologist who is known for his theory of the "unconscious." Freud argued that the human mind is divided into the conscious and unconscious, and that the unconscious plays a major role in shaping human behaviour. The unconscious is that part of the brain, according to Freudian psychoanalysis, which is repressed, and which often slips out in various ways [small unnoticed behaviour, dreams, "slip-of-tongue" etc.] and lies beyond the awareness of the individual. The unconscious is repressed because behaviour associated with the unconscious is considered to be taboo or irrational in society. Freud believed that all this "psychic activity" functioned separately and is disconnected from the actual brain organ. This idea is called dualism, which is the belief that while both mind and matter exists, they exist independently of each other. This is presented as an in-between philosophy between materialism and idealism but it is actually just another iteration of idealism, since it denies the primacy of matter.

Freud's theory of the unconscious is based on the idea that the human "psyche" is composed of three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. The id is the primitive, instinctual part of the mind that is responsible for our desires and impulses. The basis of these desires and impulses are rooted in repressed sexual desire, according to Freud, as part of what he calls the "Oedipus Complex." The ego is the rational, logical part of the mind that is responsible for our thoughts and actions and where "consciousness" resides. According to Freud, the ego is where reality and the "unconscious" interact. The superego is the moral part of the mind that is responsible for our sense of right and wrong as it is the part of the psyche that is developed by societal rules and ruling class morality. Freud denotes this to parental tutoring instead of looking at a class basis, of course. The superego acts as a censor to the id. The superego is also characterized by what he calls the 'death instinct' (gaining the understanding of that all life, including one's own, must end). Freud argued that the unconscious is a repository of repressed thoughts, desires, and memories that are inaccessible to conscious awareness. He claimed that the unconscious is the source of many psychological disorders, such as neurosis and psychosis, and that it is the key to understanding human behaviour, though it is impossible to understand what the unconscious actually is.

Freud's ideology developed in three specific phases too. The first phase saw Freud try to cure his patients by studying the relationship between the unconscious and the individual's ego. Even in this phase, Freud believed that it is impossible to truly understand what unconscious actually is. What is possible is to grasp some aspects of it by understanding the id, the ego and the superego. This period saw actually attempt change through his process of psychoanalysis, which led him to try to understand the consciousness of his adult patients by understanding how their childhood experiences impacted them. He theorized that all humans have inherent animalistic behaviours which are suppressed through normative education and training that society gives an individual. This is part of the id. His second phase emerged when he gained popularity. He became more pessimistic with his results at the start of this phase, though he was still trying to enact change in his patients but this time, by understanding their animalistic, primal

desires by studying the id. As soon as this phase started, Freud openly claimed that he had never cured anyone but he blatantly lied to his patients that he could help them to profit off of their conditions. In his personal writings during this period, Freud claimed that he was only working on those patients to discover the source of mental suffering. In this period, he was fixated on sexual desire, on biological reproductive processes as the primary cause of the problems faced by the individual patient. This period led him to the theorization of the superego, understanding how morality of the society subjugates the animalistic desire by introducing the death instinct. The understanding of death, of the fatality of life would thus curtail the id. This is Freud's most pessimistic period, which also happens to coincide with Freud being influenced by Nietzsche.

Freud's first phase led him to the theory of the unconscious called the "Oedipus complex." The Oedipus complex is the idea that children have a desire to possess the opposite-sex parent and to eliminate the same-sex parent. Freud argued that this desire is repressed in the unconscious, and that it is the source of many psychological disorders. A lot of Freud's early work, where he tried to cure patients, relied on this understanding.

Critique of Freud

Freud is a reactionary philosopher as he is a biological reductionist in all his approaches. He is also a subjective idealist, like the post-modernists who would gain their inspiration from him. Freud concludes that most human behaviour is driven by sexual desire. On top of this, he believes that inside all humans resides some animal which is only partly subdued by social education. To him, this leads to contradictions within all humans, between their socially trained rational self and their untamed animal self. This is an ahistorical understanding of human development. In the evolutionary journey of humans, it is human labour which has shaped the process. Labour has led to humans transforming nature and thus coming into social formations, transforming humans into social animals forever. This historical process did not occur in Freud's world, where the transformation of the animal into the current social animal occurred through culture, social education etc. Yet, humans first engaged in economic activity, transforming nature, forming social associations to better engage in this process which led to the creation of society's superstructure such as family, culture, religion etc. From the economic base of class society emerged the superstructure, though at various points in history, the superstructure can dominate the base. This does not mean Freud's thesis is correct, as Freud has no nuance of this dialectical materialist relationship between human evolutionary process via labour and transformation of nature, the economic base of society and the superstructure. Instead, he sees a one-way relationship between the individual and superstructure which according to him plays a primary role in shaping the individual, apart from the unconscious which remains undefined and illusive. Thus, Freud engages in the worst forms of petite bourgeois nonsense, which includes: the typical metaphysical inability to understand the principal phenomenon that impacts people (unconscious), biological determinism, pure cultural critique to obfuscate reality of class society, inability to look at individual as part of a process within class society and a negation of the ability to change society. It should be reiterated that not only has Freud and his subsequent adherents failed to cure a single patient, there is absolutely no scientific basis to any of Freud's theories.

Furthermore, Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex is sexist and reactionary, as it implies that women are inherently inferior to men and that they are responsible for the psychological disorders of men. Freud's emphasis on individual psychology and the phenomenological focus on the childhood experiences of the individual confuse many a petite bourgeois individual into thinking this is a dialectical materialist process but this is far from true. Freudian psychoanalysis is actually merely idealism as it isolates the individualism and turns them into an abstract summation of all their childhood experiences, which are based on subjective understanding of how an individual felt during various events, instead of their objective position in the production process as part of class society. It fails to integrate the individual into a revolutionary perspective of social action as part of class society but instead continues to atomize them as an individual, just as capitalist society does.

Martin Heidegger and "Being-in-the-World"

Martin Heidegger was a German philosopher who is known for his concept of "Being-in-the-World." Heidegger argued that human existence is characterized by its existence in the world, and that individuals should strive to understand and authenticate their own existence. Heidegger was deeply inspired by Nietzsche and was a member of the Nazi party, serving as their philosopher. His reactionary ideas continue to find traction among petite bourgeoisie in the name of "free exchange of ideas."

Heidegger's philosophy is centred around the idea that traditional philosophy has forgotten the question of the meaning of being. He argued that philosophers have focused too much on the question of what exists, rather than the question of what it means to exist. Heidegger claimed that this has led to a forgetfulness of the question of being, and that individuals should strive to recover this question through a process of existential inquiry. Just as his ideological guru Nietzsche, he sees the world to have no meaning, that life is nothing but disorder and meaningless. To Nietzschean philosophy, he adds the belief of the primacy of language, which is a key pillar for future post-modernists. He states, "Language is the house of being. Man dwells in this house. Those who think and those who create poetry are the custodians of the dwelling."

Heidegger's concept of "Being-in-the-World" is closely tied to his idea of "Dasein." Dasein is the German word for "being there," and it refers to the human existence in the world. Heidegger argued that Dasein is characterized by its existence in the world, and that individuals should strive to understand and authenticate their own existence. For this, they must create "difference," just as Nietzsche postulated. Heidegger's difference is more metaphysical than Nietzsche as Heidegger does believe that God exists, a rare departure from his guru. Instead, Heidegger's difference is more than primarily a human action, but something that is beyond human comprehension. Heidegger sees the world in three parts. One, the world that is experienced by each individual via their subjective experiences, second, and the common part of the world that overlaps between multiple individuals where they share experiences collectively and third, the bridge that connects the individual's world with the shared world. For Heidegger, it is the Nietzschean Superman who has the ability to seize control of this bridge and thus, re-write the fiction of the world and alter how people perceive the world. In a 1933 speech, Heidegger argued that humans had forgotten what it meant to be in the world, something humans knew back when they lived in primitive society, and therefore, he urged the German

people to rally behind the Nazi party, which would move German society “upwards” into the “primordial realms of the powers of Being.”

Critique of Heidegger

The Nazi philosopher Heidegger carries forward the reactionary ideas of Nietzsche and adds more reactionary fuel to them, making them further palatable to German fascism. The fixation on the primacy of language is ahistorical, as language does not shape people but is merely a process of communication that exists as part of class society and is at times, further developed than the mode of production and at times, develops in relation to the development of productive forces. Language can never dominate the processes of society itself. At the same time, Heidegger and Nietzsche’s fixation on difference ignores identity within society. Unity is despised and difference is considered a necessary or divine act. Thus, class struggle is itself entirely impossible in Nietzschean philosophy. Heidegger’s interpretation of the world is a ridiculous gibberish that harkens once again to phenomenological understanding of the world, fixating on the individual’s sensory experiences to understand the world around them. Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger, these petite bourgeois masterminds, would have entire society act like men locked in a dark room, desperately touching walls and the floor to understand where they are instead of casting the light of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism upon the people so that they can struggle and liberate themselves out of these existing conditions.

THE 1960S CRISIS: GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND THE BIRTH OF POST-MODERN THOUGHT

The 1960s marked a significant crisis for the ruling class, as imperialism became increasingly crisis-riddled, faced with greater and greater resistance from the oppressed peoples of the world. This period saw the rise of various liberation movements, inspired by the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the spread of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought (now, Maoism) across the world.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution aimed to heighten the struggle against the capitalist roaders within the Communist Party of China and transform the decadent superstructure of Chinese society into a socialist one, to firmly establish a truly socialist society. This revolution had a profound impact on people across the world, inspiring many to take up the cause of liberation and socialism. At the same time, the Communist Party of China engaged in exposing modern revisionism across the world by engaging in the Great Debate with the social-imperialist USSR. In various parts of the world, communists would break from modern revisionism, parliamentary cretinism and advance class struggle by initiating protracted people’s wars in the light of MLM. This occurred in India, Philippines, Turkey, Peru, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Vietnam, Palestine, Cambodia etc.

The petite bourgeoisie also saw these developments and once again saw in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism a way out of its crisis. The Black Panther Party, the Gay Liberation Front, and the Street Transvestite Action Resistance (STAR) were just a few examples of the many identitarian groups that merged their struggles with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism's liberation politics. These groups saw in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism a hope for liberation from the oppressive systems of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Various guerrilla groups, inspired by Maoist protracted people's war formed during this period, such as the Socialist Patients Collective (which waged armed struggle against the German state for they believed capitalism was what had made them mentally ill) and the Rote Zora (women's guerrilla group waging war against the state for women's liberation, guided by an eclectic philosophy trying to merge radical feminism with Maoism). Similarly, in India, the Dalit Panther movement emerged, inspired by the Black Panther Party and the Naxalbari uprising. This movement aimed to challenge the caste system and to fight for the rights of the Dalit community.

The petite bourgeois identitarian struggle against oppression found hope for liberation within the proletariat's Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. However, as the storm of the 60s settled and the dismantling of these movements led to a return of pessimism among the petite bourgeois, as they became disillusioned with the failure of their struggles to achieve liberation. This pessimism led to a shift in the thinking of some former Maoist-influenced thinkers, who began to develop post-modern thought. Post-modern thought rejected the idea of a universal, objective truth, and instead emphasized the fragmented and subjective nature of reality. Most of these identitarian groups, inspired by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, were comprised of students who now became members of academia, finding places within NGOs and making claims of "growing out" of their revolutionary phase. Most of the people from these groups are now members of ruling class political parties (American Democratic Party's Bernie Sanders is one such example) or are trotted out regularly by the state to remind students of never linking with the working class' politics ever again. The academic and former Communist Party of USA activist Angela Davis and anti-Zionist critic Norman Finkelstein are examples of this.

Michel Foucault: Sex, Drugs and Anarchy

Michel Foucault was a French philosopher and journalist who started out as a student of Louis Althusser. Inspired by Althusser's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist sympathies, Foucault became a member of the French Communist Party, going to various protests that were occurring in France during the heady days of 1968 when France was both facing an internal revolt as well as a national liberation war led by the Algerian National Liberation Front. Foucault's journalism as part of the communist party and the later curtailment of the revolt of 1968 along with the worldwide setbacks suffered by the Maoist movements saw Foucault drift further and further away from revolutionary politics into the first prominent post-modern thinker, deeply inspired by the fore-father of post-modern thought Nietzsche. Prior to his death, Foucault described himself as "simply a Nietzschean." His work focuses on the ways in which power operates in society, and how it shapes our understanding of the world and ourselves.

Foucault's most famous concept is the idea of "power-knowledge," which suggests that power is not held by a single entity, but is instead dispersed throughout society. He argues that power is exercised through the production and dissemination of knowledge,

and that those who have the power to define and produce knowledge also have the power to shape reality. For Foucault, power is ubiquitous and everywhere and can never be fully understood, only experienced. Note the presence of both phenomenology and similarities to Freud's unconscious in this. Foucault, who heavily critiqued modernity and rationality, stated that power and claim to universal truth turned out to be repressive towards all other forms of reason. Such truth, he added, marginalized them as "unreason" or "irrationality." Foucault claimed that this terming of something as rational and another irrational sets the "discourse." Foucault reads everything in society as part of a discourse. It is used to designate established ways of thinking together with the power-structure. The discourse of science, the discourse of art, etc. are all narratives established by shared assumptions within society that are promoted over others. For Foucault, counter-discourses, even if they are irrational, illogical and baseless are needed just to create difference within society. For example, when Foucault would look at women's oppression in imperialist society, he would claim that this is due to legitimized discourse of patriarchy struggling against the illegitimized discourse of feminism. The struggle for the liberation of women would be reduced to a battle of narratives.

Foucault's work is often divided into three distinct periods: his early work on madness and reason, his middle period on power and knowledge, and his late work on subjectivity and ethics. In his early work, Foucault examines the ways in which society has historically treated individuals who are deemed "mad" or "insane." He argues that the concept of madness is a social construct, and that it has been used to control and regulate individuals who do not conform to societal norms. Foucault starts seeing the entire world as social constructs, seeking to create flux and fluidity by creating conditions where people can break these constructs by turning them into fluid categories.

In his middle period, Foucault develops his concept of power-knowledge, and argues that power is exercised through the production and dissemination of knowledge. He examines the ways in which institutions such as prisons, hospitals, and schools operate as sites of power, and how they shape our understanding of the world and ourselves.

Foucault's most famous work from this period is "Discipline and Punish," which examines the ways in which power operates in modern society. He argues that modern society is characterized by a shift from punitive power to disciplinary power, and that this shift has led to the development of new forms of control and regulation.

In his late work, Foucault turns his attention to the concept of subjectivity, and argues that individuals are not fixed or essential entities, but are instead shaped by the power-knowledge relationships in which they are embedded. He develops the concept of "care of the self," which suggests that individuals should focus on cultivating their own subjectivity and autonomy, rather than trying to conform to societal norms.

Critique of Foucault

Foucault saw knowledge generation-power turning people into subjects and then governing these subjects with knowledge. Power and power in every aspect of life is what he saw, negating class content of society and, in his view, people have no escape route from the multiple sources of power. He also dismisses the view of overhauling the system of domination. For Foucault, knowledge is only fragmentary and there is no

continuity in history. So, for him truth is merely a truth within a discourse. There is no objective truth for Foucault and there is no way for one to attain power in society. Thus, Foucault once again chooses to put the oppressed and exploited back into a dark room with no way out. But he goes further and tells them to not even try to find a way out, as the exercise of searching for truth would itself be an exercise of power!

Foucault is virulently anti-science due to his belief that sciences have reduced man to a subject of study and subsequently, a subject of the state. The object behind science, he claims is to subject human beings to a set of laws to define their entities, e.g. economic, rationality, laws of speech, social behaviour and even biological functioning. Thus, Foucault fundamentally opposes the notion of a central organizing theory within science. Dealing in absolutism, Foucault finds sciences to constrain humanity to a set of laws. Foucault, due to his inability to implement dialectical materialism, is unable to ever separate one thing into two, unable to see the objective reality of the sciences and differentiate it with the subjective imposition of ruling class ideology upon the sciences. In the name of “social construction of science” or “sociology of scientific knowledge,” post-modernists deny that scientific facts have any necessary relation to casual processes and theoretical entities, which they claim to describe. They regard science as mere construction but not a discovery of reality. Thus, our knowledge is said to be our own construction and so fails to present the reality itself.

Foucault’s focus on hyper-subjectivity, of creating alternative discourses for the sake of creating difference, also compels him to promote the use of drugs as a means of breaking free from dominant discourses. In terms of sexual relations, Foucault promotes engaging in as varied and non-normative forms of sex as possible, as far as they may deviate from existing social norms, as a form of sexual liberation. Here, he claims it is breaking from dominant discourses on sex. Here, Foucault engages in the “liberatory” actions of all subsequent post-modernists, where they promote anarchy and indiscipline as a form of rebellion, where they promote individual activity as a form of liberation. Snorting cocaine is turned into liberation by Foucault, the only liberation that is possible according to him. Through this, he ensures that the people never constitute into a disciplined, organized force capable of combatting the forces of the ruling classes and seizing state power. Lenin said without discipline, the Bolsheviks could have never succeeded in completing the Great October Socialist Revolution. Yet, Foucault deems all discipline as repressive, as an act of power achieved through punishment. He can never imagine a voluntary force led by the proletariat organized into military discipline to combat the ruling class and defend the people’s organs of state power. Foucault would see the Soviet Red Army and the People’s Liberation Guerrilla Army in India as repressive organizations!

On his understanding of history, Foucault states, “the history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language, relations of power, not relations of meaning. History has no meaning, though this is not to say that it is... incoherent. On the contrary, it is intelligible and should be susceptible to analysis down to the smallest detail—but this is in accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics.” For Foucault, history is not real but is non-linear and plural. For him, there are multiple histories and they are categorized not by class struggle but by language, relations of power etc.

What is Power?

For Maoists, power is a tool by which one class subjugates another. Power is state power. It is a means to an end, unlike post-modernists who see power as an end in itself. Maoists do not see the world as a power struggle, as post-modernists do. Instead, we see power as our way of resolving the principal contradiction of the world. Thus, we struggle to seize state power from the hands of the ruling class and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. For this task, we establish red power in the form of the revolutionary people's committees, the Janathana Sarkar as an embryonic form of a new state and dual power, contesting with the state power of the ruling class.

Jacques Derrida: Difference for the Sake of Difference

Jacques Derrida was a French philosopher who is known for his work on the concept of "différance," which refers to the way in which meaning is constantly deferred and never fixed. Derrida argues that language is a system of signs, and that meaning is never stable or fixed, but is instead always in flux. In Derrida's thought, "power" tends to be corrupt. He says that "power" tries to unify everything by force and thus rejects differences. So one must reject power. The tortured remains tortured, according to Derrida, because the entire system invariably generates the tortured. Whatever political system it may be, the final result is absence of freedom and presence of frustration. Such views gained further credibility due to the rise of bureaucratic revisionist regimes in Russia, East Europe and then China, after capitalist restoration. Thus, whether it is socialism or capitalism, whether in the hands of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, power is corrupt, per Derrida. These views are easily accepted in the capitalist world mired in chronic crisis.

Derrida's most famous work is "Of Grammatology," which examines the relationship between language and meaning. He argues that language is not a neutral or transparent medium, but is instead a complex and multifaceted system that shapes our understanding of the world. As his path for freedom from oppression of power, Derrida gave the call for "deconstruction." For Derrida, the entire world, reality itself, is text. Everything is thus a construct of language. He goes so far as to say, "I am also built by language." Derrida thus develops the concept of "deconstruction," which refers to the process of analysing and challenging the dominant meanings and interpretations of texts. He argues that all texts are subject to multiple interpretations, and that there is no single, objective meaning that can be discerned. Derrida would purposefully write in a manner where one could not understand where a sentence would begin and end. He would aim to write in a manner where multiple interpretations could be made of his text and no contradictions (in terms of grammar) would exist in his text, a process he called "dissemination." For Derrida, all exercise in reading a text is actually re-writing the text. In "reading" (trying to understand) any text, whether a book, nature or society, or ourselves, we rewrite it. All reading is "writing," a constant, endless process inherent to the living, that cannot be carried out consciously, at least not with the autonomous self-consciousness prior modernity had posited. Hence, we can no more determine an author's intent than could the original author. There is no experience per se that is shared by all human beings; everything is a surface that constantly reconstitutes itself. Absence dominates all presence, and we are left to pursue the "traces" of an absent itself. Thus, "logo centrism" is to be avoided.

For Derrida, all language is in itself violent. He finds a means to reduce this violence by avoiding speaking, writing but as disseminated as possible. Instead, the best possible scenario would be one where no one speaks but only gestured to others. Even this is violent, but less so than all other scenarios.

Critique of Derrida

Derrida promotes all the key issues found in Foucault, but adds new fashionable nonsense over it. He promotes difference for the sake of it, he postulates to create a world driven by gestures and somehow, even this is “violent.” Like all post-modernists, he dislocates the objectively understood meaning behind words and uses them in places where it makes no sense. Violence, which is commonly understood as the act of exerting physical strength over another, suddenly becomes equivalent to speaking in a harsh tone or writing a strongly worded letter. This has the effect of reducing the gravity behind actual class violence meted out by the ruling classes.

Derrida promotes difference for the sake of it. In fact, creating as many meanings of a single text as possible is his goal. This plays the role of completely eroding all possibilities of finding an objective truth. Derrida’s goal is the opposite of that; his goal is finding as many subjective truths as possible. It is anti-thetical to the Maoist understanding of the world. If two people cannot conclude on what a thing is together, they can hardly conclude upon how to carry out a revolution. Derrida speaks favourably of Marxism, and this fools many a Marxist sympathizer into engaging with Derrida but this is a ploy. Derrida’s philosophy is anti-thetical to Marxism. A man who finds words violent and spends his life in pursuit of finding ways to avoid them will hardly be a champion of violent insurrections and people’s wars. Derrida’s world outlook is subjective idealism, as is the case with all such post-modern identitarian thinkers as he aspires to create a world of complete difference with no unifying factors. Michel Foucault, the great champion of subjectivity himself, called Derrida’s purposefully complicated writing as “terrorist obscurantism.” Foucault said of Derrida, “he writes so obscurely you can’t tell what he’s saying, that’s the obscurantism part, and then when you criticize him, he can always say, ‘You didn’t understand me; you’re an idiot.’ That’s the terrorism part.” Derrida employs the oldest trick in the Sophist intellectual’s book, wordplay, to mask the fact that he has nothing of importance to say

What do Maoists Think of Difference?

Maoists uphold the axiom of “one divides into two” and understand that there exist both antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions in society. All units will contain within themselves two contradictory forces. For example, in the Communist party, which is united in its ideological-political-organizational outlook, there will still exist internal two-line struggle, that of capitalist road and that of the proletariat. This will be a non-antagonistic contradiction among the people which can be resolved by the Maoist method of unity-struggle-unity. We will not aspire to violently combat this difference. The same cannot be said of the ruling class. The Communist party will wage violent class struggle against the ruling class and liquidate its existence. Maoists understand that various types of differences exist in society and dealing with them requires studying the contradictions that are the cause of these differences and thus, methods can be charted to deal with them.

Maoists do not create difference just for the sake of it, nor do we seek to engage in a homogenizing project to crush any differences that exist in society. The fate of these differences is dependent on the nature of the contradictions that cause them.

Jacques Lacan: Fear All Which is Real

Jacques Lacan was a French psychoanalyst who is known for his work on the concept of "the real," which refers to the unrepresentable, unsymbolizable aspect of reality. Lacan argues that the real is the source of anxiety and uncertainty, and that it is the thing that disrupts the smooth functioning of the symbolic order. He interpreted Freud in the light of the new structuralist theories of linguistics and focused on the human subject as defined by linguistic and social pressures. Similar to Derrida, Lacan believes that "it is the world of words that create the world of things."

Lacan's most famous work is "Ecrits," which examines the relationship between the symbolic order and the real. He argues that the symbolic order is a system of signs and symbols that shapes our understanding of the world, but that it is always incomplete and lacking.

Lacan develops the concept of the "mirror stage," which refers to the process by which the individual develops a sense of self through their reflection in the mirror. He argues that this process is characterized by a sense of alienation and fragmentation, as the individual recognizes that their reflection is not the same as their true self. Herein comes Lacan's concept of the anxiety of the "real." The real is a fiction that one cannot anyways grasp. But whenever one comes close to it, the contradiction between one's perception of what is real and what reality actually is causes anxiety in the individual. The further one pursues the real, one faces more and more trauma, until one dies. Therefore, per Lacan, it is better to avoid the real, its pursuit and any such endeavours which will bring one closer to reality.

Critique of Lacan

Prior to Lacan, the other post-modern thinkers would negate the pursuit of finding objective truth as an impossible exercise or an oppressive one. Derrida and Foucault would instead pursue difference, diffusion of power and plurality of history. Lacan goes even further beyond; arguing that even coming close to the objective truth may cause death. The journey of struggling for objectivity is so filled with anguish for Lacan that he says it may traumatize the individual. Therefore, Lacan brings into play petite bourgeois cowardice. He warns of the harshness of the struggle needed to understand reality and in turn, change the existing state of affairs and sees only death and grief in such a task. He would instead encourage the individual to invert the gaze and focus on oneself, just as all such post-modern thinkers and their precursors have done during periods of crisis in history.

The Birth of Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily through the work of black feminist academics and lawyers in the United States of America. The term "intersectionality" was first coined by the lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, in a courtroom. Just as our journey started with the "wise-men" of slave-holding societies advocating for various accused persons in the judicial systems of that society, using

sophistry and contorted truth to win their arguments, we return once again to the same situation. Crenshaw, in a case where a black woman was being discriminated against by her employer, realized that her argument that the employer was motivated by racism was not getting the job done. The employer, when charged with racism, argued that they employed several other non-white individuals, including black men. To win her case, Crenshaw deduced that the employer in fact, did not have a single black woman among its employees. Therefore, she brought up intersectionality, arguing that her client, being a black woman was oppressed not just by racism or sexism but by a unique combination of both.

Since then, intersectionality has earned great traction within post-modern circles, as post-modern thought latched onto the identitarian movements. Until the 1960s, identitarian struggles still held the viewpoint of seeking liberation, which led them to align with the proletariat and find inspiration and guidance from the proletariat's ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. But with the disillusioned and pessimistic petite bourgeois now floating aimlessly, making numerous theorizations of its own demise and aimlessness, intersectionality combined with the post-modern fixation on differences and its hatred for "logo centrism" culminated into post-modern identitarian thought. No more focused on liberation or civil rights, this variation of identitarian thought is focused strictly on understanding how many identities an individual falls in, and what unique permutations and combinations of identities an individual is a product of.

Intersectionality refers to the idea that different forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism and homophobia, intersect and overlap, creating a complex and multifaceted system of oppression. This means that individuals and groups experience multiple forms of oppression simultaneously, and that these forms of oppression cannot be understood in isolation from one another. The birth of intersectionality can be traced even further before Crenshaw, to the Combahee River Collective, a black lesbian collective that was formed in 1974. The collective's statement, which was published in 1977, is considered one of the foundational texts of intersectionality. The statement argues that black women's experiences are shaped by the intersection of racism, sexism, and homophobia, and that these forms of oppression cannot be understood in isolation from one another. Ironically, the Combahee River Collective fashioned itself as a Marxist organization and aimed to carry out socialist revolution in the USA. Even during this period, some sections of the petite bourgeoisie still recognized that its only recourse lay with the proletariat. Yet, now sick with post-modern identitarian thought, it was incapable of separating Marxism from post-modern thought, often trying to merge the two in a bid to "complete" Marxism. The concept of intersectionality gained further momentum in the 1980s and 1990s, through the work of scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins, who developed the concept of "matrix of domination" to describe the complex and multifaceted system of oppression that shapes the experiences of oppressed social groups. Patricia Hill Collins used explicitly Foucaultian understanding of power (Foucault considered that power flowed like a web or a matrix) to expand upon intersectionality.

Critique of Intersectionality

Intersectionality reduces everything to an identity. Instead of exposing the material basis of the oppression of various social groups, it only talks of the symptoms of this basis (the oppression), focusing once again on how an individual feels regarding said oppression

versus how the oppression works, why it occurs and how it can be ended. It is a prime case of post-modern usage of phenomenology. Due to their belief that “each individual’s experience is unique and subjective, while still being true,” intersectionality actively ensures that no two people can come together to fight against oppression together as their identities may clash. For example, a Dalit man and an Adivasi woman can never understand each other; forget finding unity in cause, as a man always oppresses a woman due to patriarchy. Similarly, a dominant caste proletarian woman can never unite with an Adivasi peasant woman, as a dominant caste woman will always oppress an Adivasi person, due to Brahmanism. Further, an Adivasi peasant woman can never unite with an Adivasi peasant man, because once again, a man will always oppress a woman. This is the logic of intersectionality. It will break all possible points of unity and atomize the individual to the extreme. Furthermore, it will never talk of exploitation, only oppression. Instead, it denotes the exploitation of the labour power of the proletariat as merely another form of oppression within a series of numerous other oppressions.

In fact, intersectionality turns the individuals into a repository of capital penetration by turning them into a bunch of identities. For each identity, imperialism has a whole new market available for consumption. If one is gay, then they must buy merchandize to show this identity. If one is a woman, then they must buy products to let the world know of this identity. The list goes on and on. In fact, the permutations of identities allow capital to rehash more commodities for these permutations too, potentially creating an unlimited space for capital penetration as imperialism promotes the formation of more and more identities.

Post-Modern Thought and Communism

Post-modern thought had a significant impact on communism, as it challenged the idea of a universal, objective truth and the notion of a revolutionary vanguard. Post-modern thinkers argued that communism was a totalizing and oppressive ideology that sought to impose a single, universal truth on all individuals and groups. It claimed that Marxism imposed the “western” conception of rationality over the colonized peoples of the oppressed nations, thus charging Marxism with Euro-centrism. It also accused Marxists of being economic determinists, ignoring the political/social/cultural framework of society, as represented by identities and oppression, in favor of analyzing things from a “purely class lens” i.e. through economic relationships.

Post-modern thinkers fail to see historical development as growth, instead seeing all of history as the same, strongly opposing that the existing mode of production is any better than the previous mode of production, repudiating the necessity of revolution and confuse Marxism with economism. Foucault might understand what Marxists mean when we talk of power but he rejects it as he finds power to flow like a web, not concentrated in the hands of a centre (the state). Post-modern thinkers reject progress in society, often dabbling in nostalgia for the past (a suppressed “discourse” in times of modernity) instead. Maoists on the hand, often understand that there are some elements of the past societies that still hold relevance in the new society and therefore, must be taken up while largely rejecting the base and the superstructure of old society.

While the likes of Foucault openly attacked Maoism, the likes of Derrida and Lacan were

more subtle, often heaping praise on Marxism while promoting a thought that is entirely geared towards opposing Maoism and serving the ruling class. This subtle ploy of the ruling class has often fooled some Marxist sympathizers to take a liberal or sympathetic stance against post-modern identitarian thought. Such “Marxists” like Georg Lukas, would call these ideas “romantic anti-capitalism” which would incorrectly attribute to them the character that they are in some way opposed to imperialism, which is absolutely incorrect.

Instead of finding truth from fact by deepening our understanding of post-modern thought in words and actions, such Marxists would only look at the surface of post-modern thought and find possible means of unity with it. Such practices, instead of a staunch approach of struggle and weeding out post-modern thought from within their organizations, have led to the collapse of various communist organizations, many falling into the quagmire of revisionism, parliamentarianism or worse, liquidating themselves entirely. This is the true objective of post-modern identitarian thought in relation to communism.

THE 1990S AND 2008 CRISIS: RENEWED AND ADVANCED POST-MODERN THOUGHT

The 1990s and 2008 crisis marked a significant turning point in the development of post-modern thought. The ruling class ideology of imperialism, marked by neo-liberalism's globalization project, continued to dominate the world. The oppressed countries were subjected to liberalization, globalization, and privatization policies which further exacerbated the exploitation and oppression of the people via unprecedented import of finance capital. The USSR officially collapsed after years of being mired in social imperialism and the once revolutionary China was building capitalist relations within itself, soon to be itself on the path of social-imperialism. Post-modern thinkers famously declared this the end of history and a triumph, plunging a whole new generation of the petite bourgeois in post-modern identitarian thought.

In this context, post-modern thought underwent a significant transformation. The past identitarianism, which had been criticized for its limitations, was revived and advanced. The concept of intersectionality, which had emerged in the 1980s, became a principal framework. At the same time, the economic crisis of capitalism once again reared its head with imperialism being in a permanent crisis since 1973 with the various economic bubble collapses, eventually snow-balling into further crisis with the 2008 subprime housing mortgage crisis in the US that has plunged the world into a deeper economic crisis ever since.

Deleuze: Violence in the Body, Identity in the Rearview

Gilles Deleuze, a French philosopher, was a key figure in the development of post-modern thought. His philosophy emphasized the importance of difference, complexity, and becoming. Unlike his predecessors, the new post-modernist thinkers shunned all categories themselves, finding them as barriers to unfettered difference. Identity itself became part of Deleuze's critique.

Deleuze's concept of "rhizomes" refers to the idea that knowledge and power are

decentralized and diffuse, and that they operate through complex networks and relationships. He argued that traditional notions of identity and subjectivity are too rigid and essentialized, and that they fail to account for the complexity and diversity of human experience. Instead, Deleuze saw all interpretation of things as a radical act but one that is limited by the sensory capabilities of humans. So, Deleuze believed that by completely avoiding language and focusing on new sensations, new interpretations can be made and therefore, new differences can be achieved. For this, Deleuze promoted as varied and non-normative sexual relations as possible along with the use of drugs, just as his phenomenological guru Michel Foucault. Deleuze saw the body as a sight upon which power carries out violence. In the body, he saw humans entrapped but also in the body's sensory capacities, he saw a way of living.

Critique of Deleuze

Deleuze carries forward all the same Foucaultian notions, going further into biological determinism and rooting everything in the "sensations of the body." Deleuze has little interest in the mind, which he considers to be a sight upon which power has acted heavily. He has little interest in the concept of thinking; instead, he is fixated on feeling. Due to their biological determinism, post-modernists fail to recognize that humans have long been social animals, after organizing ourselves through labour and the transformation of nature. Instead, Deleuze asks everyone to stop thinking and to just feel. This fixation on subjectivity ensures that petite bourgeoisie finds recourse in anarchic sex and drug consumption instead of disciplining itself and becoming a revolutionary subject.

Judith Butler and Critical Queer Theory: Sex, Love and the Market

Judith Butler, an American academic inspired by Michel Foucault's work on sexuality, and is a key figure in the development of Critical Queer Theory. Her philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of performativity and iterability, argues that gender and sex are not fixed or essential categories, but are instead "performed" and reinforced through social and cultural norms. In her book *Gender Trouble*, Butler theorizes that the performance of gender reproduces gender and that it has no other material basis. She argues that this performativity is not a one-time event, but is instead a repeated and reiterated process that shapes our understanding of the world.

Critical Queer Theory, which emerged in the 1990s after Butler's interventions, is now an entire field of study that examines the situation of the LGBT people in society while utilizing the classical framework of critical theory to look at their oppression in relation to the society they live in. Critical Queer Theory draws on the work of thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Eve Sedgwick. It argues that queer theory must be critical of the dominant ideologies and power structures that shape our understanding of the world. Critical Queer Theory holds that LGBT identities and experiences are shaped by the "intersections of power and oppression," and that they cannot be understood in isolation from other forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and classism. Butler offers her solution for facing this oppression by arguing that each individual must "trouble" the existing notions of gender by not "performing" it. Women dressing up as men, men as children, using language of the opposite sex to refer to oneself and each

other, androgeniety etc. as means to avoid performing gender. Before engaging in the critique of Butler and Critical Queer Theory, it is important to re-orient our understanding of the various terms used.

What is Sex? What is Gender?

Post-modern thinkers like Foucault and Butler argue that sex is the social construct created by the discourse of biological science when a doctor looks at the genitalia of a new-born and categorizes it as male or female. They argue that gender is the social construct created by various forms of power in society such as media, law, clothing, language, culture, religion etc. A child learns of their gender through performing gender. For example, a girl child learns that she is a girl by being dressed in clothing for girls, by being addressed as a girl, by being subjected to patriarchy, by media and the school which tells her what a girl is. This is gender for post-modern thinkers. It is important to note that both sex and gender are merely constructs for post-modernists.

This is both unscientific and ahistorical. Humans exhibit dimorphism, that is, varied features among the male and female of the species. This understanding did not come after the formulation of a “scientific discourse” but was the precursor to biological understanding of sexual development in humans. Yet, in primitive societies, there is no evidence suggesting that this biological difference had any role to play in the oppression of women by men, instead living in matriarchal clans with no means of one exploiting another. *This is due to the fact that primitive societies were not class societies and there was no scope for producing surplus in these societies.* Yet, as humans organized themselves further and further into class formations, by developing their productive forces and changing their relations of production, patriarchy emerged. Engels described this as, *“the overthrow of mother right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children.”* Thus, sprang forth the social character of sex, reinforced by the superstructure of the new class societies. As modes of production changed, patriarchy too, changed to better reinforce the new relations of production. Sex is therefore not merely the biological aspect of gender but is instead a stable biological category that has, just like all aspects of class society, attained a social character. When one talks of all other aspects of class society, we do not use two words to describe the “material-part” and its “social-part,” as post-modernists do with sex and gender. No contradiction can be looked at as a singularity alone, but it must divide into two aspects. In the case of sex, it is material, biological and social.

Where then, did this word gender come from? Gender was previously the word used to describe the presence of sex-based grammar within languages. For example, Hindi uses different pronouns for men and women and denotes a sex to various words, feminizing them or masculinizing them at various points. This was gender. But as we explored previously, post-modern thinkers either see the world as being a text itself, being written and re-written. Or they see language as one of the principal forms of power acting upon individuals. Therefore, they introduced the grammatical term gender into their understanding of the world itself, as they see the world no different from a book. By doing this, they created the “strictly biological” notion of sex imposed upon people by

doctors and the sciences, and the “purely social” notion of gender imposed upon people by social norms and performance. What purpose does this duality serve? It ensures that while one category remains relatively stable, the other and the dominant one that is gender, becomes completely fluid. Flux and fluidity, as you may recall, are the post-modernist’s currency. They want to create difference and disorder by way of turning every stable and already defined categories as unstable, fluid and in motion. Critical Queer Theory, Butler and Foucault therefore promote this understanding of sex and gender.

The word queer also has a similar problem. Queer just means odd and is purposefully left ambiguous so as to allow for the proliferation of identities by the market. Anyone who is odd can technically be queer. It actively hides its meaning (“troubling gender,” as Butler would say) and is too broad to be a real social category.

For Maoists, the word gender has no meaning beyond its original one. Sex as a word is enough to denote both the biological and social characters of men, women and intersex people. This is also why originally; those transitioning from male to female sex would refer to themselves as transsexual, not as transgender. We also find this to be correct. The usage of both the terms sex and gender introduce fluidity which is not rooted in any materiality and is therefore, idealistic.

On the Question of “Identifying”

Post-modern identitarian thought has introduced the nomenclature of identifying oneself with an identity. This is a product of idealistic fluidity as referred to above. This started with people “identifying” with the sex different from their own. This linguistic nonsense altered the way transsexual people are understood. More and more research is proving that there is a biological basis for people being transsexual and that this can be identified from the ages of 3-4 years of an infant to some research even arguing that this can prove even during the period of foetal sexual development. Transsexual children display early signs of understanding their contradiction with their sex from the ages of 7-14.

Yet, post-modern thinkers rabidly oppose this understanding as “transmedicalism” or biological determinism, instead promoting the view that each individual can identify with any gender depending on their own individual sensory experiences. This is in line with Foucaultian understanding of society where social categories are turned into flux by way of completely severing their link with material reality (which is already fiction in the eyes of post-modernists). This has created avenues for more and more identities to be made for the market, each more ridiculous than the other. For example, LGBT has been turned into what is now LGBTQIA++, an amoeba of identities, ever-growing. The legitimate oppression of the homosexual and transsexual people and their struggle for democratic rights has been reduced to being on the same stage as categories such as “non-binary,” which is merely an intellectual position that has no basis whatsoever in materiality of sex. By saying one can identify as any identity based on individual sensory experiences, post-modern thinkers give way to people now identifying as animals or even as people of other races! This is often used by fascists to attack the LGBT people who are lumped in with these people. Post-modern thought does not lead to the liberation of the LGBT people, it instead of reduces them to ridiculous caricatures of who they are and

diminishes their existences as repositories for the market.

Safe Spaces and Post-Modern Bubbles

Critical Queer Theory promotes the formations of “safe spaces.” These are circles of queer people and not necessarily an absolute form of space but merely a social form where the petite bourgeoisie aims to find solace together. In reality, is it possible to carve out islands of safety from the oppression and exploitation of the ruling class? The proletariat, which utilizes the strategy of protracted people’s war, has to wage war against the ruling class to engage in area-wise seizure of power so as to create its own areas of red power. These areas are not “safe spaces,” but are preserved through war. But post-modern thinkers argue that the petite bourgeoisie can create “safe spaces” by creating enclosed circles where only members of an identity group are allowed in. These are nothing but myths which can be real only for a section of the reactionary petite bourgeoisie and the ruling class. Exposing one’s real feelings within a safe space is often encouraged as a radical act. Yet, exposing one’s reactionary trends as part of self-criticism within the communist party are considered totalitarian and authoritarian practices by the post-modernists! These post-modern bubbles are nothing but dens of reactionary classes hiding within themselves as a means of practicing post-modern thought outside the ambit of society, which they have no hope of transforming.

This has led to the practice of “cancel culture” during various parts of the 2010s and 2020s, such as the MeToo movement. While rectification as a concept is completely shunned, safe spaces are sought to be created by cancelling all individuals who engage in oppression via “calling out” on social media. If all oppressors are “cancelled” and weeded out, they think their industries will become safe for women. Yet, the reality is that most people who were called out were brought back into their industries without any process of rectification. Many women who engaged in the calling out exercise find themselves out instead. This is the futility of post-modern practice, which promotes futile actions and always talks of the symptoms of the problem, never of the cause.

POST-MODERN IDENTITARIAN THOUGHT AND FASCISM

India is currently facing the rise of Brahmanical Hindutva fascism, since the BJP has come to power in 2014. While fascism has not completed its complete takeover, it is slowly creeping up in all state institutions. India is a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, one where imperialist loot and penetration of finance capital occurs via the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie with the strengthening of feudalism. Instead of demolishing feudalism to develop independent capitalism, imperialism allied itself with feudalism and created a comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie which serves as its lapdogs and is highly dependent on the capital investments and technological exchange from imperialist bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries. This comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie allies itself with the landlords to create a decadent situation where semi-feudal relations persist along with distorted capitalist relations in some pockets. The fascism in such a country is thus comprador feudal fascism. The ideology of comprador feudal fascism in India is that of Brahmanism, as caste-based feudalism dominated the landscape of India.

Gomutra and Foucault: Match Made in Hell

Brahmanism has benefited greatly from post-modern identitarian thought, just as Nazism benefited from Nietzschean philosophy. Brahmanism, just like Foucault, is deeply anti-science, anti-materialist and is a decadent ideology that has dragged its carcass across the landscape of history, always consuming the existing mode of production and regurgitating metaphysical and idealistic gibberish in service of this mode of production over and over again. Brahmanism believes in fatalism, arguing that all pain of the present is a product of past actions (karma). One is born a Dalit, born to serve the ruling class due to bad actions in a previous life, Brahmanism says. Therefore, nothing can be done to change this cycle but to do one's appointed duty and wait for a messiah in the form of Vishnu's ten avatars to change the existing state of affairs for them. This is essentially the same philosophy echoed by Nietzsche when he talked of the master-slave relationship and the Superman. It is also equivalent to Foucault's understanding of power mechanism, where everything finds a justification in the obscure notion of power.

Brahmanism strengthens the anti-reasoning tendency in people and fascist forces have promoted "alternative discourses" via their various social media outlets, their magazines and their WhatsApp groups to spread pseudo-scientific views among the people and move them closer to mysticism and a manufactured understanding of Hindutva. Just as post-modern thinkers seek to promote alternative narratives, combating dominant discourses, Brahmanical Hindutva fascists claim to present the real discourse in contrast to the dominant narrative set by "Nehruvians", "left-liberals," "pseudo-seculars" or by "urban Naxals." In science, they claim to see colonial vestiges, just as Edward Said (a self-proclaimed Foucaultian and early contributors to the "post-colonial" school) saw in his text, *Orientalism*. Therefore, in the name of promoting indigeneity, they promote cow urine (gomutra), Ayurveda as "indigenous knowledge." Knowledge production is where

power resides, per Foucault and this fascist act would be a radical one for Foucault, as the fascists are now creating an alternative power via this “indigenous knowledge.”

This post-fact world, where truth is what social media memes and reels make of it, is one where fascism thrives. It is one that is backed by post-modern identitarian thought.

RISE OF POST-MODERN IDENTITARIAN THOUGHT AMONG THE YOUTH

Youth is that section of society which is at the cusp of joining the production process. As students, as unemployed lumpenized youth, they are dominated by petite bourgeois ideologies. Ruling class actively targets the youth due to this unique placement in society where they are ripe for training within a neo-colonial structure. The education, the ideological indoctrination of the youth through the superstructure, particularly after the rampant penetration of foreign finance capital after the Liberalization-Globalization-Privatization of the late 1980s has seen the import of capital bring with it distorted ideological content at the service of imperialism. Capitalism across the world sees the youth as prime consumers of goods and companies seek to target them to most for consumption of their goods. At the same time, in semi-colonial semi-feudal countries, the youth is to be prepared to best serve the logic of imperialism, the best candidates among them being brought to capitalist countries to train themselves further in the art of neo-colonial tactics in service of the ruling class.

It is crucial that the rest then remain as viable consumers and obedient citizens. Historically, the youth has always played an active role in political movements and have been the first sections of the petite bourgeoisie to quickly integrate them with the proletariat. Imperialists learned this the hard way during the 1960s, as previously mentioned. Mao Tse-tung has affirmed this, “the petty bourgeois students and youth are a part of the people and at the inevitable conclusion of their struggle, the struggle of the workers and peasants will reach a high tide.” To avoid this again, post-modern identitarian thought was promoted heavily among the youth. At the same time, due to heavy consumption of goods, alienation has continuously heightened among the youth. Social media and e-commerce have further isolated the youth from each other and socialization, leading to intensified sense of purposelessness. Post-modern aesthetics (the field dealing with the question of external beauty), which convey no meaning and actively seek to cause feelings of emptiness and aimlessness dominate the visuals conveyed on social media. Pornographic content becomes normalized via social media, fuelling distorted ideas of imperialist patriarchy among the youth. All this would eventually lead the youth down the path of class struggle. To mitigate this crisis and to ensure that the youth does not revert back to class struggle, post-modern identitarian thought promotes consumption of drugs, the practice of sexual anarchy and even greater consumption of goods. Bourgeois psychology, now reinforced by post-modern identitarian thought, drags the corpse of Freud back into the realm of the living, now diagnosing most people with various mental health conditions, utilizing mind-numbing medication to distract the youth from confronting the contradictions that face them. This package of drugs, sexual anarchy, mental health issues and mass consumption culminates in the creating of a political anarchist youth, which will find it antagonistic towards Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and unable to deal with its crisis.

CONCLUSION

“Protest is when I say I don’t like this or that. Resistance is when I do something about it.” - Ulrike Meinhof, Red Army Fraction (West Germany)

Post-Modern Identitarian Thought may find its class basis within the reactionary petite bourgeoisie, but it is not the ally of the petite bourgeoisie. In India, the petite bourgeoisie faces a constant battle for its existence, most of it tumbling on the verge of pauperization as foreign finance capital and comprador bureaucratic capitalism keeps marginalizing it. The nascent national bourgeoisie in India too, finds itself cornered by the alliance of imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism. There is no recourse within imperialism for the petite bourgeoisie. Post-modern identitarian thought has hurt the class interests of the petite bourgeoisie. During the 60s, the petite bourgeoisie was heavily integrating itself with the proletariat and advancing world socialist revolution. Through this, it would also liberate itself from an empty-hollowed out existence in which it always lives at the cusp of its own demise. By adopting post-modern identitarian thought, the petite bourgeoisie has chosen to complain about its sorry existence, yet given up the will to do anything about it. Post-modern identitarian thought has fuelled the worst tendencies of the petite bourgeoisie and entrapped it in a vicious cycle of subservience to the ruling classes who will most definitely spell the demise of the petite bourgeoisie with their crisis-riddled system. It is in the interests of the petite bourgeoisie to combat post-modern identitarian thought and re-integrate itself with the proletariat. The program of the New Democratic revolution is the only way forward for the petite bourgeoisie and even the national bourgeoisie. Comrade Charu Majumdar had concluded, “whether [the petite bourgeoisie] are revolutionaries can be determined only by how much they become participants of this movement. Those who will not participate in this movement have the danger of becoming reactionaries.”

The greatest opportunity lies with the petite bourgeoisie in India, which houses the largest zone of red power in the world today that is the Dandakaranya Guerrilla Zone of the Communist Party of India (Maoist). There, the revolutionary classes have formed a united front to create an embryonic version of a true democracy in the form of the Jantana Sarkar. Just as the revolutionary youth of India marched to the countryside in thousands during the Naxalbari uprising, it is necessary for the petite bourgeoisie today to once again dare to struggle, dare to win. It cannot win if it doesn’t fight. It cannot fight if it withers away in post-modern ideations and dies.

NAZARIYA MAGAZINE



THE MARXIST-LENINIST-MAOIST PERSPECTIVE ON POST MODERN THOUGHT: A Nazariya Magazine Booklet

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Long live MLM! Long live NDR! Long live the Indian communist movement!