

**CRITICS OF MODERNITY : AN ANALYSIS OF SELECT  
TEXTS OF GANDHI, MARCUSE AND FOUCAULT**

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Certificate

This is to certify that dissertation titled "CRITICS OF MODERNITY : AN ANALYSIS OF SELECT TEXTS OF GANDHI, MARCUSE AND FOUCAULT", submitted by Ravi Kumar, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of this University, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

This is my original work.

*Ravi Kumar*  
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We recommend this dissertation to be placed before examiners for evaluation.

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*To  
My Mamu and Mamani for their contributions...*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Frustrations generated by the daily skirmishes with harshness of life are unbearable... and thereafter 'reason' loses its way. Why does it happen ? Why do they behave like this? It was difficult to understand the contradictory developments. I have shared all these in some way or the other with my supervisor. And it has been his response, not to exaggerate because of fear of his 'position', that has always resolved my doubts and inspired my thoughts. His uncommon method to teach, interact, and willingness to provide space for dissent has culminated in this dissertation. Dr. Maitreyi Chaudhary and Dr. Susan Viswanathan helped me mature and comprehend the 'worldly' complexities through their abilities to demolish the boundaries erected between teachers and students.

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## P r e f a c e

### **Looking at the Modern World**

The world (and it largely means India of today) in which we live is extremely mechanised – the humans lack the required freedom to think or dwell upon the various elements of observation that they come across. The role of an individual is predefined and the deviation from that role is termed as ‘deviance’, ‘abnormality’, ‘unfit’, ‘incapable’ etc. The parents draw its life map when a child<sup>1</sup> is born. It is reared according to that – aspirations are injected in it by the parents, who themselves have accepted the servitude of a thought process and social system with pride, as well as the external agencies like mass media, the nature of socio-economic activities that dominate the surrounding etc. The parents, in this process, are least bothered about the ideas of healthy adult-child interface, nature of socialisation that a child needs among other things. Hence, right from the games that children play to the playing items that are bought or the ‘literature’ that they are provided to the choices they are offered as entertainment (like the colourful nonsensical channels) everything starts shaping a child into a citizen of a subjugated system. As it grows up and starts going to school and becomes a girl or a boy the other elements of fraudulent gender liberation and elements of competition and therefore individualism are inculcated in it. The results we come across are: a four-five year child remembers all brands of cars and has a choice as well to own a particular

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<sup>1</sup> The capitalist development and the assertion of gender based movements have been to a great extent able to end the sexual difference in career choices decided for a child, especially in the new consumerist, individualised urban middle class families.

brand. These are a very common site in urban middle class households and as far as the shaping of aspirations are concerned even in the urban lower classes as well.

By the time one grows up – the girls are satisfied with the limited token of freedom provided in form of the liberty to earn and to enter the world of ‘glamour’<sup>2</sup>, and popularised as women liberation by *The Times of India* and Co<sup>3</sup>. In this direction it becomes significant to note that “there is an increasing role for cosmetics and body management in a society to overt displays of personal status within a competitive society where narcissism is a predominant feature.”<sup>4</sup> The men are busy working as ‘executives’ (and it seldom matters ‘in’ what type of organisation though gradually a stage is reached when only some names and some type of companies are considered as ‘workable’ because have certain attributes) and toiling to maximise their company’s profit and thereby their own salary. And the whole world gets restricted to this viciousness. What appeals are smooth roads, glamorous companies and, ‘good’ cars and ‘comfortable’ brand of trousers.<sup>5</sup> The criticality gradually vanishes – nobody prefers to ‘waste’ time about the marginalised sections of society and their state of being. The market, the bureaucracy, the innovation of new techniques of manipulation acquires the centre stage. This is the contemporary world, the post-modern world, the world with ‘unprecedented freedom and liberty’, which even the ‘socialism’ could not provide to people. But how can one understand this system – this state of being, where the human bodies “need to be trained, restrained and

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<sup>2</sup> In fact these terms are created and a notion of status, well-being and to be a part of mainstream through it are attached to it.

<sup>3</sup> There is a multilayered and complex team of managers associated in this assignment of illusion creation.

<sup>4</sup> Turner, Bryan S.; *The Rationalisation of the Body: Reflections on Modernity and Discipline*; in Las, Scott and Whimster, Sam (ed.) *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*; Allen & Unwin; London; 1987; Pp.226

<sup>5</sup> All these terms are value loaded and are shown as the requirements of a decent and a better living.



disciplined by diet, drill, exercise and grooming,”<sup>6</sup> where the differences of opinion are suppressed<sup>7</sup>, where a homogeneous system has been constructed, where authorities are created and branded as scientific and rational because the method involved in it has followed certain scientific procedures, which are sanctified by this system. As modernity set in new ways of living were advocated, meaning prescribed as a much better living style. The mannerisms and ways of disciplining body were defined – e.g., restrictions on blowing one’s nose or spitting at the table “was indicative of this individualised new ethics of good conduct”. A civilising process was on.<sup>8</sup> This has been the world achieved through a long process of historical development since the times of Enlightenment. However, in the same society World Wars, colonial conquests and brutal socio-economic, cultural and political repression took shape.

A way of life is dictated – the these aspects of this post-Enlightenment world it has come under scathing criticism from various thinkers and schools of thought. But very interestingly their criticism has been directed against a world system and not against certain actors that construct this world order. Even if it has been done, it has been insufficient.mannerisms, behaviour and everything. We oppose the relentless consumerism, the illusion created by advertisements or the repression unleashed by the individualist/social interests. In the field of academics the revered teachers are expected to fulfil their duty in the best possible way. They are expected to translated into practice what they pronounce emphatically at public gatherings. But when they

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<sup>6</sup> Turner, Bryan S.; *The Rationalisation of the Body: Reflections on Modernity and Discipline*; in Las, Scott and Whimster, Sam (ed.) *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*; Allen & Unwin; London; 1987; Pp.225 Also refer to Foucault, Michel; *Discipline and Punish*; Vintage; New York; 1995

<sup>7</sup> Stalin has been accused of suppressing the opposition voices by force but in this social order this suppression takes place subtly and without the knowledge of participant because even he/ she participates in this process.

<sup>8</sup> Turner, Bryan S.; *The Rationalisation of the Body: Reflections on Modernity and Discipline*; in Las, Scott and Whimster, Sam (ed.) *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*; Allen & Unwin; London; 1987; Pp.230

sit on the other side of the table, their criticality dies...from thinking beings they become bureaucrats. The criticality and the respect for it which, they are supposed to have culminated for so many years, is suddenly negated in moments. Hence, the questions of *why* does it happen are not asked, instead definitions that seem to tie, restrict and suffocate the development of a concept are emphasised.

'Intellectuals' have a privileged position and their responsibility is to teach masses, make them aware. They are the people who have been telling everyone about establishing the relationship between theory and practice but they themselves forget, when it comes to them. In a meeting of the rural masses, in their fight for survival, for basic facilities and to understand the problems they participate as 'consultants', people with 'supra-knowledge' characteristics. The 'social workers' of elite 'aid agencies' or funding departments have a wish – to become 'activists'. Hence, they define it their own way and they have the tools to propagate their definition. To become activists to them mean wearing certain types of clothes, not drinking certain brand of cold drinks or attending a PRA training. They call themselves the 'grass root' people, despite being not able to understand that the system that they wish to imbibe in the towns are detrimental to the people down the hierarchy. Individual heroes are created and the collective solutions are forgotten. This is the state of society and we live there but despite understanding it we are not able to make significant interventions. Why? What is the dynamics? What stops us? And what conditions our being?

The criticisms that arose out of a discontent with the system which had promised the land of eternal joy has majorly come from the Critical School, Postmodernists and the feminists. Here an effort to look at another brand of anti-modernity that can be classified as religio-spiritual, that of Gandhi, has been made. However, before proceeding further it becomes necessary to understand modernity and how it has been viewed.

## INTRODUCTION

### MODERNITY: NEED FOR A CRITICAL ENQUIRY

#### **Understanding Modernity**

'Modernity' as a phenomenon in itself and modernist sociology as a discipline has invited extensive discussions within the sociological world, with debates ranging from the period of its origin to its very nature. Certain sociologists called 'modernity' a "relativist term" due to its usage to connote any 'new' development. This element of being 'new' becomes significant when it is applied as an instrument of legitimisation and authentication of social practices in the light of 'new information and knowledge'. And this characteristic of 'reflexivity of modern social life'<sup>1</sup> and as a phenomena 'marked by an appetite for the new' has helped modernity muster support irrespective of the fact whether the information is doctored, manipulated or subservient to social interests. Though shrouded in controversy modernity is related to the Enlightenment epoch, when it came to be identified with rationality, science, and forward progress<sup>2</sup>. Thus, modernity can markedly be seen as representing a shift in the existing nature and structure of things, with the shift being enforced by contradictions and competing paradigms and possibilities between and within the world systems.

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<sup>1</sup> For further details see Giddens, Anthony; *Institutional Reflexivity and Modernity* – in *The Polity Reader in Social Theory*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1994

<sup>2</sup> For further details see Alexander, Jeffrey C.; *Fin de Siecle Social Theory: Relativism, Reduction and The Problem of Reason*; Verso; London; 1995

With regard to modernity - sociology relationship certain sociologists have argued that sociology as a subject itself carried the modernist impressions due to the coincidence of its origin with that of modernity<sup>3</sup>. But there are still others who differentiate between traditional and modern sociology, with Plato and Aristotle seen as representing the former, when 'normative and moral considerations took precedence over empirical issues', while the latter is characterised by conspicuous absence of principles and terms like 'ethics', 'morality', 'good' and an overwhelming dominance of scientificity<sup>4</sup>. If modernity is taken as a product of Enlightenment and gradually enforcing itself with the Industrial Revolution then it would not be inappropriate to conclude that modernity and capitalism not only coincided but were complementary as well. Modernity unravels the dynamics of capitalism. It can be interpreted as a revolt against a static tradition expressed in its fundamental principles of 'innovation, change, novelty and critical opposition to tradition and dogmatism'. Marx saw modernity as a child of industrialisation and Weber as a process of rationalisation and secularisation<sup>5</sup>.

Modernity can be, indubitably, categorised as a capitalist ideology but within a spatio-temporal context because then the criticisms of modernity could be analysed as representatives of a particular stage of capitalism. It would not be a fallacious conclusion that the whole agenda of science and rationality in opposition to the prevailing hegemonic irrational Biblical feudal ideas was a necessity for the emerging bourgeoisie. After the Industrial Revolution capitalism enforced itself and

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<sup>3</sup> For further details see Giddens, Anthony; *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1987

<sup>4</sup> For further details see Vaughan, Ted R. and Sjobers, Gideon; *Human Rights Theory and The Classical Sociological Tradition* – in Wardell, Stephen L. and Turner, Stephen P. (ed.); *Sociological Theory in Transition*; Allen and Unwin; Boston; 1986

<sup>5</sup> For further details see Kellner, Douglas; *Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1989

so did the ideas of 'modernity'. Thus, modernity came to be established as the dominant idea of a society based on the capitalist mode of production. And as a part of these developments capitalism enforced the conceptions of 'totality of knowledge' or universalisation of its themes and agendas, which were compatible with its imperialist, colonialist and then neo-colonialist projects.

However, in this whole debate on modernity, as a capitalist phenomena the Weberian discussions and theses on the role of rationality acquires importance, wherein he considered even socialism as embodying the features of a much higher form of rationalist bureaucracy. "Weber's far-reaching and highly differentiated scientific research perspective is derived from his initial, entirely concrete, historical and everyday experience of a specific, 'modern occidental', process of rationalisation."<sup>6</sup> He held that the modern West is characterised by formal rationality, which "insists on seeing the world primarily as the field of implementation of human purposes (unlike the world-views of magic and great religions)."<sup>7</sup> Even the notion of his actor is "characterised by a potential for rational calculation and acting in terms of material and ideal interests."<sup>8</sup>

All these features of rationality and rationalisation emerge from Weber's understanding of a social theory and his perceptions about science. In his lecture on science to the students at Munich, which was later published as a pamphlet, he stated very clearly that "there are in principle no *mysterious incalculable powers at work*, but rather that one could in principle master everything through *calculation*."<sup>9</sup> He

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<sup>6</sup> Weiss, Johannes; *Weber and the Marxist World*; Routledge & Kegan Paul; New York and London; 1986; p.108

<sup>7</sup> Hindess, Barry; *Rationality and the Characteristics of Modern Society* – in Lash, Scott and Whimster, Sam (ed.); *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*; Allen & Unwin; London; 1987; p. 145

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 146

<sup>9</sup> Weber, Max; '*Science as a Vocation*'; in Lassman, Peter and Velody, Irving (ed.); *Max Weber's Science as a Vocation*; Unwin Hyman; London; 1989; p.13

talked about *art* in the same fashion and wanted it to be “raised” to the level of science and the artists to the level of doctors and he thought that the earlier artists, like Leonardo da Vinci, aimed at this. He strongly critiqued the “modern intellectualist romanticism” for its irrationality and laid emphasis on the need for a rational discipline and understanding. Science had basically three uses according to him: (1) through knowledge of techniques life can be “controlled through calculation”; (2) methods of thought and tools and education are also necessary to understand the things going around us; and (3) it provides us clarity about things and phenomena.

Weber’s scientificity also came out strongly when he talked about the notion of value-neutrality in social sciences. In fact, the whole debate on this issue, which he flagged off, reflected the understanding of various sociologists on the agenda of science and rationality. Weber was criticised even by Marcuse for this thesis on the grounds that it ultimately leads to the domination of a particular class, i.e., bourgeoisie. He held Weber’s rationality as an ‘instrumental or technical and formal reason, which can function as an instrument of domination and control over natural as well as social processes. He termed Weber’s reason as ‘bourgeois reason’ because his ideas were tied to modern science, which was essentially assigned to bourgeoisie or capitalism.

Furthermore, if his concept of bureaucracy is left aside his ideas on modernity cannot be completely understood. Capitalism is characterised by a rationalistic bureaucracy for administrative purposes, which enables its smooth functioning and progress. Democracy rests on the principles of a bureaucracy, which is transparent, calculable, non-partisan and efficient, which makes domination impossible. Weber assumed that the socialist revolution would not dissolve bureaucracy as its feature

but would rather lead to “an extension and acceleration of bureaucracy.” This idea of his rested on the fact that ‘rational socialism’ could not do away with “the specific rationality (i.e. especially the transparency or ‘calculability’, and efficiency, meaning ‘precision’, ‘continuity’ and ‘expediency’) of a bureaucratically organised ‘administration of the masses.’”<sup>10</sup> He asserted the need for a more tight and calculable administration in socialism. However, Marxist critiques see shortcomings in his theory of bureaucracy because Weber could not see its class base, and his “treatment of bureaucracy purely as a problem of social rationalisation or organisation”<sup>11</sup> also appeared problematic to them. Hence, what we see is a debate taking place at another plane about the nature of modernity in socialist countries as well as capitalist countries. And if modernity is to be critiqued within the paradigms of rationality and bureaucracy as its representative then it would appear that the brand of socialism that existed failed to do away with the criticisms which were made of other bureaucracies as well.

### **Characterising Modernity**

Once the origin of modernity is identified in spatio-temporal terms its prominent tenets are also recognisable:

- Societies are coherently organised systems with interdependent subsystems – this can be interpreted as an attempt at forging a consensus through ‘coherence’ and as an excuse for providing sufficient space for protest and discontent.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> op.cit., Weiss; p.112

<sup>11</sup> ibid., p.114

<sup>12</sup> op. cit., Alexander, p.11

- In the process of historical evolution one can identify two kinds of social systems – traditional and modern.
- Modern societies have been equated with the Western societies and characterised as individualistic, democratic, capitalist, scientific, secular and stable. An idealisation was attempted in order to provide legitimacy to its expansionist designs and a hope was being generated by the bourgeoisie that ultimately the technological advancements would achieve the ‘happiness’.<sup>13</sup>
- Modernity can undergo modifications or ‘upgradations’ during the evolutionary process. Thus, to provide a space for exhaustion of frustration and discontent modernity claimed that it was ready to undergo alterations given a rationally proven better alternative was available.
- There is a consistent effort to standardise the cultural system, with the “gloss” that there is a freedom of choice. The effort is to create homogeneity<sup>14</sup>.
- Perfectionism and Reason formed the essence of modernity. It was the modernist concern and belief of the possibility of a “masterful transformation” of the world and this is what guided the major reforms and revolutions in the modern world, as planned and executed by humans themselves. Enlightenment strengthened it through

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> For further details see Craib, Ian; *Modern Social Theory*; Harvester /Wheatsheaf, New York; 1992



Reason, which may be defined as ‘the self-conscious application of the mind to social and natural phenomena’.

Thus, reason and perfection combined would make the world free and happy<sup>15</sup>. A ‘dream of reason’ a ‘hope for perfection’ is what modernism preached.

If we look at the works of certain major sociologists in the twentieth century we encounter an effort to substantiate the claims of modernity. Talcott Parsons has been one of them, who demonstrated that modernity provides sufficient space for modifications and ‘upgradations’ – through industrialisation, democratisation via law, and secularisation via education. Parsonian thesis says that there are certain functional exigencies that compel the transition to modernity, i.e., to democracy, markets or universalised cultural system. And once any subsystem experiences this transition other subsystems are compelled to respond to it. His effort was always to create a post-capitalist, post-socialist “welfare state”, where individualism and equality was combined and an integration of all hitherto existing contradictory statuses and roles could be seen. Parsons was talking of social equilibrium and political consensus (the modernist language of homogenisation and universalisation). Going much further he wanted to prove that the individual autonomy could be maintained in a social way<sup>16</sup>. Thus, one can conclude that modernity intends to create an image which ‘may be seen as a generalising and abstracting effort to transform a historically specific categorical scheme into a scientific theory of development applicable to any culture around the world’<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> op. cit., Alexander; p.11

<sup>16</sup> ibid.

<sup>17</sup> ibid.

## Modernity Re-examined

The genocide unleashed on humanity by the insatiable appetite of the private capital in form of two World Wars had diminished the hopes generated by modernity of a 'free and happy world'. The technological advancement played havoc, the homogenisation attempts and slogan of universalisation had paved way for the emergence of totalitarian regimes. Herbert Marcuse traced the changes in personality structure during late capitalism, resulting out of a search for a strong personality, due to the anxiety of the period, within oneself rather than without. Thus, narcissistic tendencies led to growth of fascism<sup>18</sup>. But then the post-war years, characterised by a 'socialist' USSR and the expansion of the socialist project and introduction of welfare measures and legislation in capitalist nations towards softening the economic inequity had again raised the hope for a better future. But not more than fifteen years after the war, towards the 1950s, the 'Reality' had set in. Western societies were plagued by class and racial conflicts; new forms of exploitation surfaced and Marx's promise and Parson's hope seemed to be fading away. The leftist intellectuals got a jolt when Nikita Khrushchev revealed, in 1956, the atrocities committed by Stalin<sup>19</sup>.

The theme of modernity, that emerged as a consequence of the Enlightenment related tenets, found its hegemonic world system trembling in "one of those extraordinarily heated rites of spring that marked student uprisings, antiwar movements and newly humanist socialist regimes, and which preceded the long hot summers of the race riots and Black Consciousness movement in United States"<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> op.cit., Craib

<sup>19</sup> Alexander, Jeffrey C.; *Sociological Theory Since 1945*; Hutchinson; London; 1987

<sup>20</sup> Alexander, Jeffrey C.; *Fin de Siecle Social Theory: Relativism, Reduction and The Problem of Reason*; Verso; London; 1995;

The World Wars, the Stalinist regimes, the ethnic movements, racial conflicts, debacle of what was left in a 'Soviet Block', the sophisticated exploitative patterns in the age of MNCs and global capitalism had delivered a shock to all those who had hopes from the modernist project. And it is not surprising to see even the once hardcore communists, in India as well outside, losing hope for a better future. Those who felt defeated were the humanists, anti-fascists, and leftists. Thus, the victory was for them who believed in the contrary. From this shock and lost hopes emerged various schools of thought and thinkers who represented the discontentment with the happenings around them. And it is significant to note here that Marcuse and Foucault were products of the same environment and situation. Later on, feminists also attacked modernity basically on its aversion to take into consideration the issue of 'difference'<sup>21</sup>.

From a literary perspective, the main characteristics of modernism include:

1. An emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity in writing.
2. A movement away from apparent objectivity provided by omniscient third-person narrators, fixed narrative points of view and clear cut moral positions.
3. A blurring of distinctions between genres, so that poetry seems more documentary (as in T.S. Eliot) and prose seems more poetic (as in Virginia Woolf).

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<sup>21</sup> For further readings on feminist critique of modernity see Walby, Sylvia; *Post-postmodernism?: Theorizing Gender* – in *The Polity Reader in Social Theory*; Polity Press: Cambridge; 1994 and Wolff, Janet; *Feminism and Modernity* – in *The Polity Reader in Social Theory*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1994

4. An emphasis on fragmented forms, discontinuous narratives and random seeming collages of different materials.
5. A tendency towards reflexivity or self-consciousness about the production of work of art, as something constructed or consumed in particular way.
6. A rejection of elaborate formal aesthetics in favour of minimalist designs and a rejection, in large part, of formal aesthetic theories, in favour of spontaneity and discovery in creation.
7. A rejection of the distinction of 'high' and 'low' or popular culture, both in choice of materials used to produce art and in methods of displaying, distributing and consuming art.

Modernity is fundamentally about order, about rationality and rationalisation, creating order from chaos. The assumption is that creating more rationality is conducive to creating more order and that the more ordered the society is the better it will function. Because modernity is about the pursuit of ever increasing levels of order, modern societies constantly are on guard against anything and everything labelled as disorder, which might disrupt order. Thus, modern societies rely on continually establishing a binary opposition between order and disorder, so that they can assert the superiority of order. But to do this they have to have things that represent disorder - modern societies thus continually create disorder. Anything non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual, non-rational etc. becomes a part of disorder and has to be eliminated from the ordered, rational modern society.

The way modern societies go about creating categories labelled as order or disorder have to do with the effort to achieve stability. Lyotard equates stability with the idea of 'totality' of a totalised system (think here of Derrida's idea of totality as wholeness or completeness of a system). Totality, stability and order Lyotard argues are maintained in modern societies through the means of 'grand narratives' or 'master narratives, which are the stories that the culture tells itself about its practices and beliefs. Every belief system or ideology has a grand narrative according to Lyotard; for Marxism, for instance the grand narrative is the idea that capitalism will collapse in on itself and a Utopian socialist world will evolve. Lyotard argues that all aspects of modern societies, including science as a primary form of knowledge, depend on these grand narratives. The awareness that such narratives serve to mask the contradictions and instabilities that are inherent in any social organisation and practice. In other words, every attempt to create order always demands the creation of equal amounts of disorder but a grand narrative masks the *constructedness* of these categories by explaining that disorder really is chaotic and bad and that order is really rational and good.

Modernity, as co-terminus with capitalism produced a discontentment as discussed above. This nature of discontentment, if analysed, reveals that the ideas that were opposed by the Critical School or the Postmodernists were largely offspring of the western capitalism. Capitalism was an advanced stage of social order and adopted (and adopts even today) various means to perpetuate its hegemony. Galileo was made a hero by them because they needed a symbol to defeat the feudal forces and science was required by the nascent bourgeoisie to augment its production. The organisation of the society in an orderly fashion was a necessity because anarchy hampered production. To this idea origin of the notion of order can be traced.

Hence, a rational, ordered, scientific social order was the necessity of the emerging bourgeoisie at the time of Renaissance.

The capitalist system guided by the desire to maximise profit resorted to wars of various kinds – from World Wars to guerrilla wars. In a system characterised by the private property and an insatiable lust for profit an equitable social order is impossibility but the movements that brought about the rule of bourgeoisie or strengthened them in many western countries promised them a just and democratic social order. However, it was a dream, which gradually broke. And, even today, using the powerful instruments of propaganda and destroying criticality the bourgeoisie keeps the people under the illusory cover of a false liberty. It defines the systems, judges the conflicts and innovates new terms to show that it has been acting judiciously and rationally. In order to expand its base it resorted to the universalising tendencies and tried to put the whole world under one kind of social system. To achieve its aims it has been resorting to all kinds of instruments available at its disposal and this has been brilliantly shown by Foucault's study of prisons, asylums and confinement houses. Marcuse, through his two works, which have been cited here, has tried to show that the democracy and liberty, as self-lauded by the contemporary social systems, have been nothing more than a façade. The elements that he has criticised have been attributed to modernity as a universe comprising them, which came into being after Enlightenment. In this work I would look at the ideas and views of Foucault and Marcuse on domination and hegemony maintenance and creation which they looked at as an essential part of the design of modernity. Through Gandhi an effort to understand a critique of modernity in colonial situation is made.

## **Indian Modernity**

India experienced its Enlightenment much later than the Western world. And, moreover, this Enlightenment could not be carried much further, geographically as well as ideologically because of various reasons, one being the colonial hegemony of British. This Renaissance was first experienced in Bengal, where “the impact of British rule, bourgeois economy and modern western culture was felt first”<sup>22</sup>. The role of Bengal in India Renaissance can very well be compared to that of Italy in European Renaissance. This Renaissance extended from social reform movements, like anti-*Sati*, anti-dowry struggles, to that of reforms in the field of education. It can be divided in five phases: first phase (1814-33) was dominated by Raja Rammohun Roy, who wanted to raise the Indian society from the stagnant and decadent stage through a symbiosis of western (reflected in the demand to introduce western education) and eastern ideas; the second phase (1833-57) was dominated by the Derozians, who were committed disciples of Rammohun Roy but could not take further his aim ideologically; the third phase (1857-85) was that of after the Mutiny characterised by popular upsurge, development of creative literature religious reform and development of a national consciousness among other things; the fourth phase (1885-1905) and the fifth phase (1905-19) were characterised by political awakening. Thinkers like Tagore were a product of this Renaissance that characterised Bengal. The western education was introduced in India by the British, the spirit of Western Enlightenment and the ideas of a scientific, rational world was pouring in through various channels like education. Later on people like Nehru also

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<sup>22</sup> Sarkar, S.; *Bengal Renaissance and Other Essays*; People’s Publishing House; New Delhi; 1981; Pp. 03

represented those sections of Indian population which wanted India to modernise and this, in fact, became a major issue of difference between him and Gandhi.

Gandhi wrote his work and advocated his philosophies in such a situation. His was not a critique of scientific rational order of same type or category that we find in the works of Marcuse or Foucault but was largely a spirituo-religious criticism of the Western culture, which was 'modernity'. The criticism that he did of the western civilisation contained elements of discontent against the universalising tendencies, imposition of an authority, in form of texts and disciplines prescribed by the western world. Even his opposition against the western understanding of the Indian situation as backward/underdeveloped and barbaric was also in a sense a critique of the modern civilisation because such concepts and notions started dominating the western thought only after Renaissance and more after Industrialisation. This may be attributable to the changed nature of colonisation. The initial annexation of colonies, no doubt, resembled the Middle Age conquests but then the need of the developing capitalist systems of Europe was to sustain the rule in colonies and do away with the oppositions that emerged there, for which the role of education and a cultural campaign for colonial rule were considered important.

Gandhi's opposition was a coincidence as well, which makes it difficult for sociologists to classify him as an ardent opponent of modernity. The elements that Gandhi was opposing were largely introduced in India by the British, which meant that Gandhi's opposition was against the British, but it also implied that the formation of the Gandhi's thought process was a part of the colonial system, which the Indians despised. Hence, his opposition needs to be seen in the context of colonisation campaign of the West.



## **The Dissertation**

In this dissertation the three thinkers who have been chosen as critiques of modernity do not fall in a homogeneous category of some particular brand of anti-modernity thinkers. Rather they represent three different schools of thought. Hence, the question that arises is that why were they chosen? The reason is that through the exercise of engaging in a dialogue with these thinkers an effort is made to gauge the wide spectrum of anti-modernity thought and understand how in different circumstances different thoughts appear as a response to more or less same overarching logic of development (such as modernity).

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. The 'Introduction' tries to understand the phenomena of modernity and the causes for its emergence. It also takes into consideration how the developments taking place at socio-economic and political horizon led to disenchantment with it. In the chapter on Gandhi an effort is made to look at him as a person placed in the colonial tradition, characterised by various kinds of responses from Indians to the Western civilisation. How Gandhi reacts and formulates his own critique of the Western civilisation and modernity in such a situation. The chapter on Marcuse takes a look at the emergence of one of the most scathing critiques of modernity, as represented by the advanced capitalist world. He unravels the cultural features and dynamics of the rule of capital. Chapter on Foucault, on the other hand, tries to locate his ideas of ideology, hegemony, power/knowledge relationship, surveillance etc., as grounded in historicity. It also deals with his suggestions and alternative ways of history writing, which redefined the character of modernity as a system trying to evolve newer techniques of domination. The 'Conclusion' tries to assimilate the three thinkers and analyse their contributions in the light of capitalist development and assess their shortcomings.

GANDHIAN ASSERTION: SPIRITUALITY AND  
DISCONTENTS OF MODERNITY

In this chapter the Gandhian perception about modernity is sought to be understood with the help of his work *Hind Swaraj*, which embodies his philosophy of life. A critical assessment of his ideas is made through grounding him and his contributions in the contemporary times and locating his thought as a product of a person living and fighting colonial bondage.

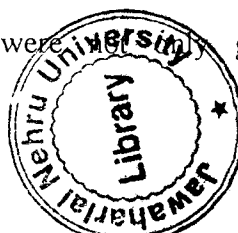
**Locating Gandhi**

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E.H. Carr in his book *What is History* wrote that before studying a book of history, study the historian and before studying the historian study his environment, in which he had been nurtured. Not only Carr, but long before, Karl Marx as well had pointed that a person is a product of his/her own environment and so will be his ideas and understandings about the things he stands for. Gandhi needs to be understood from this perspective. He was born on October 2, 1869 in the semi-independent state of Porbander. Born and brought up in a family where religious atmosphere dictated everything, Gandhi was taught the same spirit of piousness and religiosity, which he later developed to the extremes of chastity. He was educated in England and worked in South Africa before coming to India.

On a larger canvas Gandhi was born in a colonised state of British Empire – India and during the process of socialisation, which includes education and interaction, he saw and realised the urgency of liberating the country from the bondage of British colonialism. The colonial masters were governing their colonies

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administratively but also ideologically. And it was in this context that the ideas of 'civilising the Orient' and the notions of 'white man's burden' were invented. The culture and civilisation of India was criticised by the colonial masters, which in India gave way to the emergence of a Revivalist School of thought, which extolled the contributions of Indian history, thereby sometimes applauding even the reactionary tendencies and events. The loot of the Indian resources was continuing unabated and the gradual processes of modernist development that were on in England were also making their way into the Indian land. This was a result of the long interaction between the Indian and English culture.

There was a search for identity on global scale and Gandhi was doing the same thing when he asserted that through the methods of non-violence India would show the world the power of spirituality and the whole world would bow before her. He was critiquing the imposition of ideas on Indian society by the British. Modernity, which later came to be identified more clearly in terms of universalisation, rationality, homogenisation and order, was being imposed by the British and Gandhi's opposition, intentionally or unintentionally, was directed towards this. But it is difficult to gauge whether he was critiquing modernity or highlighting his own project of a nation and society, wherein the values and ethics advocated by modernity was not tolerated. But there was one thing certain – he had a vision of a free India, wherein the status quo of the pre-British epoch in the sense of a village society with certain elements of change, but with the same inequitable power matrix was to stay.

We come across these tendencies in the Latin American nations as well, where the leaders of freedom movement defended the local culture, but provided more space to change. Beginning from the great philosopher Andrés Bello, who through his work

*La autonomía cultural de América* admitted that the local specificities should have been provided more space as far as history writing was concerned. Due to a scattered history scientific treatment of the subject was impossible and therefore narratives should be given primacy. This encouraged authors and leaders to develop their concepts of nation, history and identity.

In *Civilización y Barbarie*, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento considered the European model of development to be superior and prescribed that Argentina should follow the metropolises, which were centres and concentration of such cultures. He considered the rural areas to be full of savage population. His ideas were derived from European Enlightenment, empiricism and rationalism. On the other hand, Jose Martí, in his essay *Nuestra América* defended the indigenous culture and people. He argues that the indigenous people have a concept of their culture and they had built it accordingly. He developed a critique of western outlook of civilisation and rejected the 'imported education and imported books'<sup>1</sup>. Gandhi needs to be located in the same context, wherein the superimposing hegemony of Western world represented by the British in India was trying to implement their project of modernity. Modernity, if seen as forced domination, forceful implementation of positivist ideas, which provided less space to the localised affairs and ideas of the colonies and tried to bind the whole world under one perception, was certainly what Gandhi was opposing, the only difference being the alternative that he was offering.

Interpretation of Gandhi's life and philosophy has been many, ranging from studies that categorise him as a 'petty-bourgeois' representative to the other studies calling him a critical traditionalist' or a 'populist'. Some other studies, off late, have also

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<sup>1</sup> Paul, Rama; *La Trayectoria del Desarrollo de la Narrativa del Siglo XX: Desde el Realismo hasta la Nueva Novela* (unpublished); 2001 She refers to the three authors – Bello, Sarmiento and Martí to show the concept of nation building that they had envisioned.

tried to interpret his perception with relations to his notions of chastity and his attitude towards Kasturba and others. However, there have been people like Bhikhu Parekh who termed him as a sort of women liberator as well because he not only brought many, traditionally subjugated women into public life, which even Lenin or Mao could not do but also “articulated and attempted to live up to the extraordinary ideal of an androgynous person.”<sup>2</sup> But our concern lies here mainly to see his role as an anti-modernity representative from the Indian society and the salient features of his thought process with regard to that.

Gandhi never fitted into any category of traditional Indian due to his simultaneous opposition to superstition and obscurantism as well as western modernity. He was convinced that the “Hindu society needed moral regeneration, a ‘new system of ethics’, a new *yugadharmā*.”<sup>3</sup> But for this aim to be achieved the Hindu tradition alone was insufficient and needed reinterpretation and reform. Therefore, the help of other religions was sought like Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity and writers like Tolstoy and Thoreau. Hence, he defined the existing Hindu tradition in a fashion, which showed that it had a tradition of entertaining cultural-exchange of ideas.

Gandhi’s claim to belong to a tradition and to hold its heritage firmly emanated from the understanding that claiming “allegiance to its tradition” meant committing “oneself to its central values not its contingent beliefs and practices.”<sup>4</sup> He considered the “basic values and insights of a tradition” as ‘valid’ and binding not because of its age but because it stood the test of time, and test of critiques. Comparing the western rationality to the Indian tradition he felt that as the scientists of Western Europe

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<sup>2</sup> Parekh, Bhikhu; *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform – An Analysis of Gandhi’s Political Discourse*; Sage Publications; New Delhi; 1999; p.15

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p.23

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.24

embarked on their missions to understand the complexities of this world even the Indian minds have been trying to unravel the mysteries of this universe through their own method.<sup>5</sup> Every tradition had its own principles of self-criticism, which enriched the stock of moral knowledge and that is why to him European attempt to shape the entire world in its own image appeared damaging and erroneous to him. This approach was also fallacious because it hampered not only the process of development of non-European societies but also “denied Europe new moral insights and critical self-knowledge.”<sup>6</sup> He put forward the twin ideas of rootedness and openness. Gandhi “exemplified and deepened Gadamer’s idea of ‘fusion of horizons’ and offered an alternative conception of universalism to the post-Enlightenment ethno-centric model of the colonial rulers.”<sup>7</sup>

Gandhi met with tremendous opposition from the traditional orthodox Indians, especially for the criticism of the criticisms he made of certain traits as ‘superstitions’. Because of his lack of knowledge and absence of any ‘authority’ (as he belonged to a non-Brahmin caste as well) he was not accepted as a person eligible to make scrutiny of the sacred texts. However, the title of Mahatma given by Tagore was accepted by the Indians because of his stress on morality and ethics, which seemed traditional. Gandhi emphasised on reason but cannot be called a rationalist and to him tradition and reason were not hostile to each other. Tradition was an accumulation of experiments at whose heart lay reason. The British “colonialism spawned intense rationalism and undermined tradition both as a mode of discourse and as a form of knowledge.”<sup>8</sup> At such a juncture when the brutal criticism of Indian

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<sup>5</sup> Hinduism has been a science of spirit, “an unending quest, an inherently open tradition of inquiry”. (ibid., p.24)

<sup>6</sup> ibid., p.25

<sup>7</sup> ibid., p.26

<sup>8</sup> ibid., p.36

tradition by the British had made the defence of the tradition imperative Gandhi also realised that “it had accumulated a lot of ‘dead weight’ and that the uncritical and ‘mindless’ traditionalism of the orthodox was both unwise and impractical.”<sup>9</sup>

The situation forced upon India had paved way for the emergence of, basically, three responses:

- (i) *Traditionalists*: They believed that the Hindu society had nothing negative and therefore need not change. They were not bothered about the British’s ‘materialistic’, ‘irreligious’, ‘individualist’, ‘violent’... character. The way Britain had conquered India and ruled showed that they needed to learn many elements of civilisation from it. The influence of traditionalists was limited, though Ram Mohun Roy and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhaya (who had turned a ‘full circle’ from an admirer of the West to its critic) shared it deeply. However, Ram Mohun Roy fell more suitably in the category of critical modernists because his attempts (in the field of education and movement for women) to westernise the Indian stock of knowledge. Similar was the case of Madhusudan who through his works wanted to make the presence of West, conceptually, felt in India because of his westernised ideas and hope of improving the condition of India through modernity and rationalisation.<sup>10</sup>
- (ii) *Critical Modernists*: They thought that the Indian society needed a ‘national rebirth’, ‘a new moral and social order’, a ‘new philosophy’ etc. Not only

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.38

<sup>10</sup> For further details see Nandy, Ashis; *The Intimate Enemy – Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*; OUP; Delhi; 1998 (To him Bankim also tried to include the values of western modernity through radicalising the religious symbols as in his work Krishna, where he showed Krishna as a “respectable, righteous, didactic, hard god, protecting the glories of Hinduism”. This was a symbiosis of the traditional culture, the belief in the gods, but rationality comes in the changing nature of gods. p.23)

new truths but also new methods of validating them are needed. Modern science appeared as the only solution to them. 'Scientific method', 'scientific research' and 'scientific ethics' was required to take India on the paths of glory. "Bengal for a while was full of Comte and found in his positivism a method of discovering new truths."<sup>11</sup> Ranade was advocating Bacon's method while Gokhale thought that J.S. Mill's empiricism was alone appropriate for any research. "Hindu leaders were convinced that their society's salvation lay in creating a strong India state. Since such a state presupposed industrialisation modern science and technology and a rationalist culture, they needed these as well."<sup>12</sup> Hence, the salvation lay in modernity. They wanted the development to be synchronised wherein the central principles of the Indian civilisation need not be given up.

- (iii) *Critical Traditionalists*: Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, Vivekanand, B.C. Pal, Aurobindo and others formulated a response as per which a solution lay in, for which they used Aurobindo's term, *atmasakarna* – i.e., 'an assimilative appropriation, making the thing settle into oneself and turning it into a characteristic form of our self-being'.<sup>13</sup> While critical modernists wanted to combine the best of both the civilisations the critical traditionalists wanted to have a society through "regenerating and reforming their own."<sup>14</sup> Former wanted to retain what was valuable in the civilisation and the latter wanted to eliminate what was evil.

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<sup>11</sup> op. cit., Parekh, p.52

<sup>12</sup> ibid., p.55

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from Aurobindo; The Foundations of India Culture; Sri Aurobindo Ashram; Pondicherry; 1959; p.389 in op. cit., Parekh, p.73

<sup>14</sup> ibid., p.73



Gandhi presented his own understanding of the Indian society and modern western civilisation in this context, wherein he was fighting a twin battle – against the traditionalist forces as well as the modernist thinkers.

### **About *Hind Swaraj***

*Hind Swaraj* has been chosen as the book to assess the ideas of Gandhi about modernity because this was, in a sense, the first major ideological work that he produced and which reflected his whole philosophy and understanding of the situation in which he was living and participating in the freedom struggle. The book was written in 1908 as a response to the Indian School of Violence and was serially published in 'Indian Opinion' (edited by Gandhi). In 1921, Gandhi wrote about the book: 'It teaches the gospel of love in place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul force against brute force. I withdraw nothing except one word of it, and that in deference to a lady friend. The booklet is a severe condemnation of 'modern civilisation'. It was written in 1908. My conviction is deeper today than ever...But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am today aiming at the Swaraj described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it. It may seem an impertinence to say so. But such is my conviction. I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary Swaraj, in accordance with the wishes of the people of India.'<sup>15</sup>

### **Gandhi and his Philosophy – an Introduction**

Gandhian philosophy and his world-view have been spelt out clearly in *Hind Swaraj*. Gandhi had a vision of free India and for the social order he wished to

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<sup>15</sup>Gandhi, M.K.; *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*; Navjivan Publishing House; Ahmedabad; 2000;p.13

establish he had a fairly clear perception about the inclusions and exclusions of that system. In fact, Gandhi is not so easy to analyse as to read and understand. The greatest merit that lies with him is his simplicity, which one can realise after doing a comparative reading of his works with that of Foucault and Marcuse – both of whom represented complexity at its nadir.

This book, which encompasses his philosophy and understanding on nearly every issue, brings forth the agenda that he pursued during his role as the leader of Indian nationalist movement. He has extensively talked in the initial stages about the role of Congress Party in nation - building and how Partition acted as the catalyst that generated awakening among Indians against the British rule. This book and Gandhi's thought as a whole, was a response to the contemporary forms of unrest, which were primarily violent in nature.

The basis of his ideas seemed to be his relentless campaign to defeat and oust British from Indian soil. In fact, he did not even talk of ousting them if they could have adopted the country, meaning if they could have respected the culture and civilisation, as their own and gave up their role as the masters. On the issue of how to make India free Gandhi believed that "...it is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English. If the English become Indianised, we can accommodate them."<sup>16</sup>

It is in this connection that one finds references to the existing British system and Parliaments, when he opposed them. Views are formulated not in abstraction but as a part of the environment that surrounds, and nurtures the thought process of a person. Gandhi was placed in a colonial situation and he had one aim – to make

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p.56

India free. Western society, which governed the underdeveloped nations, was represented in his mind-set as the embodiment of a perverse form of civilisation.

His critique as a whole was against the modern civilisation and its various facets like newspapers, doctors, lawyers, the existing education system, hospitals and railways. In fact, one might argue that his opposition to these was largely in context of the British subjugation of India, but, in any case, they reflected his ideas about these aspects of civilisation. He appeared concerned about the vanishing *morality* and *collectivity* and opposed cities with this view. His view was that the modern civilisation rather than the British were subjugating India. Gandhi's opinion and concern about the issues of morality and vanishing collectivity was a manifestation of the class interests, which he represented. He grew up in a princely state in Gujarat and was brought up in an ambience that was not modernised in the sense grounded in the positivist ideas. And this background of his nurtured Gandhi's thinking about the path a free India should have taken and the conflict between the representative of nascent Indian bourgeoisie – Nehru – and the rich peasantry – landlord section of society – Gandhi – reflected the class interests of the two and explains the stands taken by them. Even among the peasantry, Gandhi represented the traditional peasantry, which was opposed and ignorant to the mechanisation and modernisation of Indian agriculture. To counter the detrimental tendencies and to defeat them he prescribed passive resistance or the use of soul-force vis-à-vis body-force.

### **Understanding Civilisation**

Gandhi scathingly criticising civilisation termed it a disease on the lines of “a great English writer”. He argued that people did not oppose it because of its intoxication

affect. "A man labouring under the bane of civilisation is like a dreaming man."<sup>17</sup>

The writings of defenders of modern civilisation hypnotised us.

Commenting on what "state of things" could be included in the word "civilisation" he writes, "its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life." Better houses, dresses, arms etc., are termed emblems of civilisation. Any country that adopts "European clothing... are supposed to have become civilised out of savagery."<sup>18</sup> Steam engine, more and more valuable books, fast-travel etc., are "considered the height of civilisation." It is argued that with further development men will not use their hands and feet because everything will be done by machine. Now, one man can kill thousands. This is civilisation. People are compelled to work "at the risk of their lives...for the sake of millionaires."<sup>19</sup> The "temptation of money" has "enslaved" man and new diseases, doctors and hospitals have come up. "This is a test of civilisation."<sup>20</sup> Gandhi here tries to oppose the tendencies of individualisation and commercialisation of social life. He also constantly refers to the sharp economic disparity that characterised India.

Gandhi opposed the tendency to brand opposition as ignorant with reference to authoritative books. This understanding of Gandhi is a rebuttal of the tendencies to create instruments (as books) and authorities that are considered unchallenged because of the logic they profess. Rationality, though Gandhi has not used the word, was defined as the invention of the Western civilisation and then certain spaces, and symbols were constructed and declared as rational. Therefore, an area, a limit, a restriction was imposed and the world and societies were asked, implicitly or

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, pp.30-31

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p.31

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p.32

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

explicitly, to function within that limit. In the similar fashion, and a part of the same project, certain books were declared as rational, and therefore authorities to decide the wrong and the right. Gandhi's objection can be put under that same category of an opposition to such tendencies. "This civilisation takes note neither of morality nor of religion. Its votaries calmly state that their business is not to teach religion. Some even consider it to be a superstitious growth. Others put on the clock of religion, and prate about morality. But, after twenty years' experience, I have come to the conclusion that immorality is often taught in the name of morality...Civilisation seeks to increase bodily comforts, and it fails miserably even in doing so."<sup>21</sup> The civilisation is a façade, it is hypocritical because it fleeces people in the name of morality and religion, even if these terms are used.

Gandhi's critique of civilisation was essentially based on the model of civilisation and culture that was prevalent in Britain. He never wanted a Hindustan where everything was like "English rule without the Englishman",<sup>22</sup> meaning Anglicisation of Indian society was not tolerable. This was his response to the question of adopting British parameters of splendour and fame such as navy, army etc.

Critiquing the existing British system Gandhi opined that India should never find itself in that "pitiable" condition. He presented an opposition of the existing institutions that were there in England. That "Mother of Parliaments", which we adore, "is like a sterile woman and a prostitute" because it had done nothing good and was always under control of ministers who change from time to time just "like a prostitute."<sup>23</sup> This criticism emanated from the fact that it never worked for people in general but for Party in power and the Prime Minister acted as an agent who

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, pp.32-33

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p.26

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p.27

ensured this. They, the members of Parliament, who were hypocritical as well as selfish, “bribe people with honours...they have neither real honesty nor a living conscience”<sup>24</sup>. Carlyle called it the ‘talking shop of the world’. Members voted on issues without thinking and those who thought were declared renegades. “Parliament is simply a costly toy of the nation.”<sup>25</sup>

His criticism was not restricted to only Parliament, ministers or newspapers (whom he called inconsistent and dishonest and as agents of the political parties) but also included people of England. “The people would follow a powerful orator or a man who gives them parties, receptions, etc. As were the people, so is their Parliament.”<sup>26</sup> This condition is not due to fault of people but because of modern civilisation. If India follows England it would be ruined the same way. And as a solution he prescribed the need of a Home Rule there as well.

G.D.H. Cole very sharply reacted to the Gandhi’s critique of West and argued that West had ‘grave defects’, as was visible in Spain and Abyssinia, but they were only certain tendencies that never reflected the essence of Western civilisation. He accepted the defect but, simultaneously, pointed out that it was not ‘past mending’.<sup>27</sup>

This civilisation, which is irreligious, rules Europe has made people mad. People in European countries due an impact of this civilisation “lack real physical strength or courage. They keep up their energy by intoxication. They can hardly be happy in solitude. Women, who should be the queens of households, wander in the streets or they slave away in factories.”<sup>28</sup> This civilisation will be “self-destroyed”. In order to prove that the Indian culture and religion has always denounced such a culture he

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p.29

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p.28

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p.30

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p.09

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p.33

refers back to Mohammed, who called it a “Satanic Civilisation”, and Hinduism, which termed it a “Black Age”.<sup>29</sup> This civilisation “is eating into the vitals of the English nation”, which has symbols of modern civilisation like Parliaments, which Gandhi considered as “emblems of slavery.” But he was hopeful that the English people would resolve this problem because they are “not inherently immoral. Neither are they bad at heart... Civilisation is not an incurable disease...”<sup>30</sup>

Gandhi was more concerned with the fact that India was “being ground down, not under the English heel, but that of modern civilisation”. This would imply irreligiousness of the masses ...turning away from God.”<sup>31</sup> However, he was self-critical as well when he accepted that Indians were “lazy” and Europeans industrious and enterprising. And that Indians were trying to change their condition accordingly.

Gandhi is emphasising on the need of being religious, i.e., strive for *godly pursuits* rather than *worldly pursuits*. Killing of Christians, Muslims or Hindus in the name of religion is considered “far more bearable than those of civilisation”. It happens because of “credulous and ignorant people”.<sup>32</sup> But on the other hand, “...there is no end to the victims destroyed in the fire of civilisation. Its deadly effect is that people come under its scorching flames believing it to be all good. They become utterly irreligious and, in reality, derive little advantage from the world. Civilisation is like a mouse gnawing while it is soothing us, when its full effect is realised, we shall see that religious superstition is harmless compared to that of modern civilisation.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p.36

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p.37

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, pp.37-38

However, this never meant that superstition should not be opposed. It should be fought “tooth and nail.”<sup>34</sup>

Gandhi rose in defence of Indian civilisation and argued that India never moved from what was established through the test of experience. Then he defined civilisation as “that mode of conduct, which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves.”<sup>35</sup>

He held that it is human tendency to want more and more if his desires are fulfilled but more indulgence in passions make them “unbridled”<sup>36</sup>. Thereafter, they become difficult to control them. But our ancestors sought to end this by dissuading us from luxuries and pleasures. And that is why Indians have been using the same plough as before or live in the same cottages, so does their education remain. Competition had no place. Indians knew how to invent machinery but refrained from it because one loses moral fiber due to it.<sup>37</sup>

Gandhi also opposed cities because people would not be happy and robbers, prostitution and vice would flourish and rich would rob the poor. In past, the kings and their swords were considered inferior to the “sword of ethics” and, therefore, *Rishis* and saints had a higher place.<sup>38</sup>

Courts, lawyers and doctors were there but they acted within bounds and did not consider themselves superior. They did not rob people and were people’s

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p.38

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p.53

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p.54

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p.54



dependants. Common people lived independently and followed their agricultural occupation. "They enjoyed true Home Rule."<sup>39</sup> Those parts of India still untouched by civilisation enjoy the same Home Rule. However, Gandhi calls polyandry practices of *Niyoga* as defeats of society but "nobody mistakes them for ancient civilisation."<sup>40</sup> No civilisation has attained perfection. "The tendency of the Indian civilisation is to elevate the moral being, that of the western civilisation is to propagate immorality."<sup>41</sup>

Gandhi has been seen as a scathing critique of the Western culture and civilisation. The use of term 'civilisation' intrinsically implied the cultural ethos, the governing principles of society, and the rules of living that are framed as a part of it. His criticism of western civilisation needs to be understood from this perception, then only it would provide us with insights into his understanding of modernity, even though he never used such terms as they became a part of discourse much later on. But without looking at his understanding of Western civilisation as a representative of modernity we cannot put him under the category of a critique of modernity.

In the contemporary Indian discourse the debate on modernity became interesting after Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru indulged in intellectual encounters with Gandhi. Tagore refused to banish the Western civilisation, unlike Gandhi and termed the "attempt to separate our spirit from that of the Occident" as "a tentative of spiritual suicide."<sup>42</sup> Occident offered many things to learn and we must appreciate and imbibe that. "But to say that it is wrong to co-operate with the West is to encourage the worst form of provincialism and can produce nothing but intellectual

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p.55

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p.55

<sup>42</sup> Tagore as quoted in Rolland, Romain; *Mahatma Gandhi*: Publications Division; New Delhi; 1990, p.79

indigence.”<sup>43</sup> He was a staunch supporter of modernity, the new age. And it was amply clear when he said, “the awakening of India is bound up in the awakening of the world. Every nation that tries to shut itself in, violates the spirit of the new age.”<sup>44</sup>

Gandhi was, perhaps, negating the attempt to homogenise everything through imposition of a common culture over the colonised world. He wanted to experience and learn from the other cultures but without losing the essence of one’s own cultural spirit. This became very much evident in his response to Tagore, who strongly critiqued the non-co-operation movement,<sup>45</sup> on the grounds that it was closing India to Western culture, which did not necessarily imply everything negative. However, it remains a tedious task to bring out clearly whether it was Gandhi’s rigidity to hold on to Indian culture due to nationalist ideas (as being placed as a person dedicated to liberate India from the colonial yoke) or a commitment to oppose universalising tendencies of a positivistic, rational Western culture.

### **Civilisation without Railways, Doctors....**

#### Railways

Gandhi considered Railways to be detrimental and as embodiment of many negative qualities because: (1) English entrenched themselves through it; (2) it spread bubonic plague through enabling movement of people; (3) it has increased famine because people sell their grain to distant places in dearest markets; and (4) it

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Tagore as quoted in Romain Rolland, p.83

<sup>45</sup> Gandhi wrote: “I do not my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible...But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them...Mine is not a religion of the prison house. It has room for the least among God’s creations. But it is proof against insolent pride of race, religion or colour.” Quoted by Rolland, p.80

“accentuate the evil nature of man. Bad men fulfil their evil designs with greater rapidity. The holy places of India have become unholy.”<sup>46</sup> Previously, as people visited these places with great difficulty only “real devotees” could reach there. As good and unselfish travel at a snails pace and need not accelerate its pace it did not require railways. Hence, “the railways can become a distributing agency for the evil one only. It may be a debatable matter whether railways spread famines, but it is beyond dispute that they propagate evil.”<sup>47</sup>

### Lawyers

“...Lawyers have enslaved India, have accentuated Hindu-Mohammedan dissension and have confirmed English authority.”<sup>48</sup> This happens because when Hindu-Muslims quarrel they go to a lawyer who advances the quarrel instead of repressing or resolving the matter. This helps the English because they use this conflict for their own means. Indians themselves, without the involvement of any third party should resolve the quarrel.

Lawyers did some good work because they are good human beings. However, “All I am concerned with is to show you that the profession teaches immorality it is exposed to temptation from which few are saved.” People take to this profession to get rich, become wealthy “and their interest exists in multiplying disputes.”<sup>49</sup>

“Truly, men were less unmanly when they settled their disputes either by fighting or by asking their relatives to decide for them. They become more unmanly and cowardly when they resorted to the courts of law.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Gandhi, M.K.; *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*; Navjivan Publishing House; Ahmedabad; 2000; p.40

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p.40

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p.47

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p.48

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p.49

“The chief thing, however, to be remembered is that without lawyers courts could not have been established or conducted and without the latter the English could not rule...If pleaders were to be abandon their profession, and consider it just as degrading as prostitution, English rule would break up in a day.”<sup>51</sup>

#### Doctors

Gandhi extends his criticism to doctors as well. He held that British used medical profession for retaining India as they did with several Asiatic potentates for political gain. To him, “sometimes”, quacks appeared better than doctors. By taking medicine for cure one tends to indulge in same activity knowing that medicines will rescue him. “My body thereby certainly felt more at ease; but my mind became weakened. A continuance of a course of medicine must, therefore, result in loss of control over the mind.”<sup>52</sup>

“Hospitals are institutions for propagating sin. Men take less care of their bodies and immorality increases.”<sup>53</sup> What doctors do is irreligious, like vivisection. They also use animal fat or spirituous liquors in the medicines, which neither Hinduism or Islam permits. “Doctors induce us to indulge, and the result is that we have become deprived of self-control and have become effeminate.”<sup>54</sup> People do not wish to serve humanity, but become doctors for wealth and honours.

#### Education

Gandhi strongly critiqued the existing education system saying that Geography, Astronomy, Algebra, Geometry etc., that he learnt had no use in making him a man. “It does not enable us to do our duty.” He considered the ancient school system to be

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p.50

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p.51

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p.52

enough and “character-building has the first place in it and that is primary education.”<sup>55</sup>

Knowledge of English has “enslaved” us. With English education “hypocrisy, tyranny etc., have increased; English-knowing Indians have not hesitated to cheat and strike terror into the people.”<sup>56</sup> In fact, “we are so much beset by the disease of civilisation that we cannot altogether do without English-education.” The child should be taught morality through mother tongue and another Indian language should also be taught. English should be learnt when grows up and not as the ultimate aim. One should consider as to what could be learnt through English and even if science what kind of science. To ease these matters, English books should be translated into Indian languages. “We should abandon the pretension of learning many sciences. Religious, that is ethical, education will occupy the first place.”<sup>57</sup> He suggested that every Indian, apart from his provincial language must learn if a Hindu, Sanskrit; if a Muslim, Arabic etc., and some Hindus should learn Persian and Muslims Sanskrit. To him this alternative education was necessary to drive out the English language and British.

“In our own civilisation there will naturally be progress, retrogression, reforms and reactions; but one effort is required and that is to drive out Western civilisation.”<sup>58</sup>

### **The Attack on Machinery**

“There is a growing body of enlightened opinion which distrusts this civilisation which has insatiable material ambition at one end and consequent war at the other.”<sup>59</sup> This is industrialisation and before introducing or applying these principles

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p.77

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p.78

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p.79

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p.80

<sup>59</sup> Gandhi, Mahatma: *India of My Dreams*; Navjivan Publishing House; Ahmedabad; 1999; p.29

to the Indian context he thought it imperative to diagnose its effects. Gandhi has also been seen as a strong critique of mechanisation. He was living in a time when people were dying of hunger, getting poorer and unemployed.<sup>60</sup> This makes an opposition to mechanisation process look justified because he wanted India to have labour intensive production centres. "Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour." He introduced the concept of spindle because of these reason and was ready to go for power-spindle if "at the same time it was ready to give million of farmers some other occupation in their homes."<sup>61</sup> But he also dealt with the larger issues of the industrialisation and felt that "industrialisation on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers as the problems of competition and marketing come in."<sup>62</sup> The need is to have self-contained, self-sufficient villages and if this character of village industry is maintained he had no problems with machines. Over and above all it also appeared as a part of nation-building project to a representative of rich peasantry, averse to capitalist path of agricultural development.

Gandhi wept after reading R.P. Dutt's *Economic History of India*. "It is machinery that has impoverished India. It is difficult to measure the harm that Manchester has done to us." Machinery destroyed England. "Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilisation; it represents a great sin."<sup>63</sup>

He held machines responsible for the starving workers of Bombay mills and opined that it was better to buy Manchester cloth than manufacturing it in India because then only money was wasted. If Manchester were created in India the morality of nation would be destroyed. India would become free but a rich immoral India could easily get free.

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<sup>60</sup> Rolland, Romain; *Mahatma Gandhi*; Publications Division; New Delhi; 1990

<sup>61</sup> Gandhi, Mahatma; *All Men Are Brothers*; Navjivan Publishing House; Ahmedabad; 1999; p.162

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p.165

<sup>63</sup> Gandhi, M.K.; *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*; Navjivan Publishing House; Ahmedabad; 2000;p.81

Terming money and sexual desire as a vice he said that a snake-bite would be a lesser poison than these two, because “the former merely destroys the body but the latter destroys body, mind and soul.”<sup>64</sup> India should go back to those days without machinery, of glassware, handmade earthen saucers for lamps, etc., so that we “save our eyes and money and support Swadeshi and so shall we attain Home Rule.”<sup>65</sup> His stand on the issues again become clear here- that is his aim was to attain Home Rule and used to analyse things from that of point of view but also looked at them as the components of a future India.

Reviewers strongly criticised Gandhi’s condemnation of machinery. Murray argues that Gandhi forgets that even ‘the very spinning wheel he loves is also a machine, and also unnatural.’ Delisle Burns calls the attack ‘a fundamental philosophical error’.<sup>66</sup> Spinning wheel, spectacles, plough or the mechanisms to draw water are all mechanisms, he argues. If they are misused the moral evil lies in the man who misuses it and not the machine.

As a response to his stand on machinery, in 1921, Gandhi said, altering his crude and strong opposition of machinery, that ‘what I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour saving machinery. Men go on ‘saving labour’ till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions.’<sup>67</sup> To

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<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.82

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p.07

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, pp.07-08

Gandhi greed motivated the use of machine rather than any sense of philanthropy. He listed Singer Sewing machine as one of the few useful things ever invented.

He argued that machine should 'help the individual' and not encroach upon his individuality'.<sup>68</sup> He sought to make exceptions for sewing machines and spindle because they were primary necessities of man unlike car or bicycle. Man need not 'traverse distance with the rapidity of a motor car.'

If machinery, like the body, is not helpful to salvation, it should be rejected because Gandhi sought 'the absolute liberation of the soul' and, therefore, opposed everything that appeared as a hurdle in this direction. But machines would remain, like our body, because of its inevitability. 'The body itself, as I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected.'<sup>69</sup>

### **Politics of force and the Power of Soul-Force – The Logic of Gandhian Spirituality**

Gandhi's philosophy, in way was also a response to the extremist tendencies within the Indian national movement. He had indulged in a debate later as well with figures like Bhagat Singh on the *Philosophy of Bomb*. Critiquing contemporary form of unrest, which he termed as violent, Gandhi agreed that every reform must be preceded by discontent. However, forms of unrest would differ and may have good or bad consequences. "Rising from sleep, we do not continue in a comatose state, but according to our ability, sooner or later, we are completely restored to our sense. So shall we be free from the present unrest which no one likes."<sup>70</sup> Only "those who

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<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p.08

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p.09

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p.24



are intoxicated by the wretched modern civilisation”<sup>71</sup> think of assassinations and murders as a mode of freeing India.

While talking about the use of force he put forward an alternative notion to it – that of passive resistance, which will be “love-force, soul-force, or more popularly but less accurately, passive resistance.”<sup>72</sup> He opposed the idea and need for armed forces. “The force of arms is powerless when matched against the force of love or the soul.”<sup>73</sup> He defends the idea of soul-force on the grounds that the existence of so many people on this earth for over centuries reflect that the governing principle of the world is not the force of arms but the force of truth or love. History has failed to take note of the fact that it is love-force that has allowed hundreds of nations to live in peace. “History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of the soul.” That means, history being “ a record of an interruption of the course of nature.” And “soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.”<sup>74</sup>

Taking his idea of non-violence further he defines passive resistance as “a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force.” To get a law repealed through violence means use of “body-force”. “If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.”<sup>75</sup> It was this understanding and strategy that made Gandhi as well as his idea of non-violence famous.

The ruler uses swords and force but the millions who follow his command, all over the world, “have to learn either body-force or soul-force”. The peasants are never

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<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p.60

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, pp.65-66

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p.66

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p.68

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p.69

subdued by sword and they do not know how to use it, yet are not frightened of it. Indian masses have generally used the weapon of passive resistance in history. “We cease to co-operate with our rulers when they displease us.”<sup>76</sup> And, thus, Gandhi justifies the historical antecedence of his policy of non-violence.

The strength of soul, which is more important, lies in the strength of our mind and our physique, which is also important and should be improved “by getting rid of infant marriages and luxurious living.”<sup>77</sup> Towards strengthening mind he prescribes charity as a way of disciplining the mind and making it firm. Apart from this Gandhi believed that “to become passive resisters for the service of the country” one must “observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth, and cultivate fearlessness... When a husband and wife gratify the passions, it is no less an animal indulgence on that account.”<sup>78</sup> Such an indulgence has only one use, perpetuate the race, otherwise it should be prohibited. Gandhi justified chastity, simplicity and claimed that not following these qualities leads man to deviate from greater goals. Interestingly, Marcuse would have argued that Gandhi through advocating restraint of sexual pleasure was doing nothing but putting the body in order. Foucault, as in his masterpiece, would have also identified this tendency with that of disciplining the body. Restraint or repressions of instincts come in the way because they are considered detrimental to the development of a project – the project of order, discipline and hegemony.<sup>79</sup>

However, another important aspect of Gandhi emerges here – that of his alternative to the modern civilisation, i.e., spirituality. His emphasis on morality, chastity, soul-

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<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, p.72

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p.73

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Marcuse, Herbert; *Eros and Civilisation*; Abacus; London; 1972 and Foucault, Michel; *Discipline and punish – The Birth of the Prison*; Vintage; New York; 1995

force vis-à-vis body-force and advocacy of simplicity, religiosity as a way of living reflects his alternative – the desire to unite with truth. He wanted to lift India from the world of material struggles to that of spiritual battles, to unite with *Narayana*, the Supreme Being.

### **Assessing Gandhi**

Gandhi placed in a complex situation due to the intertwining of the his familial background, the national interests - that of the various classes – as well as the onslaught of the western modernity evolved his own response that replaced the positivist outlook with a “broader, softer and more humane alternative.”<sup>80</sup> He wanted the Indian tradition to be open-ended but also wanted to retain the core values that it had. At this juncture he had conflicts with people like Tagore and Nehru. C.F. Andrews “bridged the classical universalism of Rabindranath Tagore and the folk-based critical traditionalism of Gandhi.”<sup>81</sup> To Andrews both appeared as alternatives to modernity. However, his notion of history, wherein he took history and myth as synonymous, reflected his irrational ideas and the sources of opposition to modernity - which emanated from his upbringing. Gandhi, according to Nandy was extremely shrewd with regard to his technique of struggle, i.e., non-violence because he realised that he would find good support from a section of British population.

Parekh writes that his intention to universalise the notion of spirit was a flawed one but his interpretation of religion as a tradition of enquiry rather than a dogma was a new insight, but he again undermined its integrity as well as that of science by the taking the two as similar. The notion of *yugadharma* that bases itself on the notion

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<sup>80</sup> op. cit., Parekh, p.116

<sup>81</sup> op. cit., Nandy, p. 47

of cosmic spirit was “unconvincing”. His “uncritical” middle class Hindu morality also showed that there was a deep influence of his family background on his thought process. “His experiments were, thus, intended not to discover new truths but to try out old ones, and formed part of the technology of moral conduct rather than a science of moral principles.”<sup>82</sup>

Partha Chatterjee presents a different picture of Gandhi when he says that his opposition to the western civilisation was, in fact, “a fundamental critique of the entire edifice of bourgeois society” its continually expanding and prosperous economic life, based on individual property, the social division of labour and the impersonal laws of the market, described with clinical precision and complete moral approbation by Mandeville and Smith; its political institutions based on a dual notion of sovereignty in which people in theory rule themselves, but are only allowed to do so through the medium of representatives whose actions have to be ratified only once in so many years; its spirit of innovation, adventure and scientific progress; its rationalisation of philosophy and ethics and secularisation of art and education.”<sup>83</sup> Gandhi successfully managed to incorporate the largest section of the Indian population – the peasantry - in the struggle for a new form of state. However, “the working out of the politics of non-violence also made it abundantly clear that the object of the political mobilisation of the peasantry was not at all what Gandhi claimed on its behalf, ‘to train the masses in self-consciousness and attainment of power’. Rather the peasantry were meant to become willing participants in a struggle wholly conceived and directed by *others*.”<sup>84</sup> It remains an interesting task to

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<sup>82</sup> op. cit., Parekh, p.118

<sup>83</sup> Chatterjee, Partha; *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World – A Derivative Discourse?*; OUP; Delhi; 1996: p.90

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p.124

entangle the dynamics of how the movement led by Gandhi came to be used by the Indian bourgeoisie, or it came to be utilised in the process of 'passive revolution'<sup>85</sup>.

As a response Rajni Palme Dutt would argue that Gandhi represented the bourgeois nationalism and his choice as the ablest one was on the grounds that any other leader would not have been able to fill the gap between "the actual bourgeois direction of the national movement" and the awakening. "Both for the good and evil Gandhi achieved this, and led the movement even appearing to create it. This role only comes to an end in proportion as the masses begin to reach clear consciousness of their own interest, and the actual class forces and class relations begin to stand out clear in the Indian scene, without need of mythological concealments."<sup>86</sup> Another criticism that emerged of Gandhi was his analysis as a populist leader, who emerged due to the nature of contemporary development of Indian society, wherein the suffering brought about by rapid industrialisation and urbanisation paves way for a discontented outlook, which was seen in romanticism. This outlook "does not reject material progress, the increase of material prosperity and well-being; rather it is argued that this can come about without large scale industrialisation and urbanisation."<sup>87</sup>

### **Gandhi – A Spiritual Critique of Modernity or a Peasants Voice Against Capitalist Hegemony**

Gandhi represented which section of the Indian society in the liberation movement is a point of severe debate but he had a pro-bourgeois/petty-bourgeois leanings have

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<sup>85</sup> Chatterjee writes that passive revolution is achieved through the creation of a broad-based alliance of the diverse sections of Indian masses, in order to form a politically independent state. In this the support and involvement of the subordinate classes is also sought and is ensured.

<sup>86</sup> Dutt, R.P.; *India Today*; Manish; Calcutta; 1970; p.629

<sup>87</sup> Kitching, Gavin; *Development and Underdevelopment in Historical Perspective – Populism, Nationalism and Industrialisation*; Methuen & Co. Ltd.; London; 1982; p.02

become by and large clear. When his non-co-operation movement launched in the 1930 reached its peak and the peasants launched militant struggle against the *zamindars* (as in UP) or when the workers had put up militant resistance (as in Sholapur) or when a section of army tried to join the movement (as in the case of Garhwal unit)<sup>88</sup> on some pretext or the other Gandhi opposed them.<sup>89</sup> When Gandhi gave the call to “do or die”, he could not participate in this movement, which “even while remaining within its prescribed limits exhibited its most explosive potentialities”<sup>90</sup>, because he had to go to prison. However when the navy mutiny (1946) took place, the uprising of 1942 had taken place and there were militant worker and peasant movements all over the country, but he decried these movements in the most scathing terms. Kaviraj argues that “one must not lose sight of the fact that in order that this struggle did not take a more militant form, in order that it did not turn into class struggle of peasants and workers and also to ensure that the reins of the movement remained in the hands of the national bourgeoisie, the doctrine of non-violence was made a mandatory principle.”<sup>91</sup>

His opinion on the ‘class’ or the independent role of the workers and peasantry reflected the kind of stigma that he had towards them. He himself once wrote that: “I do not believe that the capitalists and the landlords are all exploiters by an inherent necessity, or that there is a basic or irreconcilable antagonism between their interests and those of the masses...What is needed is not the extinction of landlords and capitalists, but a transformation of the existing relationship between them and the

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<sup>88</sup> The peasant movement was withdrawn on the grounds that it was not sanctioned by the Congress Party; the action of army members was openly and outrightly condemned by Gandhi.

<sup>89</sup> Kaviraj, Narhari; *Gandhi-Nehru Through Marxist Eyes* – in Sarkar, Jagannath, Balaram, N.E. and Bardhan, A.B. (ed.) *India's Freedom Struggle – Several Streams*; Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi; 1986; p.30

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p.31

masses into something healthier and purer.”<sup>92</sup> Gandhi did not want an internal conflict because he thought that would hamper the aims of freedom struggle. But his ideas also seem to reflect the nature of his understanding towards the various social sections of Indian society and his sympathies towards the elite of rural India, which he wanted to safeguard by advocating a policy of peaceful co-existence. However, it becomes extremely difficult to classify him as a “bourgeois reformist”<sup>93</sup> who wanted to do away with the native feudalism and imperialism. This furthermore becomes doubtful when we see his understanding about the various forms of modernity, expressed in his term “civilisation” as well as in his perception about industrialisation and scientific rationality vis-à-vis the Eastern spirituality.

His opposition to machinery was in a way directed against the technology of power. It becomes extremely relevant to point here that his ideas of the power to the villages, or the decentralisation of power and subsequent empowerment of the people through the *panchayati raj* system was a part of this understanding. Gandhi had very clear idea that the source of western imperialism lies in the system of social production which the countries of the Western world have adopted.”<sup>94</sup> The machine is used to maximise production in order to satiate the never-ending consumption of the masses. “It is the limitless desire for ever-increased production and ever-greater consumption, and the spirit of ruthless competitiveness which keeps the entire system going, that impel these countries to seek colonial possessions which can be exploited for economic purposes.”<sup>95</sup> Hence, in imperialism even morality and politics are subordinated to economics. Later, he had a slightly changed outlook

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<sup>92</sup> Gandhi in Amrit Bazar Patrika dated 03/08/1934. Quoted here from Gandhi, M.K.; *India of My Dreams*; Navjivan Publishing House; Ahmedabad; 1999; p.34

<sup>93</sup> op. cit., Kaviraj, p.35

<sup>94</sup> op. cit., Chatterjee, p. 87

<sup>95</sup> ibid.

when he said that machinery can exist but it should be without rendering people poor and without ruining the countryside. This perhaps implied that the exchange relations between the country and the town should be on an equitable basis and if this stays with industrial development then it is acceptable.

Gandhian dilemma, however, persists because this never implied that Gandhi openly ever advocated the need for industrial development. But his fear of competitiveness and rampant consumerism that the mad rush to expand industrial production more than the need of humans reminds us of his ideas in the contemporary Indian scenario. There seems to be a need for a renewed examination of the Gandhian ideas, irrespective of the excuses that he has become outdated in the contemporary liberalised world order. The education system and the way knowledge has been monopolised, with it being unavailable to the majority of Indians, his ideas cannot be termed as outdated. But the need of the hour is certainly criticality, without which his ideas would seem irrelevant and an effort to push back India to traditional times.

Gandhi's thoughts were very much oriented towards anti-modernity. But they acquire complexity when we find him struggling for freedom against a power that has been leading the modernist arguments simultaneously with his desire to coexist peacefully with capitalists and *zamindars*. Gandhian, morality or spirituality came in sharp conflicts with Tagore as well as Nehru, both of whom saw India's progress in imbibing the western modernity. He wrote in 1941 to Gandhi that: "It is rather odd that I should make this confession to anyone, and more especially to you, whose ideas of the relationship between man and woman seem very extraordinary to me. I am a pagan at heart, not a moralist like you, and I love the rich pagan culture and outlook on life of the ancients, their joy in beauty of all kinds, in richness of life and



a wise understanding of human nature with all its virtues and frailties.”<sup>96</sup> Nehru, though being a part of the same freedom struggle, loved the material happiness vis-à-vis the spiritual satisfaction of Gandhi, whose opposition to modernity was not only reflected in his criticism of universalistic imposition of British ideas but also in the chastity, and understanding of women as secondary in the male-female partnership,<sup>97</sup> rejection of scientific rationality through critique of machinery or industrialisation etc. However, it is extremely difficult a task to state with clarity whether his opposition of these elements or modernity was because they were embodied in the British rule or because he was ideologically committed to an idea that was oriented towards a society dominated by peasantry, where the rule of industrial bourgeoisie as the dominant hegemonic force is absent. But the commentators like Nandy, Kaviraj, R.P. Dutt or Partha Chatterjee have shown disinclination to categorise him as a representative of the peasantry. He can be rather classified as a petty-bourgeois leader, who was shifting his position between that of the Indian bourgeoisie and the traditional folk-culture.

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<sup>96</sup> Nehru, Jawaharlal; *Years of Struggle – Selected Readings*; National Book Trust 1989; Nehru is quoted here from a letter which he wrote to Gandhi on 24 July, 1941 from Dehra Dun Jail; p.47

<sup>97</sup> It is extremely interesting to see Gandhi’s attitude towards Kasturba, towards the English women or the allegories and metaphors he uses for British Parliament in his own autobiography (refer to *Story of My Experiments With Truth*; Navjivan Publishing House; Ahmedabad; 1996) or *Hind Sawaraj*.

*"Auschwitz continues to haunt, not the memory but the accomplishment of man – the space flights; the rockets and missiles; the "labyrinthine basement under the Snack Bar"; the pretty electronic plants, clean, hygienic and with flower beds; the poison gas which is not really harmful to people; the secrecy in which we all participate. This is the setting in which the great human achievements of science, medicine, technology take place; the efforts to save and ameliorate life are the sole promise in the disaster. The wilful play with fantastic possibilities, the ability to act with good conscience, contra nature to experiment with men and things, to convert illusion into reality and fiction into truth, testify to the extent to which Imagination has become an instrument of progress. And it is one, which, like others in the established societies, is methodically abused. Setting the pace and style of politics, the power of imagination far exceeds Alice in Wonderland in the manipulation of words, turning sense into nonsense and nonsense into sense." (Pp.193)*

*"The obscene merger of aesthetics and reality refutes the philosophies which oppose "poetic" imagination to scientific and empirical Reason. Technological progress is accompanied by a progressive rationalisation and even realisation of the imaginary. The archetypes of horror as well as of joy, of war as well as of peace lose their catastrophic character. Their appearance in the daily life of the individuals is no longer that of irrational forces – their modern avatars are elements of technological domination, and subject to it." (Pp.194)*

- **Herbert Marcuse in *One Dimensional Man***

*The instincts are manipulated in a such a way that in the contemporary liberalised economies of Third World, that the people feel themselves liberated and elevated to the position of their masters when they are given passes to Five Star Hotels or Aeroplane tickets, despite being paid meagre amount as salaries. In fact, firstly an image a elite, happy, liberated person is created through various channels and then the employees are inspired to try to fit in those categories through certain following defined notions of a 'good life'*

- **Herbert Marcuse in *Eros and Civilisation.***

### III

## HERBERT MARCUSE: MODERNITY, TECHNOLOGICAL RATIONALITY AND DOMINATION

In this chapter the effort is to bring out the central thesis of Marcuse, vis-à-vis modernity. He is discussed in the background of Critical School, of which he was a member till its dissolution. To demonstrate his understanding his two most significant texts, namely *Eros and Civilisation* and *One Dimensional Man*, have been elaborately discussed because they represent his understanding in totality. The thesis developed by Marcuse about the contemporary society or modernity got crystallised in these books.

### **The Critical School**

Famous as the Critical School<sup>1</sup> or the Frankfurt School<sup>2</sup>, the Institute of Social Research was established in 1923 by a decree of the Ministry of Education. The key figures that were involved with this institution were Horkheimer, Fromm, Adorno, Lukacs, Marcuse and in later stages Habermas. These thinkers represented a break from the contemporary trends in social theory in the sense that they never dedicated any specific text to critique Marxism but called for retrospection as far as the Marxist theory was concerned. However, except for Adorno the other thinkers time and again referred to the Marxian notions but without following them in totality.

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<sup>1</sup> The name 'Critical School' became famous after Horkheimer's essay 'Traditional and Critical Theory' came out in 1937.

<sup>2</sup> This label was used for the first time in 1960s and later came to be used by Adorno himself.

“The discovery of the Americas, the Renaissance and the Reformation, and the beginning of capitalism are often taken as marking the origins of modernity.”<sup>3</sup> An opposition to tradition was initiated through secularisation and rationalisation associating modernity “with innovation, change, novelty and critical opposition to tradition and dogmatism.”<sup>4</sup> As industrialisation expanded discontentment against it also accumulated and paved way for the emergence of different forms of criticism. Romanticism opposed the domination of positivist principles in social sciences as well as the day to day life. But the most scathing critique of industrialisation, and capitalism as a mode of production in general came from Marxism, which considered bourgeoisie as a revolutionary force that wiped out the feudal system.

Towards the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Bolshevik Revolution, World War I and the “ideological bankruptcy” of capitalism among other things led many young intellectuals to embrace Marxism. All the intellectuals associated with the Critical School were product of this enchantment. They saw society “as an antagonistic totality” and “had not excluded Hegel and Marx from its thinking, but rather saw itself as their heir.”<sup>5</sup>

Till 1940s, the Institute carried an empirical and historical research based on historical materialism. It maintained close contacts with the Marx-Lenin Institute in Moscow under Grunberg. In 1930 when Horkheimer became the director he relentlessly attacked capitalism in favour of socialism.<sup>6</sup>In the 1930s the agenda

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<sup>3</sup> Kellner, Douglas; *Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity*, Polity Press; Cambridge; 1989; p. 03

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Wiggershaus, Rolf; *The Frankfurt School – Its History, Theories and Political Significance*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1986; p.01

<sup>6</sup> The capitalist system in the current phase is a world-wide system of organised exploitation. Its maintenance is the condition of immeasurable suffering. This society possesses in reality the human and technical means to abolish poverty in its crudest forms. We know of no epoch in which this possibility would have existed to the extent that it does today. Only the property system stands in the way of its realisation, that is, the condition that the gigantic apparatus of human production must function in the service of a small group of exploiters.” (Horkheimer quoted in Kellner, p.15)

gradually transformed itself when the synthesis of Marx and Freud in the form of a “materialist social psychology” emerged and the earlier “supradisciplinary materialism” got relegated to the background.

As far as their subject of interest was concerned the Critical School basically dealt with the advanced capitalism and the Russian socialism, and for a comparative study they referred to USA and USSR, as in Marcuse’s *One Dimensional Man*. The Institute passed through three phases: the first one, while in Frankfurt, (1923-33) undertook intellectual activities related to history and economics; in the second phase, in exile, (1933-50) in America dealt mainly with issues of philosophy and psychoanalysis; and in the third phase, when it returned to Frankfurt, it was at its pinnacle of activism, as seen in the student’s movement in 1960s.

The critical theorists seen as ‘radicals in despair’ were devoted to bring out critically the developments that were taking place in the horizon of Western Civilisation at that point of time. “Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno<sup>7</sup> were responsible for a theory of capitalist society which emphasised its cultural manifestations above all other aspects.”<sup>8</sup> Later on victory of the Bolshevik Revolution and defeat of Central European revolutions, especially in Germany led the intellectuals to “reappraise Marxist theory”, especially the relationship between theory and practice<sup>9</sup>

The majority of intellectual output of the Critical theorists was during the post-World War II phase. While the Institute was in USA the defeat of labour movement in Germany, triumph of fascism and revelations about the Stalinist USSR became

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<sup>7</sup> Adorno’s works brought out the cultural dynamics of the advanced capitalist society. However, he never referred to Marx, as some of the other representatives of Critical School did, but, in fact, criticised his theory of class, and rejected the idea of a theory of history or science of history.

<sup>8</sup> Hamilton, Peter in Introduction of Bottomore, Tom; *The Frankfurt School*; Tavistock Publications; London; 1984; p.08

<sup>9</sup> Bottomore, Tom; *The Frankfurt School*; Tavistock Publications; London; 1984; p.11

widespread. The disenchantment had already begun, which later led to the re-examination of Marxism as well as the emphasis to change the nature of analysis in the light of new developments. The already cultivated disillusionment with the capitalist order and the nature of 'socialism' that characterised the Western world was further exacerbated, as news of Stalinist 'repression'<sup>10</sup> became an open secret. Hence, the technological advancement and the rule of technology propelled rationality, or the joint effort of the two, as the relationship among them is largely perceived as dialectical, of capitalism came to be critiqued together with the Russian form of socialism. The anti-capitalist theorists experienced deep disappointment with the heroic utopianism of class-oriented communism and social movements. The dream of reason had faded<sup>11</sup> and the existing theories seemed to have no answer to the situation that had arisen. It was in such an ambience of insecurity and ambiguity, when Reason as well as the prospect of a unipolar capitalist world order establishing their hegemony seemed obvious, that the works of Critical School theorists needs to be seen.

Among the major opinions presented as a part of the intellectual activities of this School Horkheimer did a scathing criticism of positivism, especially that of Vienna Circle. His critique of positivism as a theory of knowledge or philosophy of science was based on three points: (1) that positivism treats humans as facts and objects within a scheme of mechanical determinism; (2) that "it conceives the world as immediately given in experience and makes no distinction between essence and

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<sup>10</sup> However, there has been a debate among the pro-capitalist and pro-socialist/Marxist thinkers and activists about the nature of developments that took place during Stalin's regime. One group calls it genocide and repression while the other terms it as lie, part of a malicious campaign to defame USSR and the Russian Revolution.

<sup>11</sup> For further details see Alexander, Jeffrey, *Fin de Siecle Social Theory – Relativism, Reduction, and the Problem of Reason*; Verso: London; 1995

appearance”<sup>12</sup>; and (3) it establishes distinction between fact and value. Horkheimer was opposing the Vienna Circle<sup>13</sup> for propagating a common universalistic scientific method for natural as well as social sciences. Marcuse saw positivism as a counter-revolutionary doctrine.

Marcuse also propounded a dialectical theory in opposition to the positivist social science arguing that positivism equated study of society to the study of nature when social study ‘was to be science seeking social laws, the validity of which was to be analogous to that of physical laws.’<sup>14</sup> He differed from Horkheimer’s criticism in so far as he based his exposition mainly on Hegels teaching. He tried to develop a positive social theory based on Hegels notion of ‘reason’. Marcuse rejected bourgeoisie or proletariat as effective historical agents and said that now the domination is not of one class but of an impersonal power, i.e., the scientific-technological rationality. He believed that new revolutionary forces would develop within this society.

“The criticism of positivism and empiricism, and the attempt to formulate an alternative epistemology and methodology for social theory, provided not only the foundation, but also a large part of the substance of the Frankfurt School’s theory of society over three decades...”<sup>15</sup> Their criticism was based on mainly three aspects: (1) “that positivism is an inadequate and misleading approach which does not, and cannot, attain a true conception or understanding of social life; (2) that by attending

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<sup>12</sup> op. cit., Bottomore, p.16

<sup>13</sup> Many of logical positivists were interested in physics and mathematics, “which are hardly empirical generalisations.” (Calhoun, Craig; *Critical Social Theory – Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference*; Blackwell Publishers; Cambridge and Oxford; 1995: p.05) They “believed that any thought worth thinking could be reduced to rational and eventually mathematical propositions.” (Alexander, Jeffrey C.; *Fin de Siecle Social Theory: Relativism, Reduction and The Problem of Reason*; Verso; London; 1995; p.69)

<sup>14</sup> Herbert Marcuse as quoted by Bottomore in p.17

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p.28

only to what exists it sanctions the present social order, obstructs any radical change, and leads to political quietism; (3) that it is intimately connected with, and is indeed a major factor in sustaining, or producing, a new form of domination, namely technocratic domination.’<sup>16</sup> The critical theory of Frankfurt School had three interrelated elements: (1) it was an epistemological and methodological critique of positivism; (2) it critiqued the ideological influence of science and technology for creating the new impersonal technocratic-bureaucratic domination; (3) it had a serious preoccupation with the culture industry, with cultural aspects of domination.

Critical School presented a critique of bourgeois system and ideology “unmasking capitalism’s promotion of a submissive attitude toward inequality and exploitation.”<sup>17</sup> It hoped to “escape the reductive excesses of Enlightenment progressivism while salvaging its emancipatory ideal.”<sup>18</sup> To resolve the crisis they, and especially Marcuse, resorted to a scathing critique of the bourgeois system. They wanted to restore and respect all that is human because it has been lost somewhere in the illusory metaphor of modernity.<sup>19</sup>

With the works of Horkheimer and Marcuse “the critique of positivism... merged into a critical assessment of ‘scientific and technological rationality’ as a new form of domination, characteristic of the late capitalist, or more broadly, the advanced industrial societies of the twentieth century.”<sup>20</sup> Gradually as Hegelian and

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Fairlamb, Horace L.; *Critical Conditions – Postmodernity and the Question of Foundations*; Cambridge University Press; Cambridge; 1994; p.174

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p.239

<sup>19</sup> To critical theorists “human nature meant the pursuit of happiness, the need for solidarity with others, and natural sympathies. From human nature in this sense emanated, according to Horkheimer, a form of reason implicitly critical to civilisation. Marcuse would perhaps extend this line of argument most substantially by analysing modern society in terms of excess repression it required of its members. Capitalism and the instrumentally rational state posed demands against Eros against nature, that went beyond what Freud had theorised as general.” (Quoted from Calhoun, Craig; *Critical Social Theory – Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference*; Blackwell Publishers; Cambridge and Oxford; 1995; p.18)

<sup>20</sup> *op. cit.*, Calhoun, p.23



psychoanalytic paradigms became the major lines of thinking in the Frankfurt School Marxism was sidelined but they never entered in a direct confrontation with it. By 1950 the whole School had lost faith in the revolutionary potential of the working class.

### **Marcuse – An Introduction**

Marcuse was born in Berlin on 19 July, 1898 in a well to do family. His father was a Jew from Pomeranian province in Berlin. Served in the army for some time but simultaneously he was also a member of SPD, which his father considered to be a worker's party. But he left SPD after suspecting their complicity in the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Libknecht. Disenchantment with the system led him to his Ph.D. from Freiburg in 1922 on the topic '*The German Novel About the Artist*'. When he returned to Berlin and was provided a publishing and antiquarian book business by father he sponsored a left – wing literary salon where Marxist theory, gestalt psychology, abstract painting etc., were discussed.

When the Institute was in exile he served in the Columbia University during 1952 – 53 and during 1954-55 Harvard. He got a grant to study Soviet Marxism during the Cold War era from USA. In 1955 wrote *Eros and Civilisation*, which was a synthesis of Marx and Freud. In this work, which he had a lot of difficulty in publishing because the differences within the Critical School especially with Adorno, he sketched the character of capitalism as a repressive society and the need to establish a non-repressive society. In 1964 he produced his most important work: *One Dimensional Man*, which did a comparative study of the capitalist society as Russian brand of socialism. He demonstrated how the "advanced industrial society" creates false needs and the increasing penetration of mass media, advertising, industrial management in the lives of people. This system through various means

and techniques tries to integrate individuals into the existing system of production and consumption. Under such circumstances the hope for a change can emerge from the non-integrated forces of minorities, outsiders and radical intelligentsia.

### One - Dimensional Man

#### **The New Form of Hegemony and Possibilities of Change**

In the contemporary society a kind of fear is instilled among the masses about the threat of atomic catastrophe or wars and arms race. As an example, in the contemporary India we find a kind of mass frenzy created in the name of nationalism, threat from Pakistan or China etc. These are done in order to perpetuate a particular form of domination/hegemony, which does not allow any opposition or calms it down through a well-planned process. In fact, these tendencies protect the forces that "perpetuate this danger", a sense of insecurity is created and a phobia fomented among the people of an external or internal enemy. The effort to prevent such catastrophes relegates the agenda of searching its *causes* to background, thereby diminishing the possibility to extricate the causes suppressed by "the all too obvious threat from without - to the West from the East, to the East from the West." Instead, "we submit to the peaceful production of the means of destruction, to the perfection of waste, to being educated for a defence which deforms the defenders and that which they defend."<sup>21</sup>

Marcuse finds that the advanced industrial society gets bigger and richer through perpetuation of the danger. The defence structure not only manipulates people but also "extends man's mastery over nature." In such a situation mass media sells the interests of particular sections of society as that of the general masses. The political

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<sup>21</sup>Marcuse, Herbert; *One-dimensional Man*; Abacus; London; 1972; p.09

needs of society, which are in the interest of the minority that rules, are transformed/displayed as individual needs and aspirations, making them committed to it. And through this process "the whole appears to be very embodiment of Reason."<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the rule of the elite is facilitated by a repression that destroys free development of human needs and faculties, which no longer questions anything, positive or negative. The primary agendas are forgotten and an 'apparent' ambience of peace reigns. In other words, war is used to maintain peace. In this process, technology, through an enhanced intellectual and material capabilities, which signifies greater social domination over the individual, helps in establishing the domination over the critical faculty. The advanced society, unlike previous societies, conquers the centrifugal social forces with Technology rather than Terror, on the basis of an overwhelming efficiency and an increasing standard of living.<sup>23</sup>

Due to these developments it becomes imperative to have a critical theory of contemporary society to analyse its functioning and dynamics. The established or existing way of organising society is measured (or weighed) against the other possible ways, that are believed to offer better alternatives of alleviating man's struggle for existence i.e., "a specific historical practice is measured against its own historical alternatives." Therefore, Marcuse sees the problem of historical objectivity as always confronting any critical theory of society. This problem needs to take into consideration the following points:

1. The realisation or the judgement that the human life is worth living or can be and ought to be made worth living is the a priori of social

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, pp.09-10

theory, and, therefore, its rejection would reject the theory. It underlies all intellectual effort. He is presenting a case for a liberating social theory that considers the well being of human beings as its prime motive or the motivating force.

2. The critical analysis has to demonstrate empirically the objective validity of the argument that in a given society, specific possibilities exist for the amelioration of human life and specific ways and means of realising these possibilities.

The critical theory that Marcuse seeks to evolve for comprehending the dynamics of society must be an abstraction derived from the concrete situations that one encounters in the society. To answer the questions of how to use the available resources to its optimum limit so as to ensure maximum benefit to masses it is necessary that the critical theory "abstract from the actual organisation and utilisation of society's resources"<sup>24</sup> as well as from the result yielded by this organisation and utilisation. This theory, which is "opposed to all metaphysics by virtue of the rigorously historical character of the transcendence"<sup>25</sup>, is necessary to find out the possibilities of an "optimal development". The 'possibilities' dealt with must be accessible to respective society and must have clearly defined practical goals. Marcuse expresses the need for abstraction, which does not consider the given facts as the final context of validation. This he calls the 'transcending' analysis of facts in the light of the possibilities denied or which have ceased to function. This is the structure of social theory that is opposed to metaphysics because of the historical character of transcendence. He further clarifies that the abstraction must represent

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, pp.10-11

the "actual tendency" or the "real needs" of the population. Social theory, for him, "is concerned with the historical alternatives, which haunt the established society as subversive tendencies and forces."<sup>26</sup> The values attached to these alternatives become facts when "translated into reality by historical practice. The theoretical concepts terminate with social change."<sup>27</sup>

However, the contemporary society, with all its instruments and processes, seems to be capable of containing social change, especially qualitative change which would establish essentially different institutions, a new direction of the productive process and new modes of human existence. The programmes and policies of the modern state reflect its tendency to integrate the opposites so as to underplay any opposition. And the National Purpose Bipartisan Policy, the decline of pluralism, the collusion of Business and Labour within the strong state, etc. have been products of these intentions only.

When the industrial society originated in first half of 19th century, "the critique of industrial society attained concreteness in a historical mediation between theory and practice, values and facts, needs and goals". "This historical mediation" was to be found in the consciousness and political action of bourgeoisie and proletariat, which "are still the basic classes", but capitalism has altered the structure and function of these two classes in such a way that "they no longer appear as agents of historical transformation". The desire to preserve and improve the status quo unites them. In a communist society, where the degree of technical progress has assured growth and cohesion, the possibility of a qualitative change has reduced due to "notions of a non-explosive evolution"<sup>28</sup>. Due to absence of agents and agencies of social change

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p.11

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p.12

the criticism of society takes place in abstraction, theory and practice, thought and action do not meet. And even empirical analysis of historical alternatives appears to be "unrealistic speculations", to which commitment is " a matter of personal (or group) preference".<sup>29</sup>

But these developments do not negate the need for a radical transformation. Instead, qualitative change is a much-needed agenda. Growing productivity and destruction, danger of annihilation', surrender of thought, hope and fear to powers of society; preservation of misery with wealth all reflect impartiality and the irrationality of this system. Their acceptance by society does not make them rational. At this juncture, the distinction between true and false consciousness, real and immediate interest holds more validity. Men must move from false to true consciousness and from their immediate to real interest and this can be done only by changing their way of life of denying the positive, of refusing. The establishment represses this need "to the degree to which it is capable of 'delivering the goods' on an increasingly large scale"<sup>30</sup>, and it uses scientific conquest of nature to conquer man.

Confronted with the achievements of industrial society critical analysis is left without rationale for transcending it. This vacuum has emptied the theoretical structure itself, because the categories of a critical social theory were developed when the elements of refusal and subversion were "embodied in the action of social forces". The negative and oppositional concepts reflected contradictions of 19th century Europe. However, those categories, like 'society', 'state', 'individual', 'class', 'private', and 'family', are now integrated with the existing conditions. With the increasing "integration of industrial society" these forces are losing their critical tone

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

and are becoming "descriptive deceptive, or operational terms."<sup>31</sup> The critical intent of these categories cancelled by the social reality is a "regression". Modern industrial society is pervasive in these categories, therefore, it is the whole that is in question.

This book "vacillates throughout between two contradictory hypotheses: (1) that advanced industrial society is capable of containing qualitative change for the foreseeable future; (2) that forces and tendencies exist, which may break this containment and explode the society. "An "accident may alter the situation, but unless the recognition of what is being done by what is being prevented subverts the consciousness and the behaviour of man, not even a catastrophe will bring about the change."<sup>32</sup>

Marcuse focuses his analysis on advanced industrial society, where the product of the apparatus as well as the operations of servicing and extending it are determined *a priori*. This productive apparatus acquires totalitarian character as it determines the socially needed occupations, skills, and attitudes as well as the individual needs and aspirations. It removes the distinction between private and public existence, between individual and social needs. This is facilitated by the domination of technology, which institutes "new, more effective and more pleasant forms of social control and social cohesion."<sup>33</sup> The ideology of technology, culture, politics and the economy are merged to constitute an omnipresent system, which negates alternatives. "Technological rationality has become political rationality."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p.13

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p.14

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

### **The New Tools of Control and the Process of Domination**

"A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom" characterises advanced industrial society, as "a token of technical progress." Rationality implies suppression of individuality as performances get mechanised; individual enterprises are incorporated into more effective and productive corporations; there is free competition among unequal economic subjects; prerogative and national sovereignties are curtailed to facilitate "international organisation of resources". There is also a political and intellectual co-ordination in this "technological order", which Marcuse considers a "regrettable and yet promising development".<sup>35</sup>

The rights and liberties that were vital in early stages of industrial society have lost their traditional rationale and content. Freedom of thought, speech and conscience (like free enterprise) were critical ideas, which sought to replace the "obsolescent material culture by a more productive and rational one". After their institutionalisation they met with the same fate as the society.

Freedom of thought, autonomy and right to political opposition is being deprived of their critical content in a society in which individual needs appear to be satisfied. In such a society its principles and elements may justly be demanded as being accepted, so that the opposition to discussion and possibility of new alternatives could be reduced. In this regard, it hardly makes a difference whether the needs are satisfied by an authoritarian or non-authoritarian regime. When standard of living is rising non-conformity with the system seems useless, especially when it (non-conformity) seems to threaten the smooth functioning of the *whole* and entails economic and political disadvantages.

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p.16



Right from beginning freedom of enterprise was not a blessing. It meant toil, insecurity and fear for the majority. If individuals are not required to prove themselves in market, as free individuals, the disappearance of this freedom will be one of the greatest achievements of civilisation. Mechanisation and standardisation might release human energy into a realm of freedom and necessity. The condition and structure of human existence would be altered as individuals get liberated from imposition of "alien needs and alien possibilities". Individual could have autonomy over his own life. "If the productive apparatus could be organised and directed toward the satisfaction of the vital needs, its control might well be centralised"<sup>36</sup>; and such a control would make individual autonomy possible.

The advanced industrial society ("the 'end' of technological rationality") is capable of achieving this goal, but the trend is contrary: the apparatus imposes its economic and political requirements on the material and intellectual culture. It functions in a totalitarian, not as a terroristic political co-ordination of society but as a non-terroristic economic – technical co-ordination, which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. And this can be found even in a system or regime, apparently characterised by 'pluralism' of parties, newspapers, 'countervailing powers' etc., can be so.

Political power, today, asserts through control over the machine process and technical organisation of the apparatus. The government of advanced/advancing societies can sustain only if it "succeeds in mobilising, organising and exploiting the technical, scientific, and mechanical productivity available to industrial civilisation."<sup>37</sup> This productivity mobilises the society above individual/group

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<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p.17

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p.18

interests. The fact that machine's physical power surpasses individual/group's power makes it "the most effective political instrument" in a machine-based society. But political trend may be reversed: "essentially the power of the machine is only the stored-up and projected power of man." The extent to which the "work world" is attributed to machine or is mechanised "becomes the potential basis of a new freedom for man."<sup>38</sup>

The industrial society has reached a stage where the traditional terms of economic, political and intellectual liberties cannot be adequately defined because they cannot be confined within traditional forms. New modes of realisation corresponding to capabilities of society are needed.

These new modes can be talked about only in a negative sense: economic freedom means freedom from economy (from control of economic forces/relationships; from earning a livelihood); political freedom means freedom of individuals from politics over which they have no control. Intellectual freedom means restoration of thought absorbed, now, by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of 'public opinion' and its makers.

"The intensity, the satisfaction and even the character of human needs, beyond biological level, have always been pre-conditioned."<sup>39</sup> One may distinguish between true and false needs – needs "superimposed" upon individuals in the process of repression are false needs (that which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery and injustice). The needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what other love and hate, belong to this category of false needs. It is gratifying to the individual but this

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

gratification/happiness needs to be maintained if it prevents to develop an understanding and perception to analyse the disease that plagues the society and look for its cures.

These needs have a social context and function determined by external powers over which humans have no controls. Though they might appear as individuals' own needs, with which he identifies himself but they remain "products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression."<sup>40</sup> Marcuse calls them "repressive needs", which are "accepted in ignorance and defeat", and needs to be eliminated. There are only certain vital needs (for satisfaction) which are basic like food, clothing and shelter. Their satisfaction is "prerequisite for realisation of all needs."<sup>41</sup>

Any consciousness or conscience that rejects the existing societal interest as the supreme form of thought and behaviour the "established" realm of needs and satisfaction is questionable – as truth and falsehood, which are historical with a historical objectivity. The judgement of needs and satisfaction under given conditions "involves standard of priority", meaning the optimal development of individual through optimum utilisation of given resources – material and intellectual. There are certain universally accepted standards (as we measure truth and falsehood of needs in terms of satisfaction of vital needs) and progressively speaking there are beyond the vital needs as well. But being historical standards they vary according to area and stage of development and can be "defined only in (greater or lesser) contradiction to prevailing ones."<sup>42</sup>

Ultimately, or "in the last analysis" (i.e., when people are free to answer on their own) individuals themselves must answer what is true and false. So long as they are not autonomous, are indoctrinated and manipulated their answers will not be

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p.19

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p.20

considered their own. No tribunal decides which needs should be developed or satisfied. Question remains that how can the people themselves being the object of effective and productive domination can themselves create conditions of freedom?

Repression in a society is proportionate to its level of rationality, productivity or technical advancement and it becomes more difficult for people to break from it. Liberation is dependent on the consciousness of servitude, which is hampered by “predominance of needs and satisfactions”, which are individual’s very own, although they (needs and satisfaction) are subject to critical standards.

Advanced industrial society ‘suffocate’ the needs that demand liberation, while it also “sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society.”<sup>43</sup> Hence, one finds social control exacting needs for production and consumption of waste; need for stupefying work where it is unnecessary; the need for modes of relaxation to soothe/prolong this stupefaction; the need to maintain deceptive liberties like free competition, administered prices, free choice of brands/gadgets, a (censored) free press.

In the repression (process) liberty is used as a tool of domination. Range of choices available never signifies freedom. “Free election of masters does not abolish the masters”. Free choice of goods/services does not mean liberty, if these goods sustain social control over life of toil and fear and sustain alienation. “The spontaneous reproduction of superimposed needs by the individual does not establish autonomy; it only testifies to the efficacy of the controls.”<sup>44</sup>

Commenting on the probable objection to his ‘overrating’ the “indoctrinating power” of media Marcuse writes that preconditioning does not begin with mass

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p.21

production of radio and television and with the centralisation of their control. It happened long ago. Decisive difference is between the given and the possible, the satisfied and unsatisfied needs. The equalisation of class distinctions reveals its ideological function. If the worker and his boss enjoy the same TV programme or visit the same resort, if the typist wears the same dress as the daughter of her employer, if Negro owns a Cadillac, if they read the same newspaper it means an assimilation and not disappearance of classes, and shows the extent to which the population shares the needs and satisfactions that preserve the Establishment.

In the advanced societies the *social needs* (which is again of a minority) have been transplanted as individual needs so effectively that the difference between them seems to be purely theoretical. In fact, domination over individual is attained when he/she starts considering the social, which is in fact of particular social groups, as his/her own and dedicates himself/herself for its cause.

Marcuse highlights the dexterity with which advanced industrial society dominates and also “the rational character of its irrationality”<sup>45</sup>. The world and the developments taking place around individual are shown, with immense convincing power, as extension of individual’s identity. It “transforms the object world into an extension of man’s mind and body and makes the very notion of alienation questionable...The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced.”<sup>46</sup>

“The prevailing forms of social control are technological in a new sense.” The technical structure and the productive and destructive apparatus have been major instruments to subject populace to the existing “social division of labour” in modern

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p.22

times. Obvious forms of compulsion have accompanied it: “loss of livelihood, administration of justice, the police, the armed forces.”<sup>47</sup> The technological control appears as much an embodiment of Reason meant for benefit of all social groups/interests that contradictions seem irrational and counteraction impossible.

Today social control affects even the individual protest, for instance the one who does not go along the system is termed “neurotic” and “imponent”. The notion of normality and abnormality is also, perhaps, used to enforce the same social order and logic of social organisation.

Marcuse introduces a new term, namely ‘introjection’ and he feels that it does not explain the way individual “himself reproduces and perpetuates the external controls.” Introjection implies “a variety of relatively spontaneous processes by which a Self (Ego) transposes the “outer” into the “inner”. Thus, introjection implies the existence of an inner dimension distinguished from and even antagonistic to the external exigencies – an individual consciousness and an individual unconscious apart from public opinion and behaviour.”<sup>48</sup> Inner freedom means “the private space in which man may become and remain “himself”.<sup>49</sup>

Unfortunately in contemporary times the private sphere has lost its privacy due to the invasion by technological reality. “Mass production and mass distribution claim the entire individual, and industrial psychology has long since ceased to be confined to the factory.”<sup>50</sup> The processes of introjection “ossified” like mechanical reactions, and resulted into “not adjustment but mimesis”, which meant individuals were identified with his society as a whole.

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p.23

This identity in industrialised world is constructed through a process of sophisticated, scientific management and organisation, in which the 'inner' dimension of mind that challenges the *status quo* is "whittled down". The loss of dimension, where the critical power of Reason is housed, is part of the process to reconcile and suppress opposition in advanced industrial society. Progress turns Reason into submission to the facts of life. The efficiency of the system convinces the individual that "it contains no facts which do not communicate the repressive power of the whole."<sup>51</sup> Individuals find themselves in the things, which shape their life and this they do by accepting the law of society.

The concept of alienation becomes questionable when individuals become aware of the existence imposed on them. And this awareness/"identification" is a reality and not illusion. "However, the reality constitutes a more progressive stage of alienation."<sup>52</sup> Before the tribunal of progress, the 'false consciousness' of the rationality is transformed into true consciousness.

This absorption of ideology into reality does not mean the 'end of ideology'. The industrial society is more ideological than previous ones as ideology is ingrained in the production process. These all reveal the political character of technological rationality and the way it functions. The products of this rationality indoctrinate and manipulate, and promote a false consciousness, which is immune against the falsehood of the rationality. As its reach increases to more individuals the indoctrination "becomes a way of life". It assumes the character of normality. A much better way of life emerges that opposes qualitative change. And emerges "a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behaviour in which ideas, aspirations, and

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe.”<sup>53</sup>

The whole trend is embodied in a scientific method: an empirical treatment of subjects that restricts the meanings “to the representation of particular operations and behaviour.”<sup>54</sup> Marcuse quotes P.W. Bridgman to argue that operational point of view restricts our way of understanding a concept as well as affects our ‘habit of thought, in that we shall no longer permit ourselves to use as tools in our thinking concepts of which we cannot give an adequate account in terms of operations.’ He foresees this becoming true as “radical empiricist onslaught” has eliminated all “most seriously troublesome concepts” in different disciplines.

The changes in ‘our habits of thought’ are expressed in a way the ideas irreconcilable with the system are repelled or the ideas and goals of individuals are co-ordinated with that of society. This never means that materialism rule and spiritualism is out. There is more spiritualism, existentialism, Zen, etc., today. But the change has been that “such modes of protest and transcendence are no longer contradictory to the status quo and no longer negative.”<sup>55</sup> They have become a part and parcel of the day-today practicality as a “harmless negation” of the current order.

The universe of discourse of the advanced technological society has its own self-validating hypotheses, paving way for its own definitions. Only those institutions are “free” that operate in the free world. And the dominant social forces define this notion of freedom and liberty. Others are anarchist, communist or propaganda. All those aspects of private life not undertaken by private/public sector (like protection of nature, comprehensive health insurance etc.) are termed ‘socialistic’. On the other

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p.24

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p.25



hand, in East 'freedom' is seen in terms of being instituted by a communist regime, and all others are capitalistic/revisionist/leftist sectarianism. Both the camps brand all non-operational ideas as "non-behavioural and subversive."<sup>56</sup> Barriers are drawn for limit of Reason.

There have been various "accommodating concepts of Reason" – from Descartes, Hobbes to Kant, which "were always contradicted" by the misery and injustice perpetrated by public bodies, and by the conscious rebellion against them. Societal conditions existed that provoked dissociation from it and existence of a private and political dimension developed it into effective opposition.

As this dimension is gradually closed by the society "the interrelation between scientific-philosophical and societal processes, between theoretical and practical Reason, asserts itself "behind the back" of the scientists and philosophers"<sup>57</sup>. The society bars a whole type of oppositional operations and behaviour rendering their concepts "illusory and meaningless". Historical transcendence is not acceptable to science and scientific thought on grounds of being metaphysical transcendence.

A new universe of discourse and action, needs and aspirations are established as the 'cunning of Reason' works in the interests of the ruling power of society. "The insistence on operational and behavioural concepts turn against the efforts to free thought and behaviour from the given reality and for the suppressed alternatives."<sup>58</sup> Scientific and technical progress is an instrument of domination.

Progress is not a neutral term as it moves towards specific ends, for ameliorating the human condition. Advanced industrialised nations are approaching a stage "where

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p.26

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p.27

continued progress would demand the radical subversion of the prevailing direction and organisation of progress.”<sup>59</sup> This stage will be reached when material production is so automated that “labour time is reduced to marginal time”. From here on “technical progress would transcend the realm of necessity”, where it served as an instrument of domination, which limited its rationality; “technology would become subject of the free play of faculties in the struggle for the pacification of nature and society.”<sup>60</sup> Marx had envisioned this through the notion of the ‘abolition of labour’.

Marcuse believes that the term ‘pacification of existence’ is better suited for the historical alternative of a world, where international conflicts transform and suspend contradictions within societies, which advances on the brink of a global war. “‘Pacification of existence’ means the development of man’s struggle with man and the nature, under conditions where the competing needs, desires, and aspirations are no longer organised by vested interests in domination and scarcity – an organisation which perpetuates the destructive forms of this struggle.”<sup>61</sup>

A qualitatively new mode of existence can be envisaged not merely as a by-product of economic and political changes. It also involves a technical basis on which this society rests – a technical basis that sustains the economic and political institutions “through which the ‘second nature’ of man as an aggressive object of administration is stabilised.”<sup>62</sup>

As freedom depends on the conquest of alien necessity, the realisation of freedom depends on the techniques of this conquest. The highest productivity of labour can be used for the perpetuation of labour, and the most efficient industrialisation can

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p.28

serve the restriction and manipulation of needs. “When this point is reached, domination – in the guise of affluence and liberty – extends to all spheres of private and public existence, integrates all authentic opposition, absorbs all alternatives. Technological rationality reveals its political character as it becomes the great vehicle of better domination, creating a truly totalitarian universe in which society and nature, mind and body are kept in a state of permanent mobilisation for the defence of this universe.”<sup>63</sup>

### **The Absence of Dissension**

Advanced industrial civilisation is a combination of Welfare and Warfare State. Its main trends are: national economy is concentrated in hands of corporations; government is “a stimulating, supporting, and ...controlling force.”<sup>64</sup> Economy is a part of global system of military alliances, monetary arrangements, technical assistance and development schemes; assimilation of blue-collar and white collar labour, the leadership types in business and labour, leisure activities and aspirations of different classes; there is a “pre-established harmony between scholarship and the national purpose”; private household invaded by public opinion; bedroom opened to mass media.

The political sphere is characterised by convergence or unity of opposites. This unification of opposites smoothens the development process on the back of those who constituted opposition to the system.

Marcuse shows how in developed countries there is “collusion and alliance between business and organised labour”. In the East due to reduced direct political control technology is seen as a more effective instrument of domination. The communist

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p.29

parties in France and Italy work within the existing systemic framework because their social base has become more conscious and their objectives altered by the transformation of the capitalist system (and Marcuse sees USSR as a case in which these factors compelled a policy change). “These national communist parties play the historical role of legal opposition parties “condemned to be non-radical”<sup>65</sup>

Internal social conflict in a society has been moderated by the impact of technical progress and international communism, and, consequently, capitalism acquired an unprecedented unity and cohesion. “It is a cohesion on very material grounds; mobilisation against the enemy works as a mighty stimulus of production and employment, thus sustaining the high standard of living.”<sup>66</sup>

### *Containing Social Change*

Marcuse sees socialism as a political revolution, which retains the capitalist technological apparatus. It, therefore, becomes a continuity wherein “technological rationality, freed from irrational restrictions and destructions, sustains and consummates itself in the new society.”<sup>67</sup> He believes that technological rationality is a pre-condition of socialism as well and therefore it cannot be altered in this new society either.

Marx was also saying that the technological development of the previous society is not negated but continued in the new society, socialism has all technologies which capitalism had<sup>68</sup>. Marcuse adds here that even the ideology attached with that

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.30

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p.31

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p.31

<sup>68</sup> For further details see Cornforth, Maurice; *Historical Materialism*; International Publishers; New York; 1985 and Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick; *Manifesto of Communist Party*; Pearl Publishers; Calcutta; 1984.

technology is continued in the new society. And that is why in USSR he finds the same traits of development and repression in the advanced capitalist countries.

Marcuse enumerates the transformation being experienced by the labouring classes in the industrialised world:

1. "Mechanisation is increasingly reducing the quantity and intensity of physical energy expended in labour."<sup>69</sup> This, he believes, has "great bearing" on Marxian notion of proletarian, who exhausts his physical energy in work process, even in mechanised one. "The purchase and use of this physical energy, under subhuman conditions, for the private appropriation of surplus-value entailed the revolting inhuman aspects of exploitation."<sup>70</sup>

Marcuse believes that mechanisation of labour with sustained exploitation has modified the status of the exploited. It is more "exhausting, stupefying, in human slavery" due to increased speed, control of machine operators, and isolation from other workers. This represents "coexistence of automated, semi-automated, and non-automated sections within the same plant..."<sup>71</sup>

Today's explanation (and he quotes Charles R. Walker, from *Toward the Automatic Factory*) involves "...skills of the head rather than of the hand, of the logician rather than the craftsman; of nerve rather than muscle; of the pilot rather than the manual worker; of the maintenance man rather than the operator."<sup>72</sup>

Previously proletariat, as the beast of burden was "the living denial of this society". Now after being organised he lives this denial less conspicuously

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<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p.33

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

and is incorporated into technological community. The environment leads the worker to believe that the technology swings him rather than oppress and Marcuse adds that it swings his mind, body and soul. He quotes Sartre to elucidate this trend.

The mechanisation process in the technological universe “breaks the innermost privacy of freedom and joins sexuality and labour in one unconscious, rhythmic automatism – a process which parallels the assimilation of jobs.”<sup>73</sup>

2. In key industrial establishments number of blue-collar workers declined compared to white-collar, indicating towards a “change in the character of the basic instruments of production.”

As the machine itself becomes a system of mechanical tools and relations “it asserts its larger dominion” by reducing the ‘professional autonomy’ of worker and integrating him with other professions, “which suffer and direct the technical ensemble.” Previous ‘professional’ autonomy of the labourer was “his professional enslavement” but it also gave him the “power of negation” – the power to stop a process that threatened his annihilation as a human being. Now he no longer forms a different class that once threatened the established society. He is assimilated into the order.

The technological change seems to negate Marxian notion of the “organic composition of capital” as well as the theory of creation of surplus value. Marx believed that machine never created value but transferred its own value to the product, while surplus value was the result of exploitation of living

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<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p.35

labour. “The machine is embodiment of human labour process, and through it, past labour (dead labour) preserves itself and determines living labour.”<sup>74</sup>

Automation has changed the relation between dead and living labour and machines and not individuals determine productivity. The measurement of individual output becomes impossible; automation means that work cannot be measured. Only ‘equipment utilisation’ can be measured. Daniel Bell believed that industrialisation did not begin with factories but arose out of the measurement of work.

With these technological changes “what is at stake is the compatibility of technological progress with the very institutions in which industrialisation developed.”<sup>75</sup>

3. The changed character of work and instruments of production have altered the attitude and consciousness of worker, which is manifested in the issue of ‘social and cultural integration’ of working class with capitalist society. The process of integration in every field begins from integration in the plant itself, in the material process of production. Presently negative features of automation are predominant - like speed-up, technological unemployment, strengthened management, “increased impotence and resignation on the part of the workers”. Chances of promotion decline as trained professionals are preferred. However, the same technological organisation also “generates interdependence” integrating the worker with the company. Workers eagerly want to participate in resolving production problems and apply brains to the technical and production problems. Workers even show their vested interests

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<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p.36

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p.37

in large establishments and Marcuse cites example of the Caltex refineries in France.

4. "The new technological work-world" weakens the negative position of proletariat and it no longer remains a contradiction to the established society. Gradually "domination is transfigured into administration" and Corporates appear as bureaucracy. With expansion of hierarchy into laboratories, research institutes etc., "the tangible source of exploitation disappears behind the façade of objective rationality."<sup>76</sup> Hatred and frustration are deprived of their target, "and the technological veil conceals the reproduction of inequality and enslavement."<sup>77</sup> Unfreedom is perpetuated and intensified through various kinds of liberties and comforts. Today humans do not have control over anything. "The slaves of developed industrial civilisation are sublimated slaves, but they are slaves, for slavery is determined 'neither by obedience nor by hardness of labour but by the status of being a mere instrument, and the reduction of man to the state of a thing' (quotes Francois Perroux)."<sup>78</sup>

Marcuse calls human's existence as an instrument or a thing as the pure form of servitude. Today, however, the relationship between Master and Servant is no longer dialectical. A vicious circle encloses them both. The decision to manufacture or even dream of new missiles is not in hands of government officials but technicians, planners and scientists employed by industries. The industries depend on military for "self-preservation and growth" while military depends on former for newer weapons and even military knowledge. A vicious circle is the image of society "which is self-

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<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, p.39

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p.40



expanding and self-perpetuating in its own pre-established direction – driven by the growing needs which it generates and, at the same time, contains.”<sup>79</sup>

### *The Future of Containment*

Can the chain of growing productivity and repression be broken? Capability of capitalism has remained better even after World Wars, waste of resources and faculties etc., and will always be so till the Enemy (communism) remains permanent. The reasons for this capability are:

- (a) The growing productivity of labour (technical progress);
- (b) The growth in birth rate of population;
- (c) The permanent defence economy;
- (d) The eco-political integration of the capitalist nations and building up of their relation with underdeveloped areas.

But the conflict between the productive capability of society and its “destructive and oppressive utilisation” makes it important “to impose the requirements of the apparatus on the population”. Hence, the system aims at (1) total administration and dependence on it by the management; (2) strengthen the harmony between public and private corporations and their customers and servants. Neither nationalisation nor enhanced participation of labour in management can change the situation of domination till the workers “remain a prop and affirmative force.”

One of the centrifugal tendencies inherent in technical progress is automation. Marcuse argues that expanding automation is more than “quantitative growth of mechanisation” – it denotes changed character of basic productive forces. “It seems that automation to the limits of technical possibility is incompatible with a society

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<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p.41

based on the private exploitation of human labour power in the process of production.”<sup>80</sup>

Automation is a “great catalyst of advanced industrial society”, with an explosive as well as non-explosive character. The social process of automation implies transformation, “or rather transubstantiation of labour power”, in which the labour power after being separated from the individual, becomes an independent producing object and thus a subject itself.

Automation, on becoming “the process of material production”, revolutionises the society. Individual ties to machinery are shaped and complete automation opens the dimension of free time, “in which man’s private and societal existence would constitute itself.” This will be “the historical transcendence towards a new civilisation.”<sup>81</sup>

Today workers oppose automation and demand extensive utilisation of labour power. However, this also means opposition of “more efficient utilisation of capital” and it hampers efforts to raise productivity of labour. That is, arrest of automation would weaken “competitive national and international position of capital, cause a long range depression, and consequently reactivate the conflict of class interests.”<sup>82</sup>

As automation in USSR increase, West would “accelerate rationalisation of the productive forces”, which will be opposed by labour, which is no more radical. With automation labour power’s role in productive process declines and so does political power of opposition. Therefore, radicalisation can be achieved through unionising white-collar groups. It will end “the mass base of labour as a pressure group.”

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p.42

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p.43

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

Marcuse holds that the slaves must be able to see and think that they are exploited and then only can they fight for freedom. But the problem that arises here is that even the 'leaders' or more conscious people of society themselves are indoctrinated. A kind of "educational dictatorship" prevails.

"Socialism must become reality with the first act of the revolution because it must already be in the consciousness and action of those who carried the revolution."<sup>83</sup>

Marcuse seems to be talking about effecting a change at the fundamental level – that is, at the level of consciousness.

During first phases of socialist construction remnants of previous society remain. But the second phase is also constructed in the first phase. Control of productive forces by 'immediate producers' denotes the change, when "men would act freely and collectively under and against the necessity which limits their freedom and their humanity."<sup>84</sup> Contrarily, in USSR, the qualitative change is postponed to the second phase. The change to socialism is still a quantitative change. Enslavement of man by the instruments of his labour continues in a highly rationalised and vastly efficient and promising form there as well.

"Terroristic" Stalinist regime perpetuated "technical progress as the instrument of domination". Instead, the "structural resistance" becomes impossible due to nationalisation, as working hours are reduced and comforts of life augmented. This happens without abandoning hold of administration over people. Hence, technical progress and nationalisation do not necessary mean liberation of individuals. Consequently the contradiction between productive forces and their "enslaving organisation" gets blunted, instead of aggravation.

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, p.46

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p.47

Containment of social change in soviet system is “parallel” to those in advanced capitalist society, (as explained above) except for a difference that there are class distinctions at the very base of the system. This was established by political decision and power after Revolution and is continuing. It is not built into the productive process like the division between capital and labour in the private ownership of the means of production.

Marcuse critiques “Soviet-Marxist thesis” that contradictions between ‘lagging production relations and the character of the productive forces’ can be resolved gradually without explosion.

Education and reduction of working time to a minimum distribution of necessities irrespective of work performance are pre-conditions of self-determination, which can be imposed by administration but at the same time, which cannot be realised till administration is there.

A mature and free industrial society would require inequality. Here supervision or administration does not serve ruling class interests. Transition to such a state is revolutionary than evolutionary even if there is nationalised and planned economy. Present communist societies cannot have this transition. Because “the need for the all out utilisation of technical progress, and for survival by virtue of a superior standard of living may prove stronger than the resistance of the vested bureaucrats”, especially when USA is the competitor.

Commenting on the remark that the development in the Third World countries would change the prospects of the advanced countries and the former would constitute a Third Force he elaborates on the different models of backwardness already in the process of industrialisation in those countries. In countries like India

industrialisation coexists with “an unbroken pre - and anti - industrial culture”. These nations enter into the industrialisation phase with a population untrained in the “values of self-propelling productivity, efficiency, and technological rationality”. Here the social capital required for primary accumulation is obtained from without – from capitalist/socialist bloc. However, in such countries “the dead weight of pre-technological and even pre-“bourgeois” customs and conditions” resist the imposed development. “The machine process requires obedience to a system of anonymous powers – total secularisation and the destruction of values and institutions whose de-sanctification has hardly begun.”<sup>85</sup> But to Marcuse the fear of a terroristic administration seems larger. Hence, under such situation, “the backward areas are likely to succumb either to one of the various forms of neo-colonialism, or to a more or less terroristic system of primary accumulation.”<sup>86</sup>

Marcuse asks whether the alternative of the local indigenous/pre-technological industrialising itself is a feasible alternative. In such a case a planned policy that would seek to develop the local forces on their own ground and eliminate the local oppressive and exploitative forces will be required. “Social revolution, agrarian reform, and reduction of over-population would be pre-requisites, but not industrialisation after the pattern of the advanced societies.”<sup>87</sup> At certain junctures help of the “piecemeal aid” of technology can be taken. Then the conditions that would exist would also be different. “...The “immediate producers” themselves would have the chance to create, by their own labour and leisure, their own progress and determine its rate and direction. Self-determination would proceed from the

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<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p.50

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p.51

base, and work for the necessities could transcend itself toward work for gratification.”<sup>88</sup>

Politics of technological rationality tries to contain change depending “on the prospects of the welfare state.” Such a state, “capable of raising the standard of living” (which is inherent to all industrial societies where technology is a separate power above the individual) is dependent for its functioning on “the intensified development; and expansion of productivity.”

Warfare State with its rationality is “a state of unfreedom” because of being “a systematic restrictions” which is of various types. Society has become more parasitical and alienated in late industrial society.

Production of “socially necessary waste” such as advertisement, PR, etc., is rationalised through “relentless” use of science and technology. In other words the increased productivity, due to the growth in productivity of labour, creates surplus-product and leads to more consumption and people do not realise the need for self-determination if “administered life” is comfortable or “good”. This unifies the opposites and leads to the construction of the one-dimensional man.

Why will people want change if they get everything and more so when they are also fed ideas and thoughts. In the advanced capitalism pluralism is subdued as whole dominates the individual. Though for individual former is still better. “The reality of pluralism becomes ideological, deceptive.”

Threat from without does not affect the productivity or standard of living in a society but it is used to contain social change and perpetuate servitude. The enemy for communism or capitalism is the spectre of liberation.

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<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

“The insanity of the whole absolves the particular insanities and turns the crime against humanity into a rational enterprise.”<sup>89</sup> Marcuse argues that the way two social systems – capitalism and communism – are interdependent (and latter trying to catch up with former) the dominance of totality has been established. “When capitalism meets the challenge of communism, it meets its own capabilities: spectacular development of all productive forces after the subordination of the private interests in profitability, which arrest such development. When communism meets the challenge of capitalism, it too meets its own capabilities: spectacular comforts, liberties, and alleviation of the burden of life.”<sup>90</sup> There is a need to struggle against a form of life, which would disintegrate the basis for domination.

### **The Cultural Conquest by Techno-Rational World Order**

Marcuse in this chapter tries to show how technological rationality liquidates “the oppositional and transcending elements in “higher culture”. And to illustrate this he takes literature as an example. “What is happening now is not the deterioration of higher culture into mass culture but the refutation of this culture by the reality. The reality surpasses its culture.”<sup>91</sup> Man is more than cultural hero or demi-god after having resolved so many problems.

He argues that higher culture is always contradictory with the social reality and was enjoyed by a privileged minority but was accommodating, undisturbing to the reality. It represented another dimension of the reality through oppositional, alien and transcendental elements. But now it is not the same. Two-dimensional culture

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<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p.54

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p.56

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p.57

has been liquidated, not through rejection or denial but through incorporation into the established order, "through their reproduction and display on a massive scale."

Today it is used to produce social cohesion and was used against communism. It is commodified. "The music of the soul is also the music of salesmanship. Exchange value, not truth value counts."<sup>92</sup> Words of freedom and fulfilment in political campaigns acquire meaning in context of propaganda only. Ideal is surpassed by reality. It comes of realm of soul/spirit into operational terms and functions. Ideals are materialised. Higher culture is equal to material culture and Higher Culture loses truth in this process.

Higher culture of West, which is still professed by the West, was a pre-technological culture. It remained largely a feudal culture because it was confined to a minority, had romantic element and "because its authentic words expressed a conscious, methodical alienation from the entire sphere of business and industry..."<sup>93</sup> Though bourgeoisie found representation through Goethe and Thomas Mann but Higher Culture remained overshadowed by the feudal dimension.

Now the Higher Culture has changed. The post-technological culture has transformed it from being an expression of "the rhythm and content of a universe in which valleys and forests, villages and inns, nobles and villains, salons and courts were a part of the experienced reality." It basically reflected the rhythm of those who had "time and the pleasure to think, contemplate, feel and narrate."<sup>94</sup>

The change in the character of Higher Culture has been tremendous. Contrary to Marxism's, that denotes man's relation to himself and to his work in capitalist

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<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, p.58

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p.59



society, "the artistic alienation is the conscious transcendence of the alienated existence."<sup>95</sup> Higher culture is invalidated, though some of its images survive in its advanced creations. Its subversive force and destructive content is invalidated. "The alien and alienating oeuvres of the intellectual culture become familiar goods and services."<sup>96</sup>

Art and literature has been termed "as one of a 'higher' order" that doesn't disturb normal business. Today, however, "the absorbent power of society" assimilates even the antagonistic contents of art thereby depleting it. In realm of culture totalising tendencies harmonise the pluralism (even contradictions). The absorbent power of advanced society assimilating its antagonistic contents. The totalitarian tendencies in cultural sphere harmonise pluralism, thereby making coexistence of the most contradictory works and truths peacefully a common site. The technological reality invalidates not only certain "styles" but also the very substance of art." Otherwise literature and language served as an important source to understand the contemporary realities as in *Madame Bovary*.

Previous to this new tendency of "cultural reconciliation, literature and art were essentially alienation, sustaining and protecting the contradiction - the unhappy consciousness of the divided world, the defeated possibilities, the hopes unfulfilled, and the promises betrayed. They were a rational, cognitive force, revealing a dimension of man and nature which was repressed and repelled in reality."<sup>97</sup>

Contemporary art is a "Great Refusal" because it has no link with sphere of labour and its misery "remains, with all its truth, a privilege and an illusion."<sup>98</sup> But in

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<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, p.60

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p.61

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*

advancing technological society the gap between the arts and the order of the day is closed and the "Great Refusal is in turn refused". It becomes a commercial, which is absorbed in society.

The defence of classic's revival by "neo-conservative critics of leftist critics of mass culture" must consider that in this revival they have become other than what they were, losing their antagonistic force and dimension of truth. Their intent and function has changed.

Making art a 'privilege' was the work/function of a repressive society. Paperback books, general education, long-playing records, and the abolition of formal dress in the theatre and concert hall cannot correct this. Marcuse expresses the significance of cultural privilege in historicity. "The cultural privileges expressed the injustice of freedom, the contradiction between ideology and reality, the separation of intellectual from material productivity; but they also provided a protected realm in which the tabooed truths could survive in abstract integrity - remote from the society which suppressed them."<sup>99</sup>

The new culture is "better, i.e., more beautiful and more practical than the monstrosities of Victorian era", but it is also "integrated" - through construction of shopping centre or municipal centre, government centre as the cultural centre. "Domination has its own aesthetics, and democratic domination has its democratic aesthetics."<sup>100</sup> Fine arts is accessible at the turn of a knob but in this process everyone has "become cogs in a culture-machine which remakes their content." "Artistic alienation" like other modes of negation surrenders to the processes of

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<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, p.63

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

technological rationality. The physical transformation of the world brings with itself new symbols, images, and ideas as a part of the mental transformation.

Brecht views theatre as a mode of change. This needs to be learnt, comprehended and acted upon. Marcuse believes that it must be also for entertainment and pleasure. Entertainment and learning are, however, not opposites, and in fact, entertainment may facilitate learning. "To teach what the contemporary world really is behind the ideological and material veil, and how it can be changed, the theatre must break the spectator's identification with the events on the stage."<sup>101</sup> This he calls "estrangement effect".

Marcuse dwells extensively on the issue of what role does poetry play in a society. He believes that "the poetic language speaks of that which is of this world, which is visible, tangible, audible in man and nature – and of that which is not seen, not touched, not heard."<sup>102</sup> It speaks of something unspoken/underrepresented. It is "an ingression" of different kind into the established order. It uses transcendental elements of ordinary language. But "mobilisation of media" in defence of current order has made transcendence "technically impossible" because the expression has been so attractive and co-ordinated.

What Dadaism and Surrealism type tendencies have done - is that they rejected "the very structure of discourse which, throughout the history of culture, has linked artistic and ordinary language."<sup>103</sup> Traditional art appears as quotes, as "residues of past meaning for refusal." In the tendencies of rebellion – like surrealism, Dadaism, Barthe's ideas etc., - "the word refuses the unifying, sensible rule of the sentence. It explodes the pre-established structure of meaning and becoming an absolute object" itself, designates an intolerable, self-defeating universe - a discontinuation. This subversion of the linguistic structure implies a subversion of the experience of

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<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p.65

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, p.66

nature.”<sup>104</sup> Barthe writes that there is no poetic humanism in “modernity”. It is a discourse full of terror, which does not relate to the other man, but to “the most inhuman images of nature, heaven, hell, the sacred, childhood, madness, pure matter etc.”<sup>105</sup>

Higher culture has vanished due to conquest of nature, and due to “the progressing conquest of scarcity.” Psychiatrists to cure problems used literature. Now, a “rationally organised bureaucracy” gives the prescriptions for inhumanity and injustice. The soul cannot be discussed because of its nature and solitude, “the very condition which sustained the individual against and beyond his society” is technically impossible. The rational universe of discourse and behaviour has all the answers.

The higher culture of past had many elements including representative of freedom, i.e., “the refusal to behave”. Now everything, including culture, is seen in terms of satisfaction. It “takes place on a material ground of increased satisfaction. This is also the ground which allows a sweeping desublimation.”<sup>106</sup>

“Artistic alienation is sublimation. It creates the images of conditions, which are irreconcilable with the established Reality Principle but which, as cultural images, become tolerable, even edifying and useful.”<sup>107</sup> But this imagery has been invalidated, desublimated, where that of immediate gratification has replaced its mediating role. “The Pleasure Principle absorbs the Reality Principle...” It is being persistently established that there is a link between desublimation and technological society.

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, p.67

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p.68

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, pp.68-69

The pre-technical was no doubt romantic and underdeveloped but it had a 'landscape', "a medium of libidinal experience that no longer exists". Mechanical world stops self-transcendence of libidinal energy. The compartmentalisation of human beings and their thought process puts brakes on self-transcendence as a principle of individual's realisation of its potential.

Diminished erotic and intensifying sexual energy in technological world leads to desublimation. "In the mental apparatus, the tension between that which is desired and that which is permitted seems considerably lowered...The organism is thus being preconditioned for the spontaneous acceptance of what is offered."<sup>108</sup> The organism is preconditioned to accept anything that is offered. There is "institutionalised desublimation".

"Technological progress and more comfortable living permit the systematic, inclusion of libidinal components into the realm of commodity production and exchange"<sup>109</sup>, such as in house, office, private versus public, exposition etc.' Due to "this mobilisation and administration of libido" the harmony between individual needs and socially required desires, goals, and aspirations etc., is maintained.

"Sex is integrated into work and public relations and is thus made more susceptible to (controlled) satisfaction. Technical progress and more comfortable living permit the systematic inclusion of libidinal components into the realm of commodity production and exchange.... This mobilisation and administration may libido may account for much of the voluntary compliance, the absence of terror, the pre-established harmony between individual needs and socially-required desires, goals,

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, p. 70

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, p. 71

ad aspirations.”<sup>110</sup> Satisfaction “generates submission and weakens the rationality of protest... All sublimation accepts the social barrier to instinctual gratification, but it also transgresses this barrier.”<sup>111</sup>

In the “unfree society” people accept the, otherwise non-free, ‘liberties’ as satisfactory, which paves way for a happy consciousness that facilitates acceptance of the misdeeds of this society. It reflects the declining autonomy and power of comprehension. “...it is mediation between the conscious and the unconscious, between the primary and secondary processes, between the intellect and instinct, renunciation and rebellion.”<sup>112</sup>

The “liberty of sexuality (and of aggressiveness) frees the instinctual drives from much of the unhappiness and discontent that elucidate the repressive power of the established universe of satisfaction.”<sup>113</sup> However, Marcuse feels that there can be various other ways for turning unhappiness into a source of strength of social cohesion and for social order meaning he tries to establish that unhappiness does not necessarily hamper social development or order.

In classical literature sexuality “appears in a sublimated, “mediated”, reflective form – but in this form, it is absolute, uncompromising, unconditional... Fulfilment is destruction, not in a moral, or sociological but in an ontological sense. It is beyond good and evil, beyond social morality, and thus it remains beyond the reaches of the established Reality Principle, which this Eros refuses and explodes.” But gradually, sexuality got desublimated and it is rampant in books like *Lolita*, wherein sexuality promotes oppression. “It could not be said of any of the sexy women in

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<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, p.72

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

contemporary literature what Balzac says of the whore Esther: that hers was the tenderness, which blossoms only in infinity. This society turns everything it touches into a potential source of progress and of exploitation, of drudgery and satisfaction, of freedom and of oppression. Sexuality is no exception.”<sup>114</sup>

The society’s enhanced capacity to “manipulate technical progress also increases its capacity to manipulate and control this instinct.”<sup>115</sup> As the opposition is reduced/absorbed in the realm of politics or higher culture even the instinctual sphere is reduced/absorbed in the same way. It results in “the atrophy of the mental organs for grasping the contradictions and the alternatives...”<sup>116</sup>

Horrors of concentration camps gradually become the practice of training people for abnormal conditions. “The neutrality of technological rationality shows forth over and above politics, and again it show forth as spurious, for in both cases, it serves the politics of domination.”<sup>117</sup> Marcuse quotes E. Ionesco in this regard: “The world of the concentration camps... was not an exceptionally monstrous society. What we saw there was the image, and in a sense the quintessence, of the infernal society into which we are plunged every day.”<sup>118</sup>

In this technologically motivated society the world is shown as a technological game – maps, missiles, symbols, wars... And Marcuse as a solution to the whole crisis has put the *whole* at stake “there is no crime except that of rejecting the *whole*, or not defending it. Crime, guilt and guilt feeling become a private affair.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, pp.72-73

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, pp.74

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, pp.75

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, pp.76

## **The Totalitarian Discourse**

In this chapter Marcuse tries to show how in modern times sociology is being used to expose and correct “abnormal behaviour” in society (also to avert any discontent) through complete exclusion of critical concepts, which could relate such behaviours to whole society i.e., criticality as important for developing a holistic approach. It results, further, in affirmation and ‘practicality’ and empiricism shows itself as positive thinking.

### *The Language of Domination*

Happy consciousness reflects conformism, “which is a facet of technological rationality translated into social behaviour.”<sup>120</sup> Today the technological rationality has aggravated the situation to such an extent that torture of Nazi type is a “normal affair”. There is a language of total administration which is operative at the moment, in which (a) media mediates between the masters and their dependants; (b) its publicity/language shapes the one-dimensional world vis-à-vis the two-dimensional, i.e., dialectical world; (c) in the new habits of thought the conflict between appearance and reality, fact and factor, substance and attribute disappear. Autonomy, discovery, demonstration, and critique surrenders before designation, assertion and imitation.

In this world the popular language, the colloquial, seems to challenge the official and semi-official domination. Appears to be asserting his humanity against the powers. The words and sentence structure is also peculiar. “This linguistic form militates against a development of meaning.”<sup>121</sup> In this universe the words represent concepts. “The word becomes a cliché” that “governs the speech or the writing.”

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<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p.78

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, p.80



These tendencies close the meaning of the thing. “The noun governs the sentence in an authoritarian and totalitarian fashion, and the sentence becomes a declaration to be accepted – it repels demonstration, qualification, negation of its codified and declared meaning.”<sup>122</sup> In East/West the analytical expressions differ but none of them allows one to go beyond the given analytical structure. Consequently, lies are accepted and their content suppressed.

The instruments around – media and commercialisation - fix the meaning of a noun that the recipient does not even think of other explanations. Advertisement industry functions on this paradigmatic understanding of things. The reader or listener is expected to associate with words, sentences and symbols a fixated structure of institutions, attitudes, aspirations, and he is expected to react in a fixated, specific manner. This can be very well seen today wherein advertising has become a major industry.

Familiarity is established through personalised ‘language’, which has come to play a significant role in the advanced communication, like ‘Your congressman’, ‘your highway’, ‘your newspaper’ type expressions. The personalised images and the structure do not leave any space for distinction, development and differentiation of meaning. It is represented as and functions as a whole.

Terms joins different spheres like technology, politics and the military in one whole. Their images convey unity and harmony of contradictions. Hence, science and military becomes synonymous. The effect of this homogenisation is “hypnotic one” – as images convey irresistible unity, harmony of contradictions. Hence, a loving and feared Father, the spender of life, is accepted as generating the H-bomb for the annihilation of life. “The imposing structure unites the actors and actions of

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<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*

violence, power, protection, and propaganda in one lightning flash”<sup>123</sup>  
Abbreviations suppress questions which full forms of NATO, SEATO, UN, USSR  
etc., would have risen. “The meaning is fixed, doctored, loaded.”<sup>124</sup>

There is a tendency to be in favour of “overwhelming concreteness” the words are  
identified with things, which have a particular function, and this identification  
“creates a basic vocabulary and syntax which stand in the way of differentiation,  
separation, and distinction. This language, which constantly imposes images,  
militates against the development and expression of concepts.”<sup>125</sup> It has an element  
of immediacy and directness and impedes conceptual thinking; thereby impeding  
thinking. Today there is stress on “functionalised, abridged and unified language”,  
which “is the language of one-dimensional thought.”

The “linguistic abridgements indicate an abridgement of thought which they in turn  
fortify and promote.”<sup>126</sup> Abridgement in form of image, formulas, identifying thing  
with its function reveals one-dimensional mind in the language. It abridges the  
thought and makes the language one-dimensional, without any criticality. It blocks  
conceptual development... and surrenders to the facts it repels recognition of facts  
and their historical facts. This world teaches us to see things as they are. This  
discourse serves as a vehicle of subordination as well as co-ordination.

Dialectical thought comprehends the historical character of contradictions. Hence,  
the ‘other’ dimension is historical and when this dimension is historical and when  
this dimension is suppressed in the universe of operational rationality it is  
suppression of history which is not “an academic but a political affair”.

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<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, pp.84-85

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, p.85

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, p.86

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, p.87

This universe of discourse not only makes categories of freedom interchangeable/even identical with the opposites but also makes us forget horrors of fascism, the idea of socialism, the preconditions of democracy and content of freedom – i.e., the historical reality. Capitalism as socialist, bureaucratic dictatorship as communist, fascism's correlation with the Free World, i.e., operational redefinition invalidate the historical concepts. These redefinition transform falsehood into truth. However, history is invoked ritually as Founding Fathers, or Marx – Engels – Lenin, which block development.

“The functional language is a radically anti-historical language...”<sup>127</sup> Memory is considered subversive and, therefore, avoided. It recalls the past – the terror and hopes of those years. Therefore, bourgeois society liquidates history and memory as irrational.

Relation with past in interaction with present established society opposes closing of the universe of discourse. “It renders possible the development of concepts which de-stabilise and transcend the closed universe by comprehending it as historical universe. Confronted with the given society as object of its reflection, critical thought becomes historical consciousness; as such, it is essentially judgement.”<sup>128</sup>

Marcuse agrees here with Marxism in so far as it recognises subject as a historical agent and seems to offer a better alternative in the present society.

As man came to be subordinated to productive apparatus “authoritarian transformation” of Marxist into the Stalinist and post-Stalinist language took place. Thereafter, it is apparatus that establishes the facts. The discourse is closed and “the closed language does not demonstrate and explain – it communicates decision,

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<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, p.88

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, p.89

dictum, command.”<sup>129</sup> At such a juncture emerges terms like ‘revisionist’, ‘deviationist’, etc. The language that is being used is a closed language in the sense that it blocks our critical faculty and prevents us from looking at the things and developments beyond the apparent layer of the ‘reality’.

Even in communist societies dialectics was ignored and it was the power from above that functioned and disallowed any move that could hamper mass production. Here “the past is rigidly retained but not mediated with the present.”

Language reflects controls but also becomes instrument of control, even when it is not an order or decision. “This language controls by reducing the linguistic forms and symbols of reflection, abstraction, development, contradiction; by substituting images for concepts. It denies or absorbs the transcendent vocabulary; it does not search for but establishes and imposes truth and falsehood.”<sup>130</sup> But it is not terroristic. It makes one believe something without believing. These factors have further made administration and domination inseparable.

#### *The Research of Total Administration*

In the one-dimensional universe man is trained to forget. Thought itself is being redefined as “the co-ordination of the individual with his society reaches into those layers of the mind”<sup>131</sup> where the concepts<sup>132</sup> are designed so as to make one comprehend the established reality. This reduces tension between thought and reality as negation power of thought is weakened. Conquest of thought by society has taken place.

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<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, p.90

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*, p.92

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*, p.92-93

<sup>132</sup> Marcuse defines the term ‘concept’: “Concept is taken to designate the mental representation of something that is understood, comprehended, known as the result of a process of reflection.” p.93

When the concepts become uncritical and accommodating and when this reduced concept governs the analysis of the human reality, individual or social, mental or material, they arrive at a false concreteness, which is isolated from the reality that constructs it. This has a political function in the sense that the thoughts and expressions, theory and practice are to be shaped and nurtured in consonance with the facts of his existence, without leaving any possibility for evolution of conceptual critique of these facts.

Marcuse argues with reference to various studies in industrial sociology that the translated statements of workers fail to establish correlation between the particular and the whole. Everything is viewed in a particularised functional sense that has a “truly therapeutic effect.” Isolation of personal discontent of worker from general unhappiness of working class makes the case “treatable and tractable incident.” Under such a situation if the particular instances of an individual are rectified or corrected (after the study) he/she will see the event as a temporary case of hardship.<sup>133</sup> “The vague, indefinite, universal concepts which appeared in the untranslated complaint (in a study) were indeed remnants of the past; their persistence in speech and thought were indeed a block to understanding and collaboration.”<sup>134</sup>

Marcuse cites example of ‘democracy’, ‘free electorate’ and the elements encompassing the term. ‘Consent’ to a political process needs to be assessed in terms of its contents, its objectives and its ‘values’. Hence, consent to a fascist

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<sup>133</sup> If the condition of workers are studied and if their problems and even if the respondent answers in a universalistic term, e.g., uses the term ‘wages’ the researcher, while translating it makes into a particular workers income, which is insufficient due to wife’s illness. The management can bear the cost of an individual and not the all and therefore, following it he increases the wages temporarily, may be as an ‘allowance’ so that his problems are solved immediately and he would recognise that such problems can be resolved.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*, p.99

regime cannot be democratic. Marcuse concludes that the social research “in social theory, recognition of facts is a critique of facts”.<sup>135</sup>

### **The Defeated Logic of Protest**

In this chapter Marcuse is trying to define the pre-technological rationality and writes that “the totalitarian universe of technological rationality is the latest transmutation of the idea of Reason.”<sup>136</sup>

In Western tradition different thoughts have clashed with each other as they represent different ways of apprehending, organising, changing society and nature. The forces of stability have entered into a conflict with the subversive elements of Reason, “the power of positive with that of negative thinking, until the achievements of advanced industrial civilisation lead to the triumph of the one-dimensional reality over the all contradictions.”<sup>137</sup>

Marcuse’s concern has been to save truth, which he termed a “human project”, in the whole process, which he has been describing. And he believes that struggle for truth saves reality from destruction.

The separation of the pre-technological and technological project lies in the manner the necessities of life - to “earning a living” – are subordinated and organised. Also are related to these two different epochs represented by different forms of organisation the new modes of freedom and unfreedom, truth and falsehood, which correspond to them.

Knowing the truth and untruth was a privilege of the philosopher – statesmen in classical times, because it was closed to anyone busy in procuring necessities of life.

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<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, p. 104

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, p. 105

Now due to the nature of domination that has been imposed by the techno-rational order the quest of truth has become distorted.

“The laws of thought are laws of reality....” Abstraction is important to develop the thought. It “is the very life of thought, the token of its authenticity.”<sup>138</sup> It remains related to the established society from which it “moves away”. Marcuse sees a contradiction between dialectical thought and the given reality. Reality comes into its own truth by seeing itself in terms of its own subversion. Here Marcuse comes closer to Popper’s falsification theory, wherein he had argued that to arrive at truth it was necessary to constantly try to refute the existing truth because there is nothing such as the ultimate truth.

On formal logic he believes that “the idea of formal logic itself is a historical event in the development of the mental and physical instruments for universal control and calculability.” This logic has been important to create “theoretical harmony out of actual discord, to purge thought from contradictions.”<sup>139</sup> Formal logic is significant because it is “the first step on the long road to scientific thought.”<sup>140</sup>

The logical procedure has been very different in ancient and modern logic but the aim has always been “the construction of a universally valid order of thought, neutral with respect to material content.”<sup>141</sup> Abstracting generalisations existed long before technological development. Elements needed to construct a coherent logical system without contradictions “or with manageable contradiction” were separated from other non-harmonious elements.

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<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, p.112

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*, p.114

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*, p.115

Marcuse argues that though forms of domination changed from pre-technological to technological society history and formal logic have remained the tools of domination. It is so because formal logic intends universal validity for the laws of thought. It became an organised thought beyond which no syllogism could pass.

The contemporary formal logic (mathematical and symbolic logic) is different from its Classical predecessor but remains in opposition to dialectical logic. The “negative” – the denying, deceptive, falsifying power of the established reality is lost. The element of subversion, of established universe of discourse, is also eliminated from all thought, which is supposedly objective, exact and scientific. The new scientific truth is pro-establishment. The new scientific truth does not contain in itself the judgement that condemns the established reality.

In contrast dialectical logic “cannot be formal because it is determined by the real, which is concrete...It is the rationality of contradiction, of the opposition of forces, tendencies, elements, which constitutes the movement of the real, and if comprehended, the concept of the real.”<sup>142</sup> Dealing with the object of dialectical logic<sup>143</sup> Marcuse writes that it is anti-establishment because “all established reality militates against the logic of contradictions – it favours the modes of thought which

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<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p.116-117

<sup>143</sup> “...the object of dialectical logic is neither the abstract, general form of objectivity, nor the abstract, general form of thought – nor the data of immediate experience. Dialectical logic undoes the abstractions of formal logic and of transcendental philosophy, but it also denies the concreteness of immediate experience.... It attains its truth if it has freed itself from the deceptive objectivity which conceals the factors behind the facts – that is, if it understands its world a historical universe, in which the established facts are the work of the historical practice of man. This practice (intellectual and material) is the reality in the data of experience; it is also the reality which dialectical logic comprehends. When historical content enters into dialectical concept and determines methodologically its development and function, dialectical thought attains the concreteness, which links the structure of thought to that of reality. Logical truth becomes historical truth.... Reason becomes historical Reason. It contradicts the established order of men and things on behalf of existing societal forces that reveal the irrational character of this order – for “rational” is a mode of thought and action which is geared to reduce ignorance destruction brutality and oppression.” p.117



sustain the established forms of life and the modes of behaviour which reproduce and improve them.”<sup>144</sup>

“The given reality has its own logic and its own truth; the effort to comprehend them as such and to transcend them presupposes a different logic, a contradicting truth.” They belong to a mode of thought, which is non-operational in its very structure, alien to scientific as well as common-sense operationalism, its historical concreteness militates against quantification and mathematisation against positivism and empiricism on the other.

### **Technological Rationality and the ‘Scientific’ Logic of Domination**

Domination of man by man has continued only the “personal dependence” is replaced with “dependence on the objective order of things.”<sup>145</sup> Now domination “generates a higher rationality” exploiting natural and mental resources more efficiently and distributing its profit on a larger scale. This rationality is manifested in the “enslavement of man by a productive apparatus.”

Marcuse believes that something is wrong with rationality of system itself. The way societal labour is organised is itself wrong. Today the private enterprise is constructing its own form of domination, while socialist system is constructing “progressive domination”. Wrong organisation in advanced industrial societies is of concern – where the formerly “negative and transcending social forces” are getting integrated within the system to create a new structure. Negative opposition has been transformed into “positive opposition”. It is interesting to look at the term *opposition* of Marcuse, which he holds was subversive and critical, but positive in reality for society’s development. Alternatives are being refuted and tangible benefits of the system are considered worth defending. But this is natural to those who do not want

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<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p.118

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*, p.119

to and are incapable of comprehending what is happening and why – a thought process which follows nothing but the established rationality. “To the degree to which they correspond to the given reality, thought and behaviour express a false consciousness, responding to and contributing to the preservation of a false order of fact. And this false consciousness has become embodied in the prevailing technical apparatus which in turn reproduces it.”<sup>146</sup>

Marcuse outlines the ideology of the established society, which helps it to function smoothly. “We live and die rationally and productively. We know that destruction is the price of progress as death is the price of life, that renunciation and toil are the prerequisites for gratification and joy, that business must go on, and that the alternatives are Utopian. This ideology belongs to the established societal apparatus; it is a requisite for its continuous functioning and part of its rationality.”<sup>147</sup>

Scientific management and scientific division of labour resulted in higher standard of living. But it also “produced a patten of mind and behaviour which justifies and absolved even the most destructive and oppressive features of the enterprise.”<sup>148</sup>

Scientific-technical rationality and manipulation produce new form of social control. Quantification of nature (as mathematical structures) separated reality from ends, true from good science from ethics. True knowledge and reason want domination of senses to be over. In Plato union of *Logos* and *Eros* led to domination of *Logos*; Aristotelian relationship bet god and world as erotic is only in terms of analogy. Then ontological link between *Logos* and *Eros* is broken and science emerges as neutral. Here is a scientific rational world – physical, chemical or biological – outside which is world of values. Latter may have a higher dignity but are placed above reality. They are non-objective and cannot be checked for validity.

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<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*, p.120

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*

Marcuse tries to prove that the philosophy of contemporary physics “suspends judgement on what reality itself may be or considers the very question meaningless and unanswerable.”<sup>149</sup> Transformed into a methodological principle it (a) shifts theoretical emphasis from the metaphysical to the functional (b) it establishes a practical certainty – free from commitment to any substance outside the operation context. To Marcuse the contemporary philosophy of science is “struggling with an idealistic element.” The scientific rationality has weakened the idea of an antagonistic reality.

“The machine is indifferent toward the social uses to which it is put, provided those uses remain within its technical capabilities.”<sup>150</sup> However, extending it further Marcuse argues that there is a closer relationship between scientific thought and its application, between the universe of scientific discourse and that of ordinary discourse and behaviour – a relationship that functions under the same logic and rationality of domination.

Once operationalism becomes centre of “scientific enterprise”, rationality becomes a “methodical construction; organization and handling of matter as the mere stuff of control, as instrumentality which lends itself to all purposes and ends – instrumentality per se, “in itself”.”<sup>151</sup>

“True, the rationality of pure science is value-free and does not stipulate any practical ends. It is “neutral” to any extraneous values that may be imposed upon it. But this neutrality is a positive character. Scientific rationality makes for a specific societal organisation precisely because it projects mere form (or mere matter – here, the otherwise opposite terms converge) which can be bent to practically all ends. Formalisation and functionalisation are, prior to all application, the “pure form” of a concrete societal practice. While science freed nature from inherent ends

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<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*, p.124

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, p.127

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, p.128

and stripped matter of all but quantifiable qualities, society freed men from the “natural” hierarchy of personal dependence and related them to each other in accordance with quantifiable qualities – namely, as units of abstract labour power, calculable in units of time. “By virtue of the rationalisation of the modes of labour, the elimination of qualities is transferred from the universe of science to that of daily experience.”<sup>152</sup>

Marcuse declares that he wishes “to demonstrate the internal instrumentalist character of this scientific rationality by virtue of which it is a priori technology, and the a priori of a specific technology – namely, technology as form of social control and domination.”<sup>153</sup>

Modern science was structured in such a way so as to lead to “the ever-effective domination of nature thus came to provide the pure concepts as well as the instrumentalities or the ever-more-effective domination of man by man through the domination of nature.” Theoretical reasoning became servile to practical reason. Today, “domination perpetuates and extends itself not only through technology but as technology, and the later provides the great legitimization of the expanding political power, which absorbs all spheres of culture.”<sup>154</sup>

Technology rationalises unfreedom of man and projects ‘technical’ impossibility of being autonomous. “Unfreedom appears neither a irrational nor as political, but rather as submission to the technical apparatus which enlarges the comforts of life and increases the productivity of labour. Technological rationality thus protects rather than cancels the legitimacy of domination, and the instrumentalist horizon of reason opens on a rationally totalitarian society.”<sup>155</sup> “The liberating force of

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<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*, pp.128-129

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*, p.129

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*, p.130

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.*

technology – the instrumentalisation of things – turns into a fetter of liberation; the instrumentalisation of man.”<sup>156</sup> Marcuse is talking of scientific project as a societal project.

Husserl emphasised that “modern science is the ‘methodology’ of a pre-given historical reality.” He held that mathematisation of nature resulted in “valid practical knowledge and helped in establishing correlation between ‘ideational’ and empirical reality. However, scientific achievement refers back to a pre-scientific basis. And Galileo never questioned this pre-scientific basis (which determined theoretical structures) of science. This resulted in development of the notion that the mathematisation of nature created an ‘autonomous absolute truth’. “The ideational veil of mathematical science is thus a veil of symbols which represents and at the same time masks the world of practice.”<sup>157</sup>

Galileo’s science projects universal quantification that is a prerequisite for the domination of nature. His science functions within limits set by the socio-historical reality. This science and scientific method rationalises and insures the prevailing mode of things without altering its existential structure – “that is without envisaging a qualitatively new relations between man and between man and nature.”<sup>158</sup>

Thus, in the institutionalised forms of life, science has a stabilising, static conservative function, even it’s revolutionary changes and self. Correction extends the established universe and experience. For Husserl (and Marcuse supports him) the Galilean science was a significant break with pre-Galilean tradition, because of its instrumentalist horizon of thought that was committed to a specific historical world with its limits in theory and practice.

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<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*, p.131

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*, p.133

<sup>158</sup> p.135

Science, today, because of its own method of interplay of hypotheses and observable facts for establishing validity, “has projected and promoted a universe in which the domination of nature has remained linked to the domination of man – a link which tends to be fatal to this universe as a whole.”<sup>159</sup> However, right from Classical period and the elements of subversion were present and reason has been a tool of domination, whether, Classical formal, modern symbolic, dialectical or transcendental logic.

In the construction of technological reality there is nothing such as purely rational scientific order, but rather the process of technological reality is a political process. Today “the web of domination has become the web of Reason itself, and this society is fatally entangled in it. And the transcending modes of thought seem to transcend Reason itself.”<sup>160</sup>

### **The Triumph of One Dimensional Philosophy**

Today the thought is being redefined “to co-ordinate mental operations with those in the social reality”<sup>161</sup>. The philosophical analysis is used as for a therapeutic purpose, i.e., for correcting abnormal behaviour in thought and speech, removal of obscurities, illusions, and oddities, or at least their exposure. However, Marcuse feels that philosophy, unlike sociology and psychology, has no therapeutic significance for society.

Marcuse dwells extensively on the concept of positivism trying to look at it in historicity. “Consequently positivism is a struggle against all metaphysics, transcendentalism, and idealism as obscurantist and regressive modes of thought. To the degree to which the given reality is scientifically comprehended and transformed, to the degree to which society becomes industrial and technological, positivism finds in the society the medium for the realisation (and validation) of its

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<sup>159</sup> p.136

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*, p.138

<sup>161</sup> *ibid.*, p.139

concepts.”<sup>162</sup> Very interestingly, it “stigmatises non-positive notions as mere speculation, dreams or fantasies.”<sup>163</sup>

In Saint – Simon’s thought positivism as an idea of technological reality includes within its gamut everything within the reach of sciences and brands Metaphysics as unscientific and irrational. Today the scope and truth of philosophy is also reduced and even philosophers accept their inefficacy and modesty in this regard. Austine and Wittgenstein “exhibit, to my mind, academic sado-masochism, self-humiliation, and self-denunciation of the intellectual whose labour does not issue in scientific, technical or like achievements.”<sup>164</sup> The contemporary philosophers justify in a certain way the dominant societal idea, which debunks alternative modes of thought that contradicts established universe of discourse. Linguistic philosophy takes up a purged language for analysis and also blocks the analysis of what ordinary speech says about the society that speaks it. This linguistic analysis not even involves the ordinary language but rather the “blown-up atoms of language, silly scraps of speech that sound like baby talk such as “This looks to me now like a man eating poppies”, “He saw a robin”, “I had a hat.””<sup>165</sup> This critical commentary on linguistic philosophy emanates from his understanding that it has an “extra-linguistic commitment.” And by deciding on a distinction between legitimate and non-legitimate usage of words, phrases etc., between authentic and illusory meaning, sense and non-sense, it invokes a political, aesthetic, or moral judgement.

Marcuse talks of poverty of philosophy, which commits itself to the established concepts and situations and “distrusts the possibility of a new experience.” It is subjected totally to the established facts, and we are furthermore asked to obey the language society speaks. Under such circumstances what is at stake today is “the chance of preserving and protecting the right, the need to think and speak in terms

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<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, p.140

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.*, p.141

<sup>164</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*, pp.143

other than those of common usage – terms which are meaningful, rational, and valid precisely because they are other terms.”<sup>166</sup>

The philosophical analysis ignores the political dimension, i.e., the critical analysis. It wilfully accepts the universal categories without looking at what lies behind them. Due to these very reasons the ordinary language, which can be a vital concern for philosophical analysis, loses the humility and the meanings hidden behind it. They have a hidden dimension that can reveal many things.

Positive philosophy, that is the dominant tendencies of the discipline, has a closed and well-protected world immune to external transgressions. In this one-dimensional word and thought process, of which above is a part, the factual representation restricts the evolution of worldly experience “and the positivist cleaning of the mind brings the mind in line with the restricted experience.”<sup>167</sup> And this positivist, with its other aspects as well, is not altered even in the neo-positivist tendencies, which claim to be so. It still “directs its main effort against metaphysical notions and it is motivated by a notion of exactness which is either that of formal logic or empirical description.”<sup>168</sup>

Under repressive conditions “experience takes place before a curtain which conceals and, if the world is the appearance of something behind the curtain of immediate experience, then, in Hegel’s terms, it is we ourselves who are behind the curtain.”<sup>169</sup> Hence, philosopher has a specific duty - to “comprehend the world in which they live – to understand it in terms of what it has done to man, and what it can do to man.”<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, Marcuse holds that “this intellectual dissolution and even

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<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, p. 145

<sup>167</sup> *ibid.*, p. 148

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*, p. 149

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*, p. 150

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*, p. 149



subversion of the given facts is the historical task of philosophy and the philosophic dimension.”<sup>171</sup> In the totalitarian society therapeutic task of philosophy is a political task, wherein politics would appear in philosophy as the intent of its concepts to comprehend the unmutated reality. If linguistic analysis fails to contribute to such an understanding, restricting itself to the closed and “mutilated” universe “it is at best entirely inconsequential.” The philosopher’s task is to rectify the wrongs that pervade the universe of ordinary discourse.

However, one finds trends contrary to this in contemporary society. Philosophical concepts are antagonistic to the ordinary discourse and have contents, which are not used in the spoken language or discourse. Hence, it still contains ‘ghosts’, ‘illusions’, ‘fictions’ etc. This has been so because of the separation of philosophy and science “is itself a historical event” as evident from the fact that the Aristotelian physics was a part of philosophy and precursor to the ‘first science’ – ontology. One of the prime concerns that emerges out of the whole spate of specialisation and division of disciplines paves way for a pertinent question about the division of arts and science.

In advanced industrial society technical rationalisation of the apparatus and then the mental and material productivity brought about a “shift in the locus of mystification”. The rational becomes an effective vehicle of mystification rather than the irrational. The mobilisation of mental and material machinery established the mystifying power over the society. It made individuals incapable of seeing things behind the machine. In this whole campaign of rationalisation, the problem has been that the statistics, measurements, and field studies of empirical sociology and

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<sup>171</sup> *ibid.*, p.150

political science are not rational enough and also become mystifying as cannot be related to the concrete contexts.

Marcuse is also concerned about the whole-individual dynamics. He writes that the “society is indeed the *whole* which exercises its independent power over the individuals, and this Society is no unidentifiable “ghost”. It has its empirical hard core in the system of institutions, which are the established and frozen relationships among men.”<sup>172</sup>

Very interestingly, dwelling upon the dynamics of meanings he writes that they vary in different historical epochs and with the level of culture. There are different meanings attached to words or terms representing the diverse conflicting sections of global politics (which is in fact not an antagonistic political relation) as in the orbit of the more or less advanced capitalist societies on the one hand and that of the advancing communist societies on the other. This whole agenda is a part of the campaign to transform the multi-dimensional society into one-dimensional society wherein one-dimensional language is imposed over the multi-dimensional language, “in which different and conflicting meanings no longer interpenetrate but are kept apart; the explosive historical dimension of meaning is silenced.”<sup>173</sup>

### **Commitment of Philosophy to Unravel the Rational “Mysticism”**

The contemporary analytic philosophy seeks to exorcise the metaphysical ‘ghosts’ “by dissolving the intent of these concepts into statements on particular identifiable operations, performances, powers, dispositions, propensities, skills, etc.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> *ibid.*, p.154

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*, p.160

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.*, p.161

Universal categories and terms have been constructed in such a way and provided such a meaning that they lose their meaning and significance if translated into particular statements. The representative institutions in which the individuals work for themselves and speak for themselves lead to the reality of such universals as the Nation, the Party, the Constitution, the Corporation, the Church – reality that is not identical with any particular identifiable entity (individual, group, or institution). In these terms the identity of the groups are lost and an overarching identity, with which, certainly, the people are seasoned to identify, are ‘imposed’ unknowingly.

The totalitarianism or repressive society affects and cripples formation of concepts. This restriction, further, “produces a pervasive tension, even conflict, between the “the mind” and the mental processes, between “consciousness” and conscious acts.”<sup>175</sup>

The basic idea behind Marcuse whole thesis appears to be his concern for the loss of criticality in the contemporary advanced society in the name rationality. Internal refutation and criticism appears to him to be an important pillar of thought process, which pertains to the historical reality and comprehends the reality and its critical content. “They recognise and anticipate the irrational in the established reality – they project the historical negation.”<sup>176</sup>

History is constructed and the factors that construct are determined by the system. Marcuse is extremely concerned with the contemporary situation wherein “all historical projects tend to be polarised on the two conflicting totalities – capitalism and communism, and the outcome seems to depend on two antagonistic series of factors: (1) the greater force of destruction; (2) the greater productivity without

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<sup>175</sup> *ibid.*, p.165

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*, p.174

destruction. In other words, the higher historical truth would pertain to the system which offers the greater chance of pacification.”<sup>177</sup>

### **The Catastrophe of Liberation**

In the contemporary society the overwhelming, anonymous power and efficiency of the technological society” enforce the positive thinking, that is the pro-establishment thought. It percolates down the general consciousness as well as the consciousness of the critic. The impact of the positive is so tremendous that it absorbs the negative in the daily experience and “obfuscates the distinction between rational appearance and irrational reality.”<sup>178</sup> He goes on to cite examples to demonstrate the “the happy marriage of the positive and the negative.”

Dealing with the agenda of values in a technological society Marcuse would argue that development of science and technology has “rendered possible the translation of values into technical tasks – the materialisation of values. Consequently, what is at stake is the redefinition of values in technical terms, as elements in the technological process.”<sup>179</sup>

The concern for all ills in the contemporary society basically arises out of Marcuse’s conclusion that the nature of technological development has been such that it’s power to transform the metaphysical into physical and has generated a sort of fetishism for technology, which has not left even the Marxists untouched, who have predicted the omnipotence of the technological man in the future. But Marcuse argues that this is fallacious because the man has become powerless before the

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<sup>177</sup> p.176

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*, p.177

<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*, p.182

machine. "At present stage, he is perhaps more powerless over his own apparatus than he ever was before."<sup>180</sup>

Marcuse proposes a radical possibility when he says that if all the instruments of indoctrination, the media, advertisement, formation, and entertainment machinery is absent the individual would get ample chance to think and know himself as well as his own society. "Deprived of his false fathers, leaders, friends, and representatives, he would have to learn his ABC's again... While the people can support the continuous creation of nuclear weapons, radioactive fallout, and questionable foodstuffs, they can not (for this very reason!) tolerate being deprived of the entertainment and education, which make them capable of reproducing the arrangements for their defence and/or destruction. The non-functioning of television and the allied media might thus begin to achieve – the disintegration of the system. The creation of repressive needs has long since become part of socially necessary labour – necessary in the sense that without it, the established mode of production could not be sustained."<sup>181</sup>

The totalitarian tendencies of the one-dimensional society render the traditional ways and means of protest ineffective – perhaps even dangerous because they preserve the illusion of popular sovereignty. This illusion contains some truth: the people, who were previously agents of social change, have "moved up" to become the ferment of social cohesion.

Under such circumstances when the repressive sections of the society are so clever that even their talk of implementing a centralised planning by liberal democracy is nothing more than the perpetuation of the existing order of things.

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<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*, p.185

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*, p.192

Marcuse ends his book on a very sad note when he writes that “nothing indicated that it will be a good end. The economic and technical capabilities of the established societies are sufficiently vast to allow for adjustments and concessions to the underdog, and their armed forces sufficiently trained and equipped to take care of emergency situations. However, the spectre is there again, inside and outside the frontiers of the advanced societies... It is nothing but a chance. The critical theory of society possesses no concepts which could bridge the gap between the present and its future; holding no promise and showing no success, it remains negative. Thus it wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal.”<sup>182</sup>

### **E r o s   a n d   C i v i l i s a t i o n**

The *One-Dimensional Man*, though written much later than this book, very clearly brought out the critique of a techno-rational order, which modernity or to be more precise capitalism, established. The system, armed with its different and complex process, which appear as simple, is so powerful that it has absorbed its most determined opponents – the Left and the working class – within its fold. A form of repression exists, which is facilitated by advertising, propaganda, vivid cultural forms etc. However, Marcuse recognised yet another form of repression that takes place as the repression of instincts in advanced capitalism. Hence, a detailed reading of *Eros and Civilisation* becomes imperative to locate how scientific management of instinctual needs has been an important factor in “the reproduction of the system” due to the crisis that the system itself produces. In the advanced industrial societies it

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<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*, p.200

has been seen and can be experienced daily that the human instincts<sup>183</sup> are manipulated by the dominated section of the society, that is the bourgeoisie or the ruling class. He inquires into the methods and forms of repression that it has taken; the agenda of liberation of the instinct and why it is not allowed to move towards that and then the misconceptions that might emerge from the demand for the liberation of sexual instincts in a society as ours.

Marcuse states that he has employed “psychological categories because they have become political categories.”<sup>184</sup> And he tries to do an analysis of the Freudian theory, which denied the possibility of a civilisation without repression. Freud looked at the development of the repressive mental apparatus proceeds at two levels: (1) Ontogenetic level, which looks the growth of an individual from infancy to his conscious societal existence (it studies the individual); and (2) Phylogenetic level, which looks at the growth of repressive civilisation from the primal horde to the developed civilised state. And from here Marcuse proceeds to analyse the politics of domination through psychological categories.

### **Repression**

In a civilised society free gratification of man’s instinctual needs is impossible and incompatible. For a civilisation to develop what is required is “renunciation and delay in satisfaction”<sup>185</sup>, without which there can be no progress. This also implies that happiness needs to be subordinated and disciplined to the larger goals and aims. “The methodical sacrifice of libido, its rigidly enforced deflection to socially useful

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<sup>183</sup> When Marcuse talks of instincts he “refers to primary drives of the human organism which are subject to historical modification; they find mental as well as somatic representation.” Marcuse, Herbert; *Eros and Civilisation*; Abacus; London; 1972; p.25

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.*, p.21

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.*, p.23

activities and expressions, is culture.”<sup>186</sup> The “conscious and unconscious, external and internal processes of restraint, constraint, and suppression”<sup>187</sup> is what Marcuse refers to as repression. Even Freud denied the possibility of a civilisation without repression.

“The most effective subjugation and destruction of man takes place at the height of civilisation, when the material and intellectual attainments of mankind seems to allow the creation of a truly free world.”<sup>188</sup>

The same forces, which enabled the society to pacify the struggle for existence, served to repress in the individuals the need for such liberation. The repression of instincts and desires begin from here. Where the high standard of living does not suffice for reconciling the people with their life and their rulers, the ‘social engineering’ of the soul and the ‘science of human relations’ provide the necessary libidinal cathexis.”<sup>189</sup> As a part of the social engineering in an affluent society the authorities need not justify their domination. The need for justification of their intentions or actions never emerges because of the manner in which they orient the masses through the various methods of illusion and grandeur of their project. “They deliver the goods; they satisfy the sexual and the aggressive energy of their subjects.”<sup>190</sup> There is no place for contradiction in the system. It is eliminated without any rustle-bustle.

And the individuals need to get themselves adopted in the new world of “uninterrupted production and consumption of waste, gadgets, planned obsolescence, and means of destruction”<sup>191</sup>, with traditional methods of tackle not

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<sup>186</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> *ibid.*, p.25

<sup>188</sup> *ibid.*, p.23

<sup>189</sup> *ibid.*, p.11

<sup>190</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *ibid.*



sufficing. However, neither the 'economic whip' nor methods like law and patriotism are able to mobilise people for further expansion of the system. But the tools of scientific management and democracy are used to manipulate people to make them let feel free. "The people, efficiently manipulated and organised, are free; ignorance and impotence, introjected heteronomy is the price of freedom."<sup>192</sup> Questions of liberation and satisfaction cannot be raised because people think that they are free and women and men enjoy more sexual liberty. "But the truth is that this freedom and satisfaction are transforming the earth into hell."<sup>193</sup> The "inferno" is still concentrated far away in Vietnam, Congo, South Africa and the ghettos of affluent societies.

The individual's awareness about the repression that he/she experiences is "blunted by the manipulated restriction of his consciousness. This process alters the contents of happiness... happiness is not in the mere feeling of satisfaction but in the reality of freedom and satisfaction. Happiness involves knowledge: it is the prerogative of the animal rationale. With the decline in consciousness, with the control of information, with the absorption of individual into mass communication, knowledge is administered and confined. The individual does not really know what is going on; the overpowering machine of education and entertainment unites him with all the others in a state of anaesthesia from which all detrimental ideas tend to be excluded. And since knowledge of the whole truth is hardly conducive to happiness, such general anaesthesia makes individuals happy."<sup>194</sup> The repressed individuals now no longer renew and rejuvenate the reality principle. There are still creative art forms, philosophies, literature etc. that express the fear of humanity and oppose the reality principle. However, only an abolition of alienation can liberate not its temporal arrest.

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<sup>192</sup> *ibid.*, p.12

<sup>193</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *ibid.*, p.82-83

Repression is a dynamic process that involves the elimination of all possibilities of freedom and it is largely because of this reason that Marcuse repeatedly elaborately discusses issue of freedom. He, in fact, hesitates to use the word 'freedom' because crimes against humanity have been perpetrated in its name. Poverty and exploitation were products of economic freedom wherein people were 'liberated to be subjugated again. But this subjection by force soon became 'voluntary servitude', "collaborating in reproducing a society which made servitude increasingly rewarding and palatable."<sup>195</sup> "Today, this union of freedom and servitude has become 'natural' and a vehicle of progress."

Marcuse used the term 'Polymorphous sexuality' "to indicate that the new direction of progress would depend completely on the opportunity to activate repressed or arrested *organic*, biological needs: to the human body an instrument of pleasure rather than labour."<sup>196</sup> This was the *new* Reality Principle.

In fact, "...the very scope and effectiveness of the democratic introjection have suppressed the historical subject, the agent of revolution"<sup>197</sup> through the idea that free people do not need liberation, and the oppressed are not strong enough to liberate themselves. Marcuse shows how conflict is contained in the affluent societies: "When, in the more or less affluent societies, productivity has reached a level at which the masses participate in its benefits, and at which opposition is effectively and democratically 'contained,' then the conflict between master and slave is also effectively contained. Or rather it has changed its social location. It exists, and explodes, in the revolt of the backward countries against the intolerable

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<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*, p.12

<sup>196</sup> *ibid.*, p.13

<sup>197</sup> *ibid.*

heritage of colonialism and its prolongation by neo-colonialism.”<sup>198</sup> However, despite efforts to repress the possibility of any revolt there have been rebellions, the only difference their forms and structures having changed. There are signs of protest as manifested in the conflict among the underdeveloped and the developed nations. The conflict has only changed its location in the sense that its has moved outside the society, and, perhaps, now the conflicts are not only within societies but also between societies.

“The affluent society has now demonstrated that it is a society at war; if its citizens have not noticed it, its victims certainly have.”<sup>199</sup> And this is not a simple war but a revolt of the body against repression which throws itself against the energies of repression, and Marcuse counts the guerrilla warfare under this category.<sup>200</sup>

### **The Process of Repression**

“The concept of man that emerges from Freudian theory is the most irrefutable indictment of Western civilisation – and at the same time the most unshakeable defence of this civilisation.”<sup>201</sup> According to him history of man is the history of repression. Culture controls societal as well as biological (instinctual) existence of man, which are incompatible with the notion of association among other things. “The uncontrolled Eros is just fatal as his deadly counterpart, the death instinct.”<sup>202</sup> The instincts due to their destructive nature need to be deflected from their goal. “Civilisation begins when the primary objective - namely integral satisfaction of needs - is effectively renounced.”<sup>203</sup> Man changes, represented by the transition

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<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *ibid.*, pp.14-15

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.*, pp.15

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.*, pp.29

<sup>202</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> *ibid.*

from animal instinct to human instinct. This change has been described Freud by the transformation from the *pleasure principle* to the *reality principle*. It is a change from the quest of immediate satisfaction to delayed satisfaction; from pleasure to restraint of pleasure; from joy (play) to toil (work); from receptiveness to productiveness; from absence of repression to security. Freud held that the subjection to the reality principle is completed during childhood itself as reflected in the Oedipus complex.

This change “implies the subjugation and diversion of the destructive force of instinctual gratification, of its incompatibility with the established societal norms and relations, and, by that token, implies the transubstantiation of pleasure itself.”<sup>204</sup>

Under the reality principle human being develops the function of *reason*. It becomes a conscious, thinking subject, motivated towards rationality imposed from outside. However, *phantasy* still remains committed to pleasure principle. The reality principle materialises in a system of institutions.

In reality principle “libido is diverted for socially useful performances in which the individual works for himself only in so far as he works for the apparatus, engaged in activities that mostly do not coincide with his own faculties and desires.”<sup>205</sup>

Marcuse tried to show “that domination and alienation, derived from the prevalent social organisation of labour, determined to a large extent the demands imposed upon the instincts by this reality principle.” He has taken *performance principle*, which he defines as “the prevailing historical form of the *reality principle*”<sup>206</sup>, as the reality principle.

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<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*, p.30

<sup>205</sup> *ibid.*, p.48

<sup>206</sup> *ibid.*, p.42

The pleasure principle is subjugated and is sought to be repressed. “The basic control of leisure is achieved by the length of the working day itself, by the tiresome and mechanical routine of alienated labour; these require that leisure be a passive relaxation and a re-creation of energy for work. Not until the late stage of industrial civilisation, when the growth of productivity threatens to overflow the limits set by repressive domination, has the technique of mass manipulation developed an entertainment industry which the enforcement of such controls.”<sup>207</sup> When the pleasure principle is subjugated *perversions* emerge. “The societal organisation of the sex instinct taboos as *perversions* practically all its manifestations which do not serve or prepare for the procreative function...The perversions express rebellion against the subjugation of sexuality under the order of procreation, and against the institutions which guarantee this order... The perversions seem to reject the entire enslavement of the pleasure ego by the reality ego. Claiming instinctual freedom in a world of repression, they are often characterised by a strong rejection of that feeling of guilt which accompanies sexual repression.”<sup>208</sup>

### **Civilisation and Repression – The Logic of Domination**

The domain of instincts, sensuousness, pleasure, impulse etc., is considered hostile to reason. And this has been seen in the day to day languages – characterised by sermons or notions of obscenity.<sup>209</sup> And when Freud said that phantasy retained elements contrary to reason he was following the same path. “In the realm of phantasy, the unreasonable images of freedom become rational, and the ‘lower depths’ of instinctual gratification assumes a new dignity. The culture of the performance principle makes its bow before the strange truths which imagination

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<sup>207</sup> *ibid.*, p.49

<sup>208</sup> *ibid.*, pp.49-50

<sup>209</sup> *ibid.*, p.119

keeps alive in folklore and fairy tale, in literature and art; they have been aptly interpreted and have found their place in the popular and academic world.”<sup>210</sup> At this juncture one needs to raise the question as to why only Prometheus could be the Western hero and not Narcissus or Orpheus, who “recall the experience of a world that is not to be mastered and controlled but to be liberated – a freedom that will release the powers of Eros now bound in the repressed and petrified forms of man and nature.”<sup>211</sup> They cannot become examples also because they “negate that which sustains the world of the performance principle. The opposition between man and nature, subject and object is overcome. Being is experienced as gratification, which unites man and nature so that the fulfilment of man is at the same time the fulfilment, without violence, of nature.”<sup>212</sup>

*“The Orphic Eros transforms being: he masters cruelty and death through liberation. His language is song, and his work is play. Narcissus’ life is that of beauty, and his existence is contemplation. These images refer to the aesthetic dimension as the one in which their reality principle must be sought and validated.”*<sup>213</sup>

Civilised morality is the morality of the repressed individuals, repressed instincts. Aesthetic that dominates is that of the repression beings and used for repression as well.<sup>214</sup> “The civilised morality is reversed by harmonising instinctual freedom and order: liberate from the tyranny of repressive reason, the instincts tend toward free and lasting existential relations – they generate a *new* reality principle.”<sup>215</sup> “With the emergence of a non-repressive reality principle, with the abolition of the surplus-repression necessitated by the performance principle, this process would be reversed. In the societal relations, reification would be reduced as the division of

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<sup>210</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> *ibid.*, pp.121-122

<sup>212</sup> *ibid.*, pp.122-123

<sup>213</sup> *ibid.*, p.125

<sup>214</sup> *ibid.*, p.140

<sup>215</sup> *ibid.*, p.142

labour became reoriented on the gratification of freely developing individual needs; whereas, in the libidinal relations, the taboo on the reification of the body would be lessened. No longer used as a full-time instrument of labour, the body would be re-sexualised.”<sup>216</sup>

When one talks of the liberated instinct that never implies a society of sex maniacs but it means a “transformation of the libido”. It will enable a “free development of transformed libido within transformed institutions, while eroticising previously tabooed zones, time, and relations, would minimise the manifestations of mere sexuality by integrating them into a far larger order, including the order of work. In this context, sexuality trends to its own sublimation: the libido would not simply reactivate pre-civilised and infantile stages, but would also transform the perverted content of these stages.”<sup>217</sup> Through the self-sublimation of sexuality the transformation of sexuality into Eros takes place.

Psychoanalysis believed that the sickness of the man was because of the sickness of the civilisation and the psychoanalytic therapy seeks to cure the sick so that he could continue within the same civilisation. Freud also talked of breaking the enduring truth-value of the instinctual needs to establish the interpersonal relations, which was apparently an attempt towards collectivity.

### **Science, Reason and Repression – The Logic of Domination**

In his work *The Future of an Illusion* Freud “praised science and scientific reason as the great liberating antagonists of religion.”<sup>218</sup> No other work of his takes him so close to the tradition of Enlightenment. To Freud “being is essentially the striving

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<sup>216</sup> *ibid.*, p.144

<sup>217</sup> *ibid.*, p.145

<sup>218</sup> *ibid.*, p.64

for pleasure...erotic impulse.”<sup>219</sup> For him “Eros is being absorbed into Logos, and Logos is reason which subdues the instincts.”<sup>220</sup>

However, today, progressive ideas of rationalism can be understood only if they are reformulated. “The function of science and of religion has changed – as has their interrelation. Within the total mobilisation of man and nature which marks the period, science is one of the most destructive instruments - destructive of that freedom from fear which it once promised. As this promise evaporated into utopia, ‘scientific’ becomes almost identical with denouncing the notion of an earthly paradise. The scientific attitude has long since ceased to be the militant antagonist of religion, which has equally effectively discarded its explosive elements and often accustomed man to a good conscience in the face of suffering and guilt. In the household of culture, the function of a science and religion tend to become complementary; through their present usage, they both deny the hopes which they once aroused and teach men to appreciate the facts in a world of alienation.”<sup>221</sup>

Rationality and morality has been some of the universalistic terms and notions that have been extensively used by the Western societies to perpetuate their hegemony and stabilise their rule, the rule of rationality. It has been in this context that the Freudian interpretation of history becomes significant, which traces the origin of civilisation to horde where the father of the family, an extended one, emerged as the authority that put everything in order. The *father* had a justified biological authority. Father created the preconditions for the first disciplined ‘labour force’ through constraint on pleasure and enforced abstinence. The father incorporates the inner logic and necessity of the reality principle itself. Hatred culminated in rebellion by

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<sup>219</sup> *ibid.*, p.95

<sup>220</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> *ibid.*, pp.64-65



the exiled sons, establishment of brother clans, which implemented repression in the common interest. Freud sees this as a revolt against the father's taboo on the women of the horde, not as a possible social protest against unequal division of pleasure. However, for Freud matriarchy was preceded by patriarchy and came into being after father's death, and it had low degree of repressive domination, more erotic freedom etc.<sup>222</sup>

### **Phantasy and Art: Signs of revolt**

Dealing with the issue of phantasy Marcuse wrote that: "Phantasy plays a most decisive function in the total mental structure: it links the deepest layers of the unconscious with the highest products of the consciousness (*art*), the dream with the reality; it preserves the archetypes of the genus, the perpetual but repressed ideas of the collective and individual memory, the tabooed images of freedom. Freud establishes a twofold connection, 'between the sexual instincts and phantasy' on the one side, and 'between the ego instincts and the activities of consciousness' on the other. This dichotomy is untenable, not only in view of the later formulation of the instinct theory (which abandons the independent ego instincts) but also because of the incorporation of phantasy into artistic (and even normal) consciousness. However, the affinity between phantasy and sexuality remains decisive for the function of the former.

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<sup>222</sup> The first human group was established with the enforced rule of a man as its head. Organised around domination, it was the rule of father – "the man who possessed the desired women", produced children and kept them alive. (Pp.58) He monopolised the women for himself and subjugated other members of the horde. Monopolisation of pleasure meant that if the sons excited father's jealousy they were castrated/killed/driven out. However they bore the burden of doing things. The constrained gratification of instinctual needs or the suppression of pleasure was the result of domination but it also "created the mental preconditions for the continued functioning of domination." (p.58) This group was rational to the extent patriarchy created and maintained it.

The Recognition of phantasy (imagination) as a thought process with its own law and truth values was not new in psychology and philosophy; Freud's original contribution lay in the attempt to show the genesis of those mode of thought and its essential connection with the pleasure principle."<sup>223</sup>

Phantasy speaks "the language of the pleasure principle, of freedom from repression, of uninhibited desire and gratification – but reality proceeds according to the laws of reason, no longer committed to the dream language."<sup>224</sup> Hence, the two exist simultaneously, phantasy as the representation of spirit of freedom trying to refute the imposed mechanised processes called reality principle because they are more rational and would lead to the achievements of highest level in civilisational growth.

There is an underlying interrelationship between phantasy (imagination), illusion and knowledge and art. "Imagination envisions the reconciliation of the individual with the whole, of desire with realisation, of happiness with reason. While this harmony has been removed into utopia by the established reality principle, phantasy insists that it must and can become real, that behind the illusion lies *knowledge*. The truths of imagination are first realised when phantasy itself takes form, when it creates a universe of perception and comprehension – a subjective and at the same time objective universe. This occurs in *art*... Art is perhaps the most visible 'return of the repressed', not only on the individual but also on the generic-historical level. The artistic imagination shapes the 'unconscious memory' of the liberation that failed, of the promise that was betrayed. Under the rule of the performance principle, art opposes to institutionalised repression the 'image of man as a free subject; but in

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<sup>223</sup> *ibid.*, p. 108

<sup>224</sup> *ibid.*, p. 109

a state of unfreedom art can sustain the freedom only in the negation of unfreedom.”<sup>225</sup>

Art can also be seen as an opposition and reconciliation. “...within the limits of the aesthetic form, art expressed, although in an ambivalent manner, the return of the repressed image of liberation; art was opposition. At the present stage, in the period of total mobilisation, even this ambivalent opposition seems no longer viable.”<sup>226</sup>

However, even today there exist various art forms that represent the opposition to the system of domination and homogenisation. In fact, their fight for a system wherein, even their voices, the voices of the marginalised sections of society could be heard, very well represent the opposition, but on the other hand they are countered and suppressed by the dominant forces, representing the ruling elite of the society, which, for instance, in terms of theatre emphasise more on the form than content of the art.

### **Assessing Marcuse**

Marcuse though belonged to the Frankfurt school his ideas had been quite different from those expressed by other members of the school. His concern against modernity can be found in the criticisms of technical progress and the efforts of the forces of domination to reconcile the forces of protest. His rejection of the working class as a revolutionary force takes him away from the Marxian notion of class struggle. The transformation of man into a virtual machine adds to his alienation. His ideas about the modern civilisation is reflected in his remark that: ‘we are again confronted with one of the most vexing aspects of advanced industrial civilisation: the rational character of its irrationality...The people find themselves in their

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<sup>225</sup> *ibid.*, p.110

<sup>226</sup> *ibid.*, p.111

commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment...'<sup>227</sup> Urbanisation, unabated growth of towns, technological advancement have taken their toll. They have reduced the man to machine and defined the boundaries for them, through manipulations.

In the formation of his social thought the ideas of Marx and, later, that of Heidegger and Lukacs played a very important role. However, his understanding of the functioning of capitalist system was a new addition to the Marxian study in so far as the emphasis on culture was given. Kellner calls this “analyses of the functions of culture, ideology and the mass media in contemporary societies” as “among its (Critical Theory’s) most valuable legacies.”<sup>228</sup> They saw culture industry as an instrument of indoctrination, administration of human beings and social control.<sup>229</sup>

However, this never implies that Marxism had negated culture as a part of its analysis or as an important constituent of society. But then Marcuse fell short of reaching the class analysis which Marx did, because of his rejection of the revolutionary potential of working class and secondly because he could not perceive the techno-cultural developments as a part of the process of capitalist development. It formed one of the various stages of capitalist development. The young Marx, to him, appeared “to be implementing concrete philosophy and demonstrating that capitalism was not merely an economic or political crisis but a catastrophe for the human essence.”<sup>230</sup> Marx’s ontology differed from Hegel’s “in that it remained true

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<sup>227</sup> For further details see Woddis, Jack; *New Theories of Revolution*; Lawrence and Wishart; London; 1972

<sup>228</sup> Kellner, Douglas; *Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1989; p.120

<sup>229</sup> Kellner adds about Critical Theorist’s understanding of culture (p.120): “Culture, once a refuge of beauty and truth, was falling prey, they believed, to tendencies toward rationalisation, standardisation and conformity, which they saw as a consequence of the triumph of the instrumental rationality...”

<sup>230</sup> Wiggershaus, Rolf; *The Frankfurt School – Its History, Theories and Political Significance*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1986; p.05

to its 'orientation to the existential concept of life and its historicity'; in that it remained always an ontology of the historical human being."<sup>231</sup> He concluded that "the present era consisted of an inhuman capitalist form of existence which only by means of a total revolution could be made to correspond to the essence of humanity, now recognised thanks to the young Marx."<sup>232</sup> He claimed to have discovered another Marx, who 'was genuinely concrete and who at the same time went beyond the rigid practical and theoretical Marxism of the political parties.'<sup>233</sup>

In Marcuse's view, the elements of the new society were inherent within existing society and were preparing to transform it into a free society."<sup>234</sup> He was of the view that within the negative phenomena a positive essence was "inherent" and saw this "subterranean history of that positive essence as being the authentic and ultimately victorious side of history."<sup>235</sup>

However, contribution of Marcusean thought lies in the manner he revealed, threadbare, the functioning of the modern society and its various agencies. He argued that there is hardly any contradiction between the forces and relations of production. The productive forces produced so much wealth that rather than coming into conflict with the private capital they were employed to reinforce it. Working class has been bought and is being manipulated in the system but that never means that the possibilities to change have vanished but it could be reinforced by certain groups, which were at the periphery till now as agents of change. We are in a phase

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<sup>231</sup> *ibid.*, p.103

<sup>232</sup> *ibid.*, p.104

<sup>233</sup> Marcuse as quoted by Wiggershaus in p.104

<sup>234</sup> *ibid.*, p.503

<sup>235</sup> *ibid.*, p.504

of 'repressive desublimation', where our consciousness teaches us to satisfy our desire in the way system wants us to.<sup>236</sup>

Marcuse in his work *Eros and Civilisation* showed how sexual and aggressive instincts are repressed and channelised into "socially necessary, but unpleasant labour."<sup>237</sup> He saw mass media as the dominant agent of socialisation, which deprives individual of his autonomy and manipulates his mind and instincts, in this capitalist world. Due to this character of technology knowledge gets confined and loses its ability to instil criticality. However, there are possibilities of upheaval in times of scarcity and unemployment. The consumer society produces needs for consumption and happiness that it may not be able to satisfy, which would foment dissatisfaction and the situation could become explosive due to the already existing scarcity and unemployment. He also sees a solution in form of organised refusal of scientists, mathematicians and other intellectuals to co-operate with the system can bring about certain changes. This might instigate the youth to channelise their energy for protest because it is a biological necessity. It is a fight for life, fight for Eros and is a political fight.<sup>238</sup>

Marcuse brings forth the following points in his two works:

- Highlights the way modern capitalist system establishes and perpetuates its domination.
- Technological progress is used for establishing a totalitarian domination, meaning unfreedom and the rejection of the promise of liberation as done

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<sup>236</sup> For further details see Craib, Ian; *Modern Social Theory*, Harvester /Wheatsheaf, New York; 1992.

<sup>237</sup> Op. cit., Kellner, p.136

<sup>238</sup> op. cit., Marcuse, p.19

by capitalism and the notions of development (as technological advancement) that lie behind them.

- There is an increasing need for qualitative progress in the modern society.
- Technological world operates at the level of concepts and the construction of techniques.
- The techno-rational politics induces and seduces us into doing things through 'a comfortable, smooth, reasonable democratic unfreedom.'
- People are deprived of criticality in this society, which is effected by a whole functional dynamics of technology, mass media, cultural symbols, education, making people compulsive consumers etc.
- Suppresses dissent through integration (through use of a personalised language) or through branding it as 'abnormality' or 'neurotic'.
- The revolutionary potential of workers has died down and the hope for change lies from those sections were at periphery till now like intelligentsia, students etc.
- History is sidelined because people are trained to forget.
- Functionalisation, operationalisation and rationalisation are the keywords of technological rationality.
- Due to social engineering in an affluent society the authorities need not justify their domination. The need for justification of their intentions or actions never emerges because of the manner in which they orient the masses through the various methods of illusion and grandeur of their

project. This way even contradictions are eliminated. Questions of liberation and satisfaction are never raised because of the misconception that they are free and women and men already enjoy sexual liberty.

- The instincts due to their destructive nature are deflected from their goal. The civilisation believes that the key to progress lies in denouncement of the instinctual needs.
- This civilisation believes in the transformation of the *pleasure principle* to the *reality principle*. It is repressed and subjugated in the interests of 'progress'. It is a change from the quest of immediate satisfaction to delayed satisfaction; from pleasure to restraint of pleasure; from joy (play) to toil (work); from receptiveness to productiveness; from absence of repression to security.
- Reality principle is significant because it has function of *reason*, which pleasure principle does not have. It makes one a conscious, thinking subject, motivated towards rationality imposed from outside.
- *Phantasy* sustains the spirit of pleasure principle. Phantasy speaks 'the language of the pleasure principle, of freedom from repression, of uninhibited desire and gratification – but reality proceeds according to the laws of reason, no longer committed to the dream language'. Hence, the two exist simultaneously, phantasy as the representation of spirit of freedom trying to refute the imposed mechanised processes called reality principle because they are more rational and would lead to the achievements of highest level in civilisational growth.



- The break from reality principle is called *perversion*, which, in fact, expresses rebellion against the subjugation of sexuality under the order of procreation, and against the institutions which guarantee this order... The perversions seem to reject the entire enslavement of the pleasure ego by the reality ego.
- The domain of instincts, sensuousness, pleasure, impulse etc., is considered hostile to reason. And this has been seen in the day to day languages – characterised by sermons or notions of obscenity
- Civilised morality is the morality of the repressed individuals, repressed instincts.
- Rationality and morality have been some of the universalistic terms and notions that have been extensively used by the Western societies to perpetuate their hegemony and stabilise their rule, the rule of rationality.

The points narrated above have shown the deficiencies of capitalism/modernity but Marcuse has not been able to elaborate upon the role of the different sections of society in the process of transformation. His emphasis on the cultural dynamics of capitalism/modernity has been a milestone, but his theses on the dissolution of working class's identity as exploited lacks the insight that in a system characterised by the private property inequalities are bound to exist. And these inequalities are not temporal but an inherent feature. Then where does it culminate? Are there possibilities of awareness generation among the masses, who take on the role of a happy, striving individuals/people contributing to the betterment/development of society/individuality themselves. If yes, then how will it come about? There are many more questions that Marcuse leaves unanswered and which remains the task of those who wish to develop upon his understanding further.

*"The sovereignty of a mad heart that has attained, in its solitude, the limits of the world that wounds it, that turns it against itself and abolishes it at the right to identify itself with that world." (285)*

*"The madness of the writer was, for other men, the chance to see being born, over and over again, in the discouragement of repetition and disease, the truth of the work of art." (286)*

*"...between madness and the work of art, there has been no accommodation, no more constant exchange, no communication of languages; their opposition is much more dangerous than formerly; and their competition now allows no quarter; theirs is a game of death." (286-87)*

*"Madness is the absolute break with the work of art; it forms the constitutive moment of abolition, which dissolves in time the truth of the work of art; it draws the exterior edge, the line of dissolution, the contour against the void." (287)*

- **Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilisation***

*"What I want to show is how power relations can materially penetrate the body in depth, without depending even on the mediation of the subject's own representations." This power takes hold of the body not through conquering individual's consciousness but through "a network or circuit of bio-power."*

*"In reality power means relations, a more-or-less organised, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations."*

- **Michel Foucault in *Power/Knowledge***

## IV

### MODERNITY AS SURVEILLANCE: A FOUCAULDIAN PERSPECTIVE

From among the critiques of modernity if one leaves out Michel Foucault, the analysis will be considered incomplete. He was a figure who is credited with taking the anti-modernity criticism to new heights. Also termed the precursor of the postmodern school of thought which has expanded so much that it has hardly left any field untouched and the topic “.....a postmodern analysis” has become a fashion. Be it social theory, living style or the popular movements the term postmodern is used extensively. In this chapter the effort is to examine foucauldian analysis of modernity through his two books – *Madness and Civilisation* and a collection of lectures and interviews on *Power/Knowledge*. The first book reflects his insight into themes hitherto untouched – asylum and psychiatry, as a field where the elements of power are constantly at play, then his other book tries to analyse the modern/20<sup>th</sup> century developments from the perspective of power/knowledge dynamics.

#### **Foucault – An Introduction**

Foucault was born in Poitiers in 1926 and was awarded his *agrégation* at the age of 25, and in 1952 obtained a diploma in psychology. He worked in a psychiatric hospital in 1950s, and in 1955 taught at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. His first major book, *Madness and Civilisation*, was published in 1961, which was his *doctorat d'état*, supervised by Georges Canguilhem, in 1959. He died from an AIDS-related illness in 1984.

Foucault's explanation illustrates the innovative and often strikingly individual character of his work. In this connection his definition of discursive practices become important: 'a discursive practice is the regularity emerging in the very fact of its articulation: it is not prior to this articulation. The systematicity of discursive practices is neither of a logical nor linguistic type. The regularity of discourse is unconscious and occurs at the level of Saussure's *parole*, and not at the level of a pre-existing *langue*.'

Foucault analyses 'regimes of practices' and looks at them in terms of historicity. His notion of histories was inspired by Nietzsche's anti-idealism and 'he wanted to avoid projecting "meaning" into history'. He wrote in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: 'All we have are material effects and material acts; there is no essential meaning to things no essential subject behind action; nor is there an essential order to history'. *The Order of Things*, and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* were also outcomes of a Nietzschean approach to the history of knowledge.

Foucault through his works tried to bring forth the point that history needs to be written from the perspective of the present because it fulfils a need of the present. The past, in other words, assumes new meanings in the light of new events. Even the danger of historicism is receded 'when it is realised that no past era can be understood purely in its own terms, given that history is, in a sense, always a history of the present'<sup>1</sup>. The present society offers problems to be studied historically and the rise of structuralism in the 1960s, or the disturbances in prisons in the early 1970s, were taken as the points of departure by him, which culminated

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<sup>1</sup> For further details see Lechte, John; *The Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers*; Routledge; 1994.

in *The Order of Things* (1966) and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975).

Foucault put forward the notion of genealogy as a re-evaluation of the past. *Genealogy* is defined as the history written from the perspective of the present. But the issue of biases might crop up here, which is not dealt by Foucault. The fascist interpretation of history emerges when they are in power and this has been seen in India how the respective political parties manipulate the agenda of history or text book writing after coming to power. Being a history written in accordance with a commitment to the issues of the present moment, it amounts an intervention as well in the present as well.

With regard to *technology or technique*, a strong influence of Mauss is visible, who found every human action to be a technique, even spitting. Mauss thus 'gave precedence to technique over contingency in understanding human action, and he called techniques of the body a 'technology without instruments''. Foucault, in his analyses of power in particular, is concerned to reveal the unacknowledged regularity of actions, which is the mark of a technique. And, towards the end of his life, he started talking about the 'technologies of the self'. As a technology, techniques can be transferred anywhere even as a form of bodily discipline.

In *Madness and Civilisation* one is reminded of the Classical Age - the age of Descartes - which was also the Age of Reason. Foucault wants to find out what madness and unreason could be in the age of Descartes, and why the difference between them was such an issue. He wanted to study the difference created between madness and reason. Reason and madness in his work are thus presented as the outcome of historical processes; they do not exist as universally objective

categories. For some, such an approach appears too relativistic. Such an analysis also enables us to understand his complex and subtle approach to historical events.

He takes the reader to pre-1600 phase when there was no institution for the mad, who were thus not confined. The mad comes to assume, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the status of excluded person, which was previously occupied by the leper. In the fifteenth century mad people were wanderers, as immortalised in Sébastien Brant's poem, *Stulifera navis* ('Ship of Fools', 1497) and in Hieronymous Bosch's painting of the same name inspired by Brant's poem. Moreover, the theme of madness emerged generally in literature and iconography because the mad person was seen as a source of truth, wisdom, and criticism of the existing political situation. In the Renaissance, madness occupies a grand place: it is 'an experience in the field of language, an experience where man was confronted with his moral truth, with the rules proper to his nature and his truth.' Madness here has its *own form of reason* and is seen as a general characteristic of human beings. 'Unreasonable reason, and reasonable unreason could exist side by side.'

With the Classical Age (the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), madness is reduced to silence. It is deprived of a voice, makes it an anti-social figures, who were to be confined in hospitals, workhouses, and prisons. Similarly, 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century thought defines fury which includes both criminal and insane behaviour - as 'unreason'. Thus, the figure of madness changes between the Renaissance and the Classical Age, and with the society's approach/strategies towards it. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, madness, or insanity, was more a police matter than a medical matter. Mad people were not considered ill. Thus, historical discontinuities are revealed - first, between the Renaissance view of madness and the view of the Classical Age, which reduced it to unreason and so to silence; and, second, between the Classical Age and the

nineteenth-century medicalisation of madness as mental illness. Discontinuity (between eras) thus predominates in the history of madness.

Mad people were confined from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (as the formation of the *Hôpital général* in 1656 revealed), and medicine in the modern era was introduced as mad moved into the asylum. But the asylum changed fundamentally by the time Tuke and Pinel came to carry out their reforms at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Medicine and internment came closer to each other not because of any medical reasons, but because of two indirectly related factors: a greater concern for individual rights in the wake of the French Revolution, and the transformation of the asylum into a space of therapeutic practices, instead of being a uniquely punitive institution.

As the wave of structuralist enthusiasm began to subside in the 1970s, discourse began to figure less prominently in Foucault's work and 'technology' in relation to power and the body began to take its place. Two aspects of Foucault's theory of power become evident in his two major books of the 1970s. These are: power as it relates to knowledge and the body in punishment and sexuality, and power understood as being distinct from the philosophico-juridical framework of the Enlightenment, and its emphasis on representative government. Power ceases to have any substantive content; rather than being possessed and centralised, it comes to be seen as a technology.

### **M a d n e s s   a n d   C i v i l i s a t i o n**

Foucault has been trying to raise a debate on the agenda on the power relations and the dynamics through which it functions and reveals itself in the society. Towards formulating his conceptions he did studies like *Discipline and Punish, Madness*

*and Civilisation, The History of Sexuality* and others. In this work he has been trying to the same. However, he accepts at certain places that it could not flag off the kind of debate that he wanted to take place among the psychiatrists, Marxists and those related with the field of medicine, largely because of the fact that they wanted a recognition from the establishment ideology and psychiatry and psychiatric politics were not considered respectable topics in France at that point of time.<sup>2</sup> Foucault's aim in the last some years has been to expose domination in its "latent" as well as "brutal" nature. There is a dynamics of power and domination that includes the issue of rights and its dynamics.

He has been trying to examine the power relations that are exercised between reason and unreason. In the process of maintaining these relations, in which the different sections of the population constantly want to establish their hegemony. In this process new methods/instruments are devised to establish a hegemony. It is in this connection that he traces the history of madness and the form of treatment that existed in different epochs, from 1500 to the post-Renaissance period.

Initially the madmen were being ferried by the boats and then emerged confinement houses in different European countries. With the confinement houses emerged a particular type of treatment. Madness also underwent a change in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in fact it was the perception that experienced the transformation rather than the disease. True, that new aspects emerged as a part of diagnosis but reason continued its exercise to dominate unreason.

Then emerged asylums as embodiments of scientific (?) treatment. These asylum had no productive value but imposed only a moral rule. They acted as a new

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<sup>2</sup> Foucault, Michel; *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*; Harvester Wheatsheaf, London; 1980; pp.110-111



instrument in the power paradigm being followed by the rational-scientific order. It facilitated hegemony maintenance and perpetuation of the rule of power. Within this new creation was also born, in 19<sup>th</sup> century, a sense of authority unlike the 18<sup>th</sup> century confinement houses, where faceless power reigned. In fact such trends persist even today in nations like Peru. Hence, the apparently more freedom and liberty was nothing more than a facade - the exercise of power remained.

The asylum reflected not only newer forms of exercise of power but also newer forms of conflict between reason and unreason, wherein the Keeper acquires the role of a reasonable being and confronts madness as an embodiment unreason.

Not only in the asylums but, generally, mad came to be identified with a *minor*, as a disordered being in need of order, as opposed to reason as the *father*, as the disciplining authority. Physician also became important and acquired the role of a juridical authority trying put everything in a moral order, because saw insanity as a moral task to be performed on certain deranged person.

Psychiatry developed and with it new actions which only made the madmen free at apparent level. However, beneath the surface, the deep structures of power and the relations that functioned were still the same, with an amount of sophistication attached to it.

Science that was introduced in the asylum was a source of power a representation of the positivistic ideas that talked of rationality as the facilitators of salvation for the madmen. Surprisingly, the science, which talked of eliminating anything irrational and had no substantial backing of logic, tried to establish "a moral and social order." Positivism started dominating the sphere of medicine and imposed itself on medicine and psychiatry. As the part of the same design of domination

through a well-carved out power structure asylum were established, which organised guilt that was invested in madmen. As it became an organised phenomenon use of different techniques of power came to be seen. Briefly speaking, this guilt made the madman an object of punishment.

Hence, Foucault tries to put forward his argument about the power and knowledge and the interplay of the two with various intertwining elements in a society through the history of madness in the age of reason, which claimed to correct the discrepancies created by *unreasonableness*. He stresses on the need to understand how the bourgeoisie was never interested in improving the conditions of the insane/mad but only in mechanisms to keep them under control so as to perpetuate its own hegemony.

### **The Logic of Exclusion - From the Madmen Ferrying Boats to the Confinement Houses**

Foucault in his book talks about the history of madness from 1500 to 1800, i.e., from Middle Ages, when fools were considered a part of everyday life, to the time, when a wall was sort to be created between the insane and the rest of humanity, i.e., between reason and unreason.

He starts with how from high Middle Ages to Crusades leprosariums multiplied. But even after their disappearance (by 1635 in France and by 17<sup>th</sup> century in England and Germany) “the values and images attached to the figure of the leper as well as the meaning of his exclusion, the social importance of that insistent and fearful figure which was not driven off without first being inscribed within a sacred circle”<sup>3</sup> remained.

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<sup>3</sup> Foucault, Michel; *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*; Vintage Books; New York; 1988; p.06

Their exclusion was justified on the logic that that “abandonment is his salvation” and his exclusion would offer him communion with the God. And this opinion had complete approval of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Though lepers and leprosy disappeared the structures remained, which were to be used two-three centuries later for the poor vagabonds, criminals and ‘deranged minds’.

Hence, arrived the mad people on scene, as reflected in the literary creations of contemporary times, like ‘*Narrenschiff*’, which demonstrated that the boats that “conveyed their insane cargo from town to town” existed in reality.<sup>5</sup> If not entrusted to merchants and pilgrims madmen were left to wander in countryside, out of town’s limits. Foucault furnishes extensive data to support this and shows that this was frequent in Germany.

However, it becomes difficult to generalise this act of exclusion through extradition of madmen because France had many special houses for madmen. And many cities had even grants and donations for such activities. But there was definitely a logic for this exclusion. “It is possible that these ships of fools, which haunted the imagination of the entire early Renaissance, were pilgrimage boats, highly symbolic cargoes of madmen in search of their reason...”<sup>6</sup>

But there were cities like Nuremberg, which were not shrines. Despite having budgetary provisions these madmen were simply thrown into prisons. Access to churches was denied to them, “although ecclesiastical law did not deny them the use of the sacraments.”<sup>7</sup> Though church did not take action against mad priests but in 1421, in Nuremberg, a mad priest was expelled. Many madmen were publicly

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.07

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p.08

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p.09

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p.10

whipped. Hence, exile of madmen in a way was ritualised. However, Foucault finds another underlying logic behind handing over the madmen to sailors - that water purifies impure things.

Through navigation the madmen is delivered "to the uncertainty of fate" - no one knows his/her fate. That world of sea is uncertain with its vastness. "He is a prisoner in the midst of what is the forests the openest of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads." He is "the prisoner of the passage."<sup>8</sup>

But why did all this happen? Perhaps, it symbolised the turmoil that was approaching the horizon of European culture at the end of the Middle Ages. "Madness and the madmen represented menace and mockery, the dizzying unreason of the world, and the feeble ridicule of men" at this juncture.<sup>9</sup>

However, by Middle Ages the scene was changing as Madman came not to be seen as the Fool or Simpleton but "as the guardian of truth."<sup>10</sup> Even in serious literature, their presence is overwhelmingly present. From fifteenth century onwards, "the face of madness has haunted the imagination of Western man."<sup>11</sup> And this was just the beginning.

Foucault brilliantly explains how Madness came to occupy literary stage. This is also a reflection of the transforming scenario vis-à-vis madmen. Up to the second half of the fifteenth century, or even a little beyond, the theme of death dominated as reflected in the notional representations of the end of man, the end of time etc. It was believed to be man's fate from which nothing escapes. And this presence that threatens even within this world is a fleshless one. "Then in the last years of the

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p.11

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.13

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p.15

century this enormous uneasiness turns on itself; the mockery of madness replaces death and its solemnity. From the discovery of that necessity which inevitably reduces man to nothing, we have shifted to the scornful contemplation of that nothing which is existence itself.”<sup>12</sup> He holds that “Madness is the *deja-la* of death... What death unmasks was never more than a mask; to discover the grin of the skeleton, one need only lift off something that was neither beauty nor truth, but only a plaster and tinsel face. From the vain mask to the corpse, the same smile persists. But when the madman laughs, he already laughs with the laugh of death; the lunatic, anticipating the macabre, has disarmed it.”<sup>13</sup> But to Foucault this shift from the theme of death to that of madness was not a break “but rather a torsion within the same anxiety.”<sup>14</sup> The question of “nothingness of existence” is still the broad theme that characterises it and this is experienced from within as a part of the continuous existence rather as an external phenomenon.

This madness reveals the character of madness as a reflection of the approaching times - “it is the tide of madness, its secret invasion, that shows that the world is near its final catastrophe; it is man’s insanity that invokes and makes necessary the world’s end.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Traversing the Trajectory of Madness in Classical Times - the Changing Forms of Suppression and the Socio-economic Crisis**

#### *The Pre- Classical Madness*

Madness in Renaissance was first perceptible in decay of Gothic symbolism, which became silent and ceased to speak, remind or teach anything. They continued with

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p.16

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p.17

their own fantastic world, “transcending all possible language. Freed from wisdom and from the teaching that organised it, the image begins to gravitate about its own madness.”<sup>16</sup> This liberation “derives from a proliferation of meaning, from a self-multiplication of significance, weaving relationships so numerous, so intertwined, so rich, that they can no longer be deciphered except in the esoterism of knowledge.”<sup>17</sup> Things carry meanings, symbols, and signs and there have been works like “*Speculum humanae salvationis*’ which demonstrated that the image carries supplementary meanings and is forced to express them, with “dreams, madness, the unreasonable” slipping into this excess of meaning.”<sup>18</sup> Beneath the surface of images are hidden diverse meanings, which have the function of fascinating rather than teaching. This underlying meaning exercises a power, maintains a facade for the dominate ideas and prevents any possible antagonism or backlash related to it. Perhaps Baudrillard was deriving his ideas of hyper-reality<sup>19</sup> from this formulation of Foucault. The words and images are nothing more than enigmas.

Madness was seen as ‘animality’ by the Middle Ages’ cultural milieu. It was the time when the human symbols and values could not domesticate animality, of any form. However, it is this animality that reveals the dark rage and reveals to us the truth about “the sterile madness that lie in men’s hearts.”<sup>20</sup> This has been reflected through the many legions of animals found in Middle Ages. “When man deploys the arbitrary nature of his madness, he confronts the dark necessity of the world; the animal that haunts his nightmares and his nights of privation is his own nature,

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p.18

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p.19

<sup>19</sup> For further details see Smart, Barry; *Postmodern Social Theory - in The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, Blackwell Publishers; Oxford; 1996

<sup>20</sup> *op. cit.*, Foucault, p.21

which will lay bare hell's pitiless truth..."<sup>21</sup> And Renaissance expressed all that it apprehended, as threats and secrets of this world.

Madness also fascinated because it was taken to be knowledge. However, this knowledge, during Middle Ages, was believed to have its limits and it was forbidden to cross them. The advantage of madness was that "while the man of reason and wisdom perceives only fragmentary and all the more unnerving images of it, the Fool bears it intact as an unbroken sphere..."<sup>22</sup>

However, this madness was, indubitably, attractive, but never fascinating. It ruled the realm of easiness, joy, and frivolity in the world. "It is madness, folly, which make men "sport and rejoice", as it has-given the gods "Genius, Beauty, Bacchus, Silences, and the gentle guardian of gardens." All within it is brilliant surface no enigma is concealed."<sup>23</sup>

However, as against the generalised and 'normally perceived' notions of madness, it certainly has a form of knowledge attached to it, which has nothing secretive or enigmatic. It is, on the contrary, "the punishment of a disorderly and useless science. If madness is the truth of knowledge, it is because knowledge is absurd, and instead of addressing itself to the great book of experience, loses its way in the dust of books and in idle debate; learning becomes madness through the very excess of false learning."<sup>24</sup>

Madness reveals man's attachment with himself. It is the mirror which, "without reflecting anything real, will secretly offer the man who observes himself in it the dream of his own presumption. Madness deals not so much with truth and the

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, pp.23-24

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p.22

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p.25

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

world, has with man and whatever truth about himself he is able to perceive.”<sup>25</sup>  
This had been expressed by Erasmus, who saw it as something that “insinuates itself within man”, or as “a subtle rapport that man maintains with himself”<sup>26</sup> as opposed to the other opinion held by Boich who saw it as a comic manifestation. On the other hand, in literature and philosophy of 15<sup>th</sup> century madness “takes the form of moral satire.”<sup>27</sup>

Hence, madness was seen differently by philosophy, literature, morality, which punishes the mad for not obeying the general morals of society, as well as a desperate passion, as love disappointed in its excess, and especially love deceived by the fatality of death.”<sup>28</sup>

Madness has not been without equilibrium, a disorder but, instead, there has an “equilibrium beneath the cloud of illusion, beneath feigned disorder; the rigor of the architecture is concealed beneath the cunning arrangement of these disordered violences. The sudden bursts of life, the random gestures and words, *the wind of madness* that suddenly breaks lines, shatters attitudes, rumples draperies - while the strings are merely being pulled tighter - this is the very type of baroque *trompe-l'oeil*. Madness is the great *trompe-l'oeil* in the tragicomic structures of pre-classical literature.”<sup>29</sup> Foucault sees a logic beneath the madness of 17<sup>th</sup> century and hence madness cannot be denied as simply anarchic. In the violence that it represents there has been an equilibrium.

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p.27

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p.26

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p.27

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p.30

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p.34



The early 17<sup>th</sup> century had been hospitable to madmen, notwithstanding the threats that it, seemingly posed - “a life more disturbed than disturbing, an absurd agitation in society, the mobility of reason.”<sup>30</sup>

### *The Classical/Post-classical Era*

18<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century did not recognise madness against the back ground of nature but against the background of *Unreason*. In the classical phase “it was in relation to unreason and to it alone that madness could be understood... unreason defined the locus of madness’s possibility... madness was not...his natural existence.”<sup>31</sup>

Classical rationalism wanted to grant “against the subterranean danger of unreason, that threatening space of an absolute freedom.”<sup>32</sup>

The Classical Age reduced to silence the madness “whose voices the Renaissance had just liberated” though its violence had been “already tamed.”<sup>33</sup> Hence, madness had a transformed character by this period.

In 17<sup>th</sup> century several different methods of confinement were developed - from hospital wards to prison cells. But the position of madmen there was unclear. It was within this confinement that psychiatry came into being. Legal act made confinement natural abode of madmen. Psychiatry, in a way, popularised confinement because it declared the mad a patient who was ‘abnormal’ and hence needed a separate abode (*mine*).

Foucault cites example of *Hospital General*, found in 1656 which was not a medical establishment but rather a sort of “semi-judicial structure, an administrative entity which, along with the already constituted powers, and outside

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p.37

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p.83

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p.84

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p.38

of the courts, decides, judges and executes.”<sup>34</sup> It was “strange power” established by the King between the police and the courts: “a third kind of repression”... “a quasi-absolute sovereignty, jurisdiction without appeal, a writ of execution against which nothing can prevail...”<sup>35</sup> This new world belonged to the insane.

Foucault sees this an example of monarchical and bourgeois order being established in period. This was reflected in appointment of top Government officials as its head, which were ‘chosen from the best-families of the bourgeoisie...’<sup>36</sup> Soon such hospitals were established all over France, and by end of 18<sup>th</sup> century even in England, Holland, Germany, France, Italy, Spain. Even Church started reorganising and reforming its health institutions.

### **Confinement as a Response to the Economic Crisis**

Foucault wants to discover “...the form of sensibility to madness in an epoch we are accustomed to define by the privileges of Reason.”<sup>37</sup> This act which, through endowing power of segregation, created confinement houses, also provided a new house for madness. “It organises into a complex unity a new sensibility to poverty and to the duties of assistance, new forms of reaction to the economic problems of unemployment and idleness, a new ethic of work, and also the dream of a city where moral obligation was joined to civil law, within the authoritarian forms of constraint.”<sup>38</sup>

It was in this sense that Foucault sees confinement as fulfilling more purposes than just confinement - it was necessitated by the need for more labour. The Hospital

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p.40

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p.41

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p.45

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

general took the task of controlling “mendicancy and idleness’ calling them “the source of all disorders.”<sup>39</sup> This measure was taken since Renaissance to end unemployment and at least begging.

In 1532 Parliament of Paris decided to arrest all beggars and make them work in sewers. The city was full of beggars (30,000 out of a population of less than a lakh). Economic revival began with the Thirty Years War between England and France. In 1606 Parliament ordered whipping of beggars in the public square, “branded on the shoulder, shorn, and then driven from the city to keep them from returning.”<sup>40</sup> An ordinance of 1607 established companies of archers at all the city gates to forbid entry to indigents. Economic renaissance disappeared with the Thirty Years War and, consequently, the problems of mendicancy and idleness reappeared. Austere taxation augmented unemployment as manufacturing got hindered. Resultantly, in 1621 Paris, 1652 Lyon, 1639 Rouen saw popular uprisings. With new economic structures of manufactories (guilds losing power) the world of labour got disorganised. Church intervened and opposed the secret gatherings of workers. Under such circumstances the creation of Hospital General as a centre of confinement was victory for Parliament, which wanted to dominate the Church’s exorbitant power.

Now the individual, who was weakened through the processes as described above, was neither driven away nor punished but was taken in charge “at the expense of the nation but at the cost of his individual liberty...He had the right to be fed, but he must accept the physical and moral constraint of confinement.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, after a

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p.47

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p.47

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p.48

decree of 1657 a militia was formed to hunt down the beggars and “herd them into the different buildings of the hospital.”<sup>42</sup>

The whole of Europe narrated the same story of confinement, which was a response to the economic crisis that plagued the Western world in form of reduction of wages, unemployment and scarcity of coins - as a fall out of crisis in Spanish economy. Even the most independent economy of England had to solve the same problem. Despite all these measures poverty was increasing. It was being feared that the poor would overrun the nation, and as they could not cross national boundaries it was being suggested that they be exiled/banished to new found lands of East and West Indies.

In 1630 King published orders to prosecute beggars and vagabonds and those living in idleness and put them in correction houses. But despite the recovery having begun in England in mid-17<sup>th</sup> century even by Cromwell’s time it was unresolved.

Whenever crisis occurred the Hospital or correction houses were full. Similarly by mid-18<sup>th</sup> century France faced another great crisis and same things happened - arrests/ correction centres... and so on.

However, confinement had another meaning. “Its repressive function was combined with a new a use.”<sup>43</sup> It meant cheap manpower during period of full employment and high salaries and confinement during periods of unemployment to ward off possibilities of agitation or uprising. And, largely due to this, the first confinement houses in England or France appeared in industrialised parts. Those of Germany (first established in 1622) made it compulsory for all internees to work

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p.54

and were paid a fourth of the value of their work. Each house of confinement in Germany had a specialised production centre, each producing one commodity.

By 1651 when economy recovered all able-bodied manpower was to be used to the best advantage i.e., as cheaply as possible. Even the private factory owners used to utilise the manpower of the asylums for their own profit, which was shared among the entrepreneur as well as the Hospital. Efforts to transform buildings of Hospital General was also made.

Hence, in classical age confinement had double role to reabsorb unemployment or “at least eliminate its most visible social effects” and “to control costs when they seemed likely to become too high.”<sup>44</sup> However, Foucault argues that the both did not yield sufficient/desired results. “If they absorbed the unemployed, it was mostly to mask their poverty, and to avoid the social or political disadvantages of agitation; but at the very moment the unemployed were herded into forced -labour shops, unemployment increased in neighbouring regions or in similar areas. As for the effect on production costs, it could only be artificial, the market price of such products being disproportionate to the cost of manufacture, calculated according to the expenses occasioned by confinement itself.”<sup>45</sup>

However, by the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century the failure of confinement houses “as receiving centres for the indigent and prisons of poverty meant their ultimate failure.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p.54

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, pp.54-55

## **Reformation and the Changing Notion of Work and Ethics/Morals**

Labour in itself did not hold any value or utility but everything was left to God to decide. And this was the firm belief of Protestants. To prove oneself better one needed to work harder and not expect/wait for results. After the Fall (Renaissance) “man had accepted labour as a penance”, a mode of redemption unlike Classical Age when its effectiveness was linked to an “ethical transcendence.”<sup>47</sup> After the Fall idleness becomes the supreme sin. “Labour in the houses of confinement thus assumed its ethical meaning: since sloth had become the absolute form of rebellion, the idle would be forced to work, in the endless leisure of a labour without utility or profit.”<sup>48</sup>

Confinement and insistence on work is not related only by economic factors but also “a moral perception sustains and animates it.”<sup>49</sup> Reports attributed poverty not to scarcity of commodities or unemployment but to weakened discipline and relaxed morals. Hence, the confinement houses were not only forced labour camps but also moral institutions responsible for punishing. They had an ethical status.

For the Catholic as well as the Protestant ethics confinement represented, an authoritarian model, “the myth of social happiness: a police whose order will be entirely transparent to the principles of religion, and a religion whose requirements of the police and the constraints with which it can be armed. There is, in these institutions, an attempt of a kind to demonstrate that order may be adequate to virtue.”<sup>50</sup> In this way, “confinement” embodied a “metaphysics of government” as well as “a politics of religion”. It is a “tyrannical synthesis, in the vast space

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p.55

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p.57

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p.58

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p.63

separating the garden of God and the cities which men, driven from paradise, have built with their own hands. The house of confinement in the classical age constitutes the densest symbol of that “police” which conceived of itself as the civil equivalent of religion for the edification of a perfect city.”<sup>51</sup>

### **Madness as a Spectacle - the Interplay of Reason and Unreason in the Age of Scientificity**

However, Foucault sees “the moment when madness perceived on the social horizon of poverty, of incapacity for work, of inability to integrate with the group; the moment when madness began to rank among the problems of the city”, as “a decisive event.”<sup>52</sup> New meanings were assigned to poverty. There was a shift from the time when it was shown in “broad daylight” in *King Lear*, in *Don Quixote* to the days when it came to be “confined to Reason, to the rules of morality and to their monotonous nights.”<sup>53</sup> And Foucault writes that through confinement houses till the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, “the ape of reason confined the debauched, spend thrift fathers, prodigal sons, blasphemers, men who “seek to undo themselves,” libertines.”<sup>54</sup> The arrests were still being made on the grounds of being ‘insane’, ‘demented’ men, ‘individuals of wandering mind’, and persons who have become completely mad’.<sup>55</sup> The lunatics and insane were displayed to the public. Though this was a medieval practice, it was institutionalised later in France and England and one encounters such a practice as late as 1815, as in the hospital of Bethelhem for a penny every Sunday. The revenue was 400 p.a. meaning 96,000 visits. Mad people were treated like monkeys in a show. Madness became a “spectacle”

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p.64

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p.65

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

(notably Foucault uses this term even in *Discipline and Punish*) “above the silence of the asylums”. Confinement houses hid Unreason “in the silence of the houses of confinement, but madness continued to be present in the stage of the world-with more commotion than ever.”<sup>56</sup>

“Confinement hid away unreason, and betrayed the shame it aroused; but it explicitly drew attention to madness, pointed to it. If, in the case of unreason, the chief intention was to avoid scandal, in the case of madness that intention was to organise it. A strange contradiction: the classical age enveloped madness in a total experience of unreason; it re-absorbed its particular forms, which the Middle Ages and the Renaissance had clearly individualised into a general apprehension in which madness consorted indiscriminately with all the forms of unreason. But at the same time it assigned to this same madness a special sign: not that of sickness, but that of glorified scandal. Yet there is nothing in common between this organised exhibition of madness in the eighteenth century and the freedom with which it came to light during the Renaissance. In the Renaissance, madness was present everywhere and mingled with every experience by its images or its dangers. During the classical period, madness was shown, but on the other side of bars; if present, it was at a distance, under the eyes of a reason that no longer felt any relation to it and that would not compromise itself by too close a resemblance. Madness had become a thing to look at: no longer a monster inside oneself, but an animal with strange mechanisms, a bestiality from which man had long since been suppressed.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p.69

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p.70



The level of inhuman treatment meted on to insane in the asylums was so violent that “it becomes clear that they are no longer inspired by the desire to punish nor by the duty to correct.”<sup>58</sup> The mad came to be considered as animals and not as sick people were perhaps attributable to this very fact. Animality attributed the qualities of a rough though protecting him from what might be fragile, precarious or sickly in man. By the virtue of incorporating the animalistic tendencies madness preserved man from the dangers of disease; “it afforded him an invulnerability, similar to that which nature, in its foresight, had provided for animals. Curiously, the disturbance of his reason restored the madman to the immediate kindness of nature by a return to animality”, that’s why madness was not linked so much with medicine then. “Unchained animality could be mastered only by *discipline* and *brutalising*.”<sup>59</sup> What is expressed in madness is “the secret danger of an animality that lies in wait and, all at once, undoes reason in violence and truth in the madman’s frenzy.”<sup>60</sup> And confinement “glorified” “this *animality of madness*” *simultaneously* seeking “to avoid the scandal inherent in the *immorality of the unreasonable*.”<sup>61</sup> Gradually, Christian also relegated unreason into the margins of a reason projecting it as “identical with the wisdom of god incarnate.”<sup>62</sup>

### **Religion and Madness**

However, Christianity traditionally never went so much against madness, like the Protestants, because Christ himself never opposed madmen but was surrounded by them. “He himself chose to pass in their eyes for a madman, thus experiencing, in

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p.72

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, p.75

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p.77

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, p.78

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p.79

his incarnation, all the sufferings of human misfortune”.<sup>63</sup> “Madness thus became the ultimate form, the final degree of God in man’s image, before the fulfilment and deliverance of the Cross... Coming into the world, Christ agreed to take upon himself all the signs of the human condition and the very stigmata of fallen nature; from poverty to death, he followed the long road of the Passion, which was also the road of the passions, of wisdom forgotten, and of madness. And because it was one of the forms of the Passion - the ultimate form, in a sense, before death - madness would now become, for those who suffered it, an object of respect and compassion... Madness is the lowest point of humanity into which God submitted in His incarnation, thereby showing that there was nothing inhuman in man that could not be redeemed and saved; the ultimate point of the Fall was glorified by the divine presence: and it is this lesson which, for the seventeenth century, all madness still taught.”<sup>64</sup>

Scandal of madness was exalted and other forms of unreason was concealed because scandal of unreason only produced example of “ transgression & immorality”, whereas that of madness showed how close to animality could be their Fall. Christianity treated madness as a fact of nature (where the mad is guilty as well as innocent ).

Foucault comments on the brutal treatment meted out to the madmen by considering it as an animalistic trait and at this juncture religion comes into the scene. “All these phenomena, these strange practices woven around madness, these usage which glorify and at the same time discipline it, reduce it to animality while making it teach the lesson of the Redemption, put madness in a strange position

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p.80

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p.81

with regard to unreason as a whole. In the houses of confinement, madness cohabits with all the forms of unreason which envelop it and define its most general truth; and yet madness is isolated, treated in a special manner, manifested in its singularity as if, although belonging to unreason, it nonetheless traversed that domain by a movement peculiar to itself, ceaselessly referring from itself to its most paradoxical extreme.”<sup>65</sup>

### **Psychiatric Treatment of Madness**

There have been thinkers, psychologists who have seen madness as a problem of nerves and as a psychological discrepancy. The elements of fear and passion is introduced in this connection, and thinkers as Sauvages are quoted to show the contemporary understanding of the problem in terms of ‘fear’ which was taken to be linked to “the congestion or the pressure of a certain medullary fibre; this fear is limited to an object, as this congestion is strictly localised. In proportion as this fear persists, the soul grants it more attention, increasingly isolating and detaching it from all else. But such isolation reinforces the fear, and the soul, having accorded it too special a condition, gradually tends to attach to it a whole series of more or less remote ideas.”<sup>66</sup>

Thereafter, madness was seen in the phenomenon of passion, “and in the deployment of that double causality which, starting from passion itself, radiates both toward the body and toward the soul, is at the same time suspension of passion, breach of causality, dissolution of the elements of this unity. Madness participates both in the necessity of passion and in the anarchy of what, released by this passion, transcends it and ultimately contests all it implies. Madness ends by

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.83

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p.91

being a movement of the nerves and muscles so violent that nothing in the course of images, ideas, or wills seems to correspond to it: this is the case of mania when it is suddenly intensified into convulsions, or when it degenerates into continuous frenzy.”<sup>67</sup>

Hence, madness was seen as “the derangement of the imagination”. Represented through passion it is “an intense movement in the rational unity of soul and body; this is the level of *unreason*; but this intense movement quickly escapes the reason of the mechanism and becomes, in its violences, its stupors, its senseless propagation, an *irrational* movement; and it is then that, escaping truth and its constraints, the Unreal appears.”<sup>68</sup>

However, Foucault does not see imagination as madness (even in the arbitrariness of hallucination) but the latter begins only beyond the “when the mind binds itself to this arbitrariness and becomes a prisoner of this apparent liberty.”<sup>69</sup> Despite being beyond imagination madness is profoundly rooted in it because it “allows the image a spontaneous value, total and absolute truth. The act of the reasonable man who, rightly or wrongly, judges an image to be true or false, is beyond this image, transcends and measures it by what is not itself; the act of the madman never oversteps the image presented, but surrenders to its immediacy, and affirms it only insofar it is enveloped by it.”<sup>70</sup>

The “ultimate language of madness is that of reason, but the language of reason enveloped in the prestige of the image, limited to the locus of appearance which the image defines. It forms, outside the totality of images and the universality of

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, pp.91-92

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p.93

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p.94

discourse, an abusive, singular organisation whose insistent quality constitutes madness. Madness, then is not altogether in the image, which of itself is neither true nor false, neither reasonable nor mad; nor is it, further, in the reasoning which is mere form, revealing nothing but the indubitable figures of logic.”<sup>71</sup>

I. In the Classical Age madness existed two forms of delirium - manifest delirium, as an integral part of madness; and non-manifest delirium, which is not formulated by the sufferer but can be identified by anybody trying to understand the madness. The latter delirium exists in all minds. This is reflected in conduct, wordless violence, silent gestures, etc. The person speaks too much/too little against his normal habit.

II. Discourse covers entire range of madness. Madness in the classical sense does not consider so much a change in mind or body as the existence, under the oddity of conduct/conversation, of a “delirious discourse.”<sup>72</sup> The simplest and most general definition of classical madness can be indeed delirium.

III. “Language is the first and last structure of madness.”<sup>73</sup> It is the language that articulates madness. Hence, discourse comprises of two elements: silent language that mind speaks and the visible articulation. The delirium is of “both the body and soul, of both language and image, of both grammar and physiology.”<sup>74</sup> It is here that all cycles of madness conclude and begin.

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<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p.95

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p.99

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, p.100

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, pp.100-101

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century madman is not a victim of illusion but rather “of a hallucination of his senses...He is not *abused*; he *deceives himself*.”<sup>75</sup> The general meaning of madness holds that “madness begins where the relation of man to truth is disturbed and darkened.”<sup>76</sup>

However, to Foucault the discourse on delirium that took place was not “a discourse of reason.”<sup>77</sup> “It spoke, but in the night of blindness; it was more than the loose and disordered text of a dream, since it *deceived* itself; but it was more than an erroneous proposition, since it was plunged into that total *obscurity* which is that of sleep. Delirium, as the principle of madness, is a system of false propositions in the general syntax of the dream.”<sup>78</sup>

#### **Nothingness of Madness and its Unreasonableness**

Madness is nothing because it joins everything negative and expresses it through gestures, signs, words etc. “Joining vision and blindness, image and judgement, hallucination and language, sleep and waking, day and night, madness is ultimately nothing, for it unites in them all that is negative. But the paradox of this *nothing* is to *manifest* itself, to explode in signs, in words, in gestures. Inextricable unity of order and disorder, of the reasonable being of things and this nothingness of madness! For madness, if it is nothing, can manifest itself only by departing from itself, by an appearance in the order of reason and thus becoming the contrary itself.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p.104

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p.106

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p.107

Foucault wants one to see unreason as “reason dazzled”, that is, what we call the unreason of madness is nothing more than the hallucination that the mad undergoes. And he sees a relationship between delirium and dazzlement because in both the cases what the person believes he is seeing and admit as reality is nothing more than a hallucination. This was the classical reasoning.

Banishing of mad people to neutral and uniform world of exclusion did not stop evolution of medical techniques nor progress of humanitarian ideas. Madness in classical period “ceased to be the sign of another world, and that it became the paradoxical manifestation of non-being.”<sup>80</sup> The mad people came to be recognised as people of this world only. However, confinement did try to suppress madness and eliminate it from social order as something that had no place in it. Confinement reflected that madness meant non-being. It confirmed madness as being unreason, as being nothing. Hence, madness was seen as difference and people were confined and confinement had only one goal of correction i.e., “suppression of difference, or the fulfilment of this nothingness in death.”<sup>81</sup> It proved to be “an operation to annihilate nothingness.”<sup>82</sup>

### **Notions of Psychiatry - When Madness Became a Medical Problem and Medicine an Instrument of Control**

In this chapter Foucault discusses about the various notions of psychiatry under the heads of “Mania and Melancholia” and “Hysteria and Hypochondria”. The symptoms of melancholia included all the delirious ideas that an individual can form about himself.

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p.115

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p.116

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

“The mind of the melancholic is entirely occupied by reflection, so that his imagination remains at leisure and in repose; the maniac’s imagination, on the contrary, is occupied by a perpetual flux of impetuous thoughts. While the melancholic’s mind is fixed on a single object, imposing unreasonable proportions upon it, but upon it alone, mania deforms all concepts and ideas; either they lose their congruence, or their representative value is falsified; in ant case, the totality of thought is disturbed in its essential relation to truth. Melancholia, finally, is always accompanied by sadness and fear; on the contrary, in the manic we find audacity and fury.”<sup>83</sup> (Foucault refers to Willis here to explain this difference).

Virtually all the physicians of 18<sup>th</sup> century acknowledged the proximity of mania and melancholia. Many of them refused to call them two manifestations of the same disease, while “many observed a succession without perceiving a symptomatic unity.”<sup>84</sup> Hence, there is only a difference of degree between Mania and Melancholia: “it is its natural consequence, it results from the same causes, and is ordinarily treated by the same remedies.”<sup>85</sup>

On the issue of hysteria and hypochondria in the classical age there existed essentially two lines of development. One line of debate analysed madness as a “disease of the nerves”; while the other shifted their meaning and their traditional pathological basis and tended to integrate them gradually into the domain of diseases of the mind, beside mania and melancholia.”<sup>86</sup>

The problem of dealing with the various forms of psychiatric disorders haunted the 18<sup>th</sup> century medicine, and ultimately made hypochondria and hysteria diseases of the “nervous type”; that is, “*idiopathic* diseases of the general agency of all the *sympathies*.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, p.125

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p.132

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p.133

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p.139

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p.151



On the threshold of 19th century, the irritability of the fibers enjoyed physiological and pathological fortunes. In the domain of nervous diseases there was “a complete identification of hysteria and hypochondria as mental disease.”<sup>88</sup>

Attribution of the various disorders as described above and the overwhelming classification of madness in the category of mental diseases provided “madness a new content of guilt, of moral sanction, of just punishment which was not at all a part of the classical experience. It burdens unreason with all these new values: instead of making blindness the condition of possibility for all the manifestations of madness, it describes blindness, the blindness of madness, as the psychological effect of a moral fault... What had been blindness would become unconsciousness, what had been error would become fault, and everything in madness that designated the paradoxical manifestation of non-being would become the natural punishment of a moral evil. In short, that whole hierarchy which constituted the structure of classical madness, from the cycle of material causes to the transcendence of delirium, would now collapse and spread over the surface of a domain which psychology and morality would soon occupy together and contest with each other.” It was in this manner that the “scientific psychiatry” of the nineteenth century became possible.”<sup>89</sup>

Tracing the history of diseases and its treatment and how these methods of treatment changed over three centuries Foucault writes that “even in empiricism, the means of cure encounter the great organising structures of the experience of madness in the classical period. Being both error and sin, madness is simultaneously impurity and solitude; it is withdrawn from the world, and from truth; but it is by that very fact imprisoned in evil. Its double nothingness is to be the visible form of that non-being which is *evil*, and to utter, in the void and in the

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<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, pp.157-58

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p.158

sensational appearance of its delirium, the non-being of *error*. It is totally *pure*, since it is nothing if not the evanescent point of a subjectivity from which all presence of the truth has been removed; and totally *impure*, since this nothingness is the non-being of evil.”<sup>90</sup>

Hence, there was a transformation wherein outside the sphere of unreason madness came to be perceived as a purely psychological and moral status and the relations of error and fault which were used as classificatory categories by classicism were “crammed into the single notion of guilt”. However, the techniques still remained and a mechanical effect or a moral punishment was sought as a solution. It was in this manner that the methods of regulating movement degenerated into the famous “rotatory machine” whose mechanism and efficacy were demonstrated by Mason Cox at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>91</sup> The rotatory machine was soon used as an instrument of threat and punishment. “We also see the impoverishment of meanings which had richly sustained the therapeutic methods throughout the entire classical period. Medicine was now content to regulate and to punish, with means which had once served to exorcise sin, to dissipate error in the restoration of madness to the world’s obvious truth.”<sup>92</sup>

By 19<sup>th</sup> century madness came to be treated by ‘moral methods’ meaning bringing it in the domain of guilt. Psychology comes to be organised around the logic of punishment, wherein “before seeking to relieve, it inflicts suffering within the rigor of a moral necessity.”<sup>93</sup> It was only the use of punishment in treating the mad that distinguished, the medications of the body from those of the soul. A purely

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<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, pp.175-176

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p.176

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, p.177

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p.182

psychological treatment of mad could be possible only when madness was alienated in guilt.<sup>94</sup>

About the changed circumstances of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Foucault writes that the whole space was so arranged that madness will “never again be able to speak the language of unreason... It will be entirely enclosed in a pathology.” Though the later years remember this as a positive transformation but in the eyes of history it will be nothing more than “the reduction of the classical experience of unreason to a strictly moral perception of madness, which would secretly serve as a nucleus for all the concepts that the nineteenth century would subsequently vindicate a scientific, positive, and experimental.”<sup>95</sup>

At such a juncture when even psychology could not see beyond certain purely medical treatment and still relied heavily on confinement houses Foucault is full of praise for Freud when he says that “we must do justice to Freud”, who “went back to madness at the level of its language, reconstituted one of the essential elements of an experience reduced to silence by positivism; he did not make a major addition to the list of psychological treatments for madness; he restored, in medical thought, the possibility of a dialogue with unreason...It is not precisely an experience of unreason that it has been psychology’s meaning, in the modern world, to mask.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, pp.182-83

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, pp.196-97

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p.198

## **Liberating Madness with the Times or the New Era of Confinement - The Facade of Positivism**

In 16<sup>th</sup> century landscape when madness was located in unreason madness had very little to do with anything even obscurely moral; "...its secrecy related it to sin, and the animality imminently perceived in it did not make it, paradoxically, more innocent." While in the second half of the eighteenth century, madness was "situated in those distances man takes in regard to himself, to his world, to all that is offered by the immediacy of nature, madness became possible because of everything which, in man's life and development, is a break with the immediate. Madness was no longer of the order, in which men began to have a presentiment of history, and where there formed, in an obscure originating relationship, the "alienation" of the physicians and the "alienation" of the philosophers - two configurations in which the nineteenth century, after Hegel, soon lost all trace of resemblance."<sup>97</sup>

"One might say that the fortresses of confinement added to their social role of segregation and purification a quite opposite cultural function. Even as they separated reason from unreason on society's surface, they preserved in depth the images where they mingled and exchanged properties. The fortresses of confinement functioned as a great, long silent memory; they maintained in the shadows an iconographic power that men might have thought was exorcised; created by the new classical order, they preserved, against it and against time, forbidden figures that could thus be transmitted intact from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, pp.219-220

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, p.209

When anxiety characterised the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, “the fear of madness grew at the same time as the dread of unreason: and thereby the two forms of obsession, leaning upon each other, continued to reinforce each other... And at the very moment we note liberation of the iconographic powers that accompany unreason, we hear on all sides complaints about the ravages of madness.”<sup>99</sup> Gradually, the fear of madness became a dogma. It ‘became more frequent’.

Foucault tries to trace the relationship between religion and madness when he remarks that the “old religion of happier times was the perpetual celebration of the present. But once it was idealised in the modern age, religion cast a temporal halo around the present, an empty milieu - that of idleness and remorse, in which the heart of man is abandoned to its own anxiety, in which the passions surrender time to unconcern or to repetition in which, finally, madness can function freely.”<sup>100</sup>

Talking on the theme of “Madness, Civilisation, and Sensibility” he sees civilisation as problematic, creating conditions for madness. “Civilisation, in a general way, constitutes a milieu favourable to the development of madness. If the progress of knowledge dissipates error, it also has the effect of propagating a taste and even a mania for study; the life of the library, abstract speculations, the perpetual agitation of the mind without the exercise of the body, can have the most disastrous effect.”<sup>101</sup>

The “The disorder of the senses are continues in the theatre, where illusions are cultivated, where vain passions and the most fatal movements of the soul are aroused by artifice; women especially enjoy these spectacles “that inflame and arouse them”; their soul “are so strongly shaken that this produces a commotion in their nerves, fleeting, in truth, but whose consequences are usually serious; the

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<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, p.211

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p.217

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

momentary loss of their senses, the tears they shed at the performances of our modern tragedies are the least accidents that can result from them.”<sup>102</sup>

Novels also add to madness as it “constitutes the milieu of perversion, par excellence, of all sensibility; it detaches the soul from all that is immediate and natural in feeling and leads it into an imaginary world of sentiments violent in proportion to their unreality, and less controlled by the gentle laws of nature...”<sup>103</sup>

So in the 19<sup>th</sup> century mad were thought to be fit only for prison. There was no hope for the madman as “every psychiatrist, every historian yielded, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to the same impulse of indignation; everywhere we find the same outrage, the same virtuous censure...”<sup>104</sup>

Positivism could not liberate the madmen from the treatment that was meted out to them. Its claims “to have been the first to free the mad from a lamentable confusion with the felonious, to separate the innocence of unreason from the guilt of crime” were mere facade as proved the various examples shown by Foucault in form of the callous asylums full of misery and affliction and their emigration.<sup>105</sup>

### **The Display of Power and Subjugation of Madness - Reason's Monopoly over Society**

However a change in the awareness about madness and consciousness was noticed. “No medical advance, no humanitarian approach was responsible for the fact that the mad were gradually isolated, that the monotony of insanity was divided into rudimentary types. It was the depths of confinement itself that generated the phenomenon; it is from confinement that we must seek an account of this new

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<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, p.219

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p.221

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, pp.221-222

awareness of madness.”<sup>106</sup> Confinement reflected the most horrendous, but secretive, manifestation of power. “The madman is not the first and the most innocent victim of confinement, but the most obscure and the most visible, the most insistent of the symbols of the confining power. Tyranny secretly persists among the confined in this lurid presence of unreason. The struggle against the established powers, against the family, against the Church, continues at the very heart of confinement, in the saturnalia of reason. And madness so well represents these punishing powers that it effectively plays the part of an additional punishment, a further torment which maintains order in the uniform chastisement of the houses of correction.”<sup>107</sup>

We see how the political critique of confinement functioned in the eighteenth century. It seemed to abide by the same logic as the dominant section, which saw madness as abnormality, which could be treated through alienation and had no social cause. It did not act to liberate the mad, nor did it have a philanthropic mission or paid a greater medical attention to the insane. Contrarily, “it linked madness more firmly than ever to confinement, and this by a double tie: one which made madness the very symbol of the confining power and its absurd and obsessive representative within the world of confinement; the other which designated madness as the object par excellence of all the measures of confinement. Subject and object, image and goal of repression, symbol of its blind arbitrariness and justification of all that could be reasonable and deserved within it: by a paradoxical circle, madness finally appears as the only reason for confinement

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p.224

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p.225

whose profound unreason it symbolises.”<sup>108</sup> Confinement was tyrannical, suffocating as far as the issue of space was concerned and alienating.

Madness had a changed face in 18<sup>th</sup> century as reason continued its exercise to dominate unreason. It became individualised and juxtaposed with crime. “Hence an abyss yawns in the middle of confinement; a void which isolates madness, denounces it for being irreducible, unbearable to reason; madness now appears with what distinguishes it from all these confined forms as well. The presence of the mad appears as an injustice; but *for others*. The undifferentiated unity of unreason had been broken. Madness was individualised, strangely twinned with crime, at least with it by a proximity which had not yet been called into question. In this confinement drained of a part of its content, these two figures - madness, crime - subsist alone; by themselves, they symbolise what may be necessary about it; they alone are what henceforth deserves to be confined.”<sup>109</sup>

### **Madness as an Uneconomic Phenomenon**

Confinement has been seen as intimately related with poverty and its offshoots like unemployment and economic crisis in general. Foucault tries to understand the changed scenario and the changed relationship between the two. Gradually a crisis emerged with the whole issue of confinement as understanding about poverty changed. “Poverty was gradually being freed from the old moral confusions. Men had seen unemployment assume, during crises, an aspect that could no longer be identified with that of sloth; had seen indigence an idleness forced to spread into the countryside, where men had supposed they could recognise precisely the most

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, p.227

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, p.228



immediate and the purest forms of moral life; all this revealed that poverty was perhaps not only of the order of transgression...”<sup>110</sup>

“The basic poverty was in a sense inalienable: birth or accident, it formed a part of life that could not be avoided. For a long time, it was inconceivable to have a state in which there were no paupers, so deeply did need appear to be inscribed in man’s fate and in the structure of society: poverty, labour, and poverty are terms which remain linked in the thought of philosophers until the nineteenth century. Necessary because it could not be suppressed, this role of poverty was necessary too because it made wealth possible. Because they labour and consume little, those who are in need permits a nation to enrich itself, to set a high value on its fields, its colonies, and its mines, to manufacture products which will be sold the world over; in short, a people would be poor which had no paupers. Indigence becomes an indispensable element in the State.”<sup>111</sup> Poverty was now “an uneconomic phenomenon” liberated from the notions of idleness and slothfulness.

“Confinement was a gross error, and an economic mistake: poverty was to be suppressed by removing and maintaining by charity a *poor population*.” Actually, it was *poverty* that was being artificially masked with a part of the population being really suppressed while the wealth always remained constant. “The labour market was limited, which was all the more dangerous in that this was precisely a period of crisis. On the contrary, the high cost of products should have been palliated by a cheap labour force, their scarcity being compensated by a new industrial and agricultural effort. The only reasonable remedy: to restore this entire population to the circuit of production, in order to distribute it to the points where

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<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, p.229

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, pp.229-30

the labour force was rarest. To utilise the poor, vagabonds, exiles, and émigrés of all kinds, was one of the secrets of wealth, in the competition among nations... Confinement is open to criticism because of the repercussions it can have on the labour market; but still more, because it constitutes, and with it the entire enterprise of traditional charity, a dangerous financing.”<sup>112</sup>

Madness was apparently freed but it also raised new problems. In the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the inhuman treatment of the madmen gradually dissipated. “Madness was set free long before Pinel, not from the material constraints which kept it in the dungeon, but from a much more binding, perhaps more decisive servitude which kept it under the domination of unreason’s obscure power.’ Even before the Revolution, madness was free but it was a freedom for a perception which individualised it, free for the recognition of its unique features and for all the operations that would finally give it its status as an object.”<sup>113</sup>

By the law of 1790-91, which held the family responsible for the care of insane and ordered the municipality to take all measures that might prove useful the situation changed. Through this liberation, “madmen regained, but this time within the law itself, that animal status in which confinement had seemed to isolate them; they again became wild beasts at the very period when doctors began to attribute to them a gentle animality. But even though this legal disposition was put in the hands of the authorities, the problems were not solved thereby; hospitals for the insane still did not exist.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, pp.232-33

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p.234

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, p.238

By the time Revolution arrived on the scene it was confusing and difficult to determine the place of madness in new society- when the society was being restructured and humanity being re-evaluated.<sup>115</sup>

### **Religion as a Medicine**

The influence of religious principles over the mind of the insane is considered of great consequence, as a means of cure. "In the dialectic of insanity where reason hides without abolishing itself, religion constitutes the concrete form of what cannot go mad; it bears what is invincible in reason, it bears what subsists beneath madness as quasi-nature and around it as the constant solicitation of a milieu "where, during lucid intervals, or the state of convalescence, the patient might enjoy the society of those who were of similar habits and opinions." Religion safeguards the old secret of reason in the presence of madness, thus making closer, more immediate, the constraint that was already rampant in classical confinement. There, the religious and moral milieu was imposed from without, in such a way that madness was controlled, not cured."<sup>116</sup>

Even as asylum came into being religion and its relation continued, though with a changed nature. Religion offered "the moral power of consolation, of confidence, and a docile fidelity to nature. It must resume the moral enterprise of religion, exclusive of its fantastic text, exclusively in the level of virtue, labour, and social life."<sup>117</sup>

The asylum is a religious domain despite religion being a domain of pure morality, of ethical uniformity. "Now the asylum must represent the great continuity of

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<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, p.240

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, p.244

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, p.257

social morality. The values of family and work, all the reign is a double one. First, they prevail in fact, at the heart of madness itself; beneath the violence and disorder of insanity, the solid nature of the essential virtues is not disrupted.”<sup>118</sup>

Through asylum an effort is made to establish the “homogeneous rule of morality.”<sup>119</sup>

It sought to create a moral uniformity, an universalised upon those “who are strangers to it and in whom insanity is already present before it has made itself manifest....”<sup>120</sup> This might the effort of bourgeois morality to universalise its ideas and homogenise the thought process and pattern, even through its imposition as a law upon all forms of insanity.

### **Reason, Fear and Madness - the Birth of Asylum**

Fear appears as an essential component in the asylum. The terrors of confinement surrounded madness from the outside, “marking the boundary of reason and unreason, and enjoying a double power: over the violence of fury in order to contain it, and over reason itself to hold it at a distance; such fear was entirely on the surface.”<sup>121</sup> The fear which Foucault saw at asylums like the Retreat had great depth and it passed between reason and madness like a mediation. The terror that once reigned in the society and the asylums or confinement houses “was the most visible sign of the alienation of madness in the classical period; fear was now endowed with a power of disalienation, which permitted it to restore a primitive complicity between the madman and the man of reason. It re-established a solidarity between them.”<sup>122</sup> It was to be in constant touch with the pedagogy of

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<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, p.258

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p.259

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, p.245

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*

good sense, of truth, and of morality brought about by the changed times. Now the mad people were not chained, hooked and kept in most inhuman conditions, as at Retreat, but they were treated gently, people conversing, with liberty and freedom, which used to cure many people.

But the asylum did more than just punish the madman's guilt. "It organised that guilt". Foucault wants to refer here to the play of power and use of techniques of power to suppress through organising all the instruments. It organised the guilt for the madman as a non-reciprocal relation to the keeper; "it organised it for a man of reason as an awareness of the Other, a therapeutic intervention in the madman's existence. In other words, by this guilt the madman became an object of punishment always vulnerable to himself and to the Other; and, from the acknowledgement of his status as object, from the awareness of his guilt, the madman was to return to his awareness of himself as a free and responsible subject, and consequently to reason."<sup>123</sup>

In the asylum work had no productive value but is imposed only as a moral rule. "In the asylum, work is deprived of any productive value; it is imposed only as a moral rule; a limitation of liberty, a submission to order, an engagement of responsibility, with the single aim of disalienating the mind lost in the excess of a liberty which physical constraint limits only in appearance."<sup>124</sup>

In Classical confinement there was at least a type of reciprocity but in the asylum it changed. In classical confinement, the madman was no doubt vulnerable to observation, but it did not involve him: "it involved only his monstrous surface, his visible animality: and it included at least one form of reciprocity, since the same

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<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, p.247

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, p.248

man could read in the madman, as in a mirror, the imminent movement of his downfall.”<sup>125</sup>

In the asylum “the madman is obliged to objectify himself in the eyes of reason as the perfect stranger, that is, as the man whose strangeness does not reveal itself. The city of reason welcomes him only with this qualification and at the price of this surrender to anonymity.”<sup>126</sup> The psychology of madness & asylum judges madness only by its acts; “it is not accused of intentions, nor are its secrets to be fathomed. Madness is responsible only for that part of itself which is visible. All the rest is reduced to silence. Madness no longer exists except as seen.”<sup>127</sup>

The asylum institutes a kind of proximity and an intimacy without the chains or bars but does not allow reciprocity; “only the nearness of observation that watches, that spies, that comes closer in order to see better... The science of mental disease, as it would develop in the asylum, would always be only of the order of observation and classification. It would not be a dialogue. It could not be that until psychoanalysis had exorcised this phenomenon of observation, essential to the nineteenth-century asylum, and substituted for its silent magic the powers of language. It would be fairer to say that psychoanalysis doubled the absolute observation of the watcher with the endless monologue of the person watched - thus preserving the old asylum structure of non-reciprocal observing but balancing it, in a non-symmetrical reciprocity, by the new structure of language without response.”<sup>128</sup> And Foucault admires psychoanalysis for destroying this barrier.

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<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, pp.248-49

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, pp.249-50

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, pp.250-51

## **Surveillance, Judgement and Madness**

By 19<sup>th</sup> century authority was born in asylums unlike 18<sup>th</sup> century confinement houses where faceless power reigned. “Until the end of the eighteenth century, the world of madmen was peopled only by the abstract, faceless power which kept them confined; within these limits, it was empty, empty of all that was not madness itself; the guards were often recruited among the inmates themselves.”<sup>129</sup> There is a confrontation between reason and unreason: A situation is created wherein the “Keeper intervenes, without weapons, without instruments of constraint, with observation and language only; he advances upon madness, deprived of all that could protect him or make him seem threatening, risking an immediate confrontation without recourse.” The Keeper confronts madness as a reasonable being, invested by the authority that is his for not being mad. “Reason’s victory over unreason was once assured only by material force, and in a sort of real combat. Now the combat was always decided beforehand, unreason’s defeat inscribed in advance in the concrete situation where madman and man of reason meet. The absence of constraint in the nineteenth-century asylum is not unreason liberated, but madness long since mastered.”<sup>130</sup>

### **The Ideas of Domination - Mad as Minor and Reason as Father**

Mad was seen as *minor* with unlimited strength and unreasonable, and thereby needed to be subjugated. In fact one needs to understand and decipher the notion of minor, which embodies conceptualisations that express the ideas that govern a society and the social relations. Madness is interpreted as childhood. Everything at the Retreat is organised so that the insane are transformed into minors. They are

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<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, p.251

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*, pp.251-252

regarded “as children who have an overabundance of strength and make dangerous use of it. They must be given immediate punishments and rewards; whatever is remote has no effect in them. A new system of education must be applied, a new direction given to their ideas; they must first be subjugated, then encouraged, then applied to work, and this work made agreeable by attractive means.”<sup>131</sup>

Reason is like *father*, who is definitely hegemonic, puts everything in order, takes decision etc. He looks after the family, i.e., the society and being the guardian he had the duty to correct the discrepancies and pathologies or for that matter any kind of social disorder. It looked after madness as embodiment of unreason.

With the popularisation of asylums madness experienced a change. “In the classical period, indigence, laziness, vice, and madness mingled in an equal guilt within unreason: madmen were caught in the great confinement of poverty and unemployment, but all had been promoted, in the proximity of transgression, to the essence of a fall. Now madness belonged to social failure, which appeared without distinction as its cause, model, and limit. Half a century later, mental disease would become degeneracy. Henceforth, the essential madness, and the really dangerous one, was that which rose from the lower depths of society.”<sup>132</sup>

### **Asylums as a Embodiment of Power Dynamics ~ the Manifestation of Positivism**

Asylums could be attributed with four characteristics. “To silence, to recognition in the mirror, to perpetual judgement, we must add a fourth structure peculiar to the world of the asylum as it was constituted at the end of the eighteenth century: this is the apotheosis of the *medical personage*. Of them all, it is doubtless the most

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<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*, p.252

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*, pp.259-60



important, since it would authorise not only new contacts between doctor and patient, but a new relation between insanity and medical thought, and ultimately command the whole modern experience of madness. Hitherto, we find in the asylums only the same structures of confinement, but displaced and deformed. With the new status of the medical personage, the deepest meaning of confinement is abolished: mental disease, with the meanings we now give it, is made possible.”<sup>133</sup> Physician becomes important. The medical profession is present “as a juridical and moral guarantee, not in the name of science...For the medical enterprise is only a part of an enormous moral task that must be accomplished at the asylum, and which alone can ensure the cure of the insane.”<sup>134</sup>

Science was introduced as a power in the asylum, which by their nature, “were of a moral and social order.” It dominated the mad, and “what for positivism would be an image of objectivity was only the other side of this domination”<sup>135</sup>. It is by bringing the powers of Family, Authority, Punishment and Love into play and “by wearing the mask of Father and of Judge, that the physician, by one of those abrupt short cuts that leave aside mere medical competence, became the almost magic perpetrator of the cure.”<sup>136</sup> He, the doctor, restored the order of morality like this.

Positivism started dominating the sphere of medicine and imposed “itself upon medicine and psychiatry, this practice becomes more and more obscure, the psychiatrist’s power more and more miraculous, and the doctor-patient couple skins deeper into a strange world. In the patient’s eyes the doctor becomes a thaumaturge; the authority he has borrowed from order, morality, and the family

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<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, pp.269-70

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*, p.270

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, p.273

now seems to derive from himself; it is because he is a doctor that he is believed to possess these powers.”<sup>137</sup> “... the doctor had found the power to unravel insanity...”<sup>138</sup>

Freud demystified all the other asylum structures: “he abolished silence and observation, he eliminated madness’s recognition of itself in the mirror of its own spectacle, he silenced the instances of condemnation. But on the other hand he exploited the structure that enveloped the medical personage; he amplified its thaumaturgical virtues, preparing for its omnipotence a quasi-divine status. He focused upon this single presence-concealed behind the patient and above him, in an absence that is also a total presence—all the powers that had been distributed in the collective existence of the collective existence of the asylum; he transformed this into an absolute observation, a pure and circumspect silence, a judge who punishes and rewards in a judgement that does not even condescend to language; he made it the mirror in which madness, in an almost motionless movement, clings to and casts off itself.”<sup>139</sup>

### **P o w e r / K n o w l e d g e**

In this book Foucault deals with a variety of subjects but there is a common thread that runs through these interviews and writings his intention to establish the power/knowledge dynamics. In *Madness and Civilisation* the power/knowledge was being understood in historical context. In this book his discussions range from themes like popular justice, sexuality, body, prisons, psychiatry, health etc.

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<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, p.275

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*, p.277

## Popular Justice

A debate on popular justice should be started with the question of acts of “acts of justice by the people, and go on to ask what place a court could have within this.”<sup>140</sup> Court cannot dispense popular justice because it tries to “control” and “strangle” it, “by re-inscribing it within institutions which are typical of a state apparatus.”<sup>141</sup> In this connection he does not leave the judges and raises questions about their role as a third party between the “accused” and “the people”. Despite being in this role, unconcerned and unacquainted with the realities tries to establish the ‘truth’ or obtain a ‘confession’ and undertakes deliberations to decide and find out what is just or unjust. All this has been imposed in an authoritarian fashion. The court is the “first deformation” of popular justice.

The Maoists justified the formation of Red Army and the need for some kind of legal institutions after revolution because the masses are not sufficiently aware about the dynamics of the social system and the politics. But even then, Foucault argued, the court cannot be an instrument of popular justice and neutral but would represent certain interest. It is this interest/social group that decides what is right and what is wrong.

Despite revolts and establishment of new order and new judicial order as a neutral and just order the courts have been biased and this was vindicated when in all uprisings judicial officials have been attacked...the prisons have been opened the judges thrown out and the courts closed down. Popular justice recognised in the judicial system a state apparatus, representative of public authority, and instrument

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<sup>140</sup> Foucault, Michel; *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*; Harvester Wheatsheaf, London; 1980; p.01

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*, p.01

of class power. That is why in Western Europe and France popular justice is anti-judicial.

Citing example of France Foucault argues that acts of justice that are popular “tend to flee from the court” and “each time that the bourgeoisie has wished to subject a popular uprising to the constraint of a state apparatus a court has been set up...”<sup>142</sup>

Hence, Foucault puts forward his own idea of a court: Generally the court is believed to be a neutral arrangement, their decision is not arrived at in advance, they have authority to enforce the decision. Contrarily, in popular justice these three elements are absent and there is only masses and their enemies. And people who want to punish/re-educate their enemy they do not rely on “an abstract universal idea of justice, they rely only on their own experience; that of the injuries they have suffered, that of the way in which they have been oppressed; and finally, their decision is not an authoritative one, that is, they are not backed up by a state apparatus which has the power to enforce their decisions, they purely and simply carry them out.”<sup>143</sup> Based on this he holds that in West courts are alien to the practice of popular justice.

Reacting to the argument that the popular justice can be sometimes reactionary and fascistic as well and therefore would require to be guided by a conscious organisation Foucault identifies three characteristics of the court: (I) it is a ‘third element;’ (ii) refers to “an idea, a form, a universal rule of justice”; (iii) takes decisions and has power to enforce.

In Middle ages penal system was used to suppress rebellion and its possibilities. It also helped people to accept their status as proletarians. “... this penal system was

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<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p.07

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*, pp.08-09

aimed, very specifically, against the most mobile, the most excitable, the 'violent' elements among the common people..."<sup>144</sup> This penal system made "the proletariat see the non-proletarianised people as the marginal dangerous, immoral, a menace to society as a whole..."<sup>145</sup> Bourgeoisie wanted to introduce certain "universal moral categories which function as an ideological barrier between them and the non-proletarianised people"<sup>146</sup>, which was used to create distance between proletariat and the non-proletarianised people, by bourgeoisie to use some of these plebian elements against the proletariat.

Even where revolution has taken place it could not become a part of popular justice because to Foucault it seems "to be a possible location for the reintroduction of the ideology of the penal system into popular justice."<sup>147</sup>

To protect themselves/ their interests bourgeoisie used variety of techniques to keep rebellion at bay, through distancing proletarianised from non-proletarianised people. Hence, three methods were devised – army, colonisation and prisons. Army absorbed countryside surplus labour. This army was used against workers. Bourgeoisie tried to maintain an antagonism between the workers and the proletariat, which generally worked. Colonisation was another tool – those sent away to colonies did not become proletarians. They controlled colonised people to avoid alliance between 'lesser whites' and colonised whites racism was used as a policy. The third method was around the prison system wherein bourgeoisie created a barrier around those who went to prisons (and an ideology about crime, criminals etc., was developed). But all the three seem to have failed today as there

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<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p.15

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*, p.16

is no “overt colonisation”, police has become a reinforcement, and there is an overloading of the penal system. Therefore, the techniques have changed. “...the techniques employed up to 1940 relied primarily on the policy of imperialism (the army/the colonies), whereas those employed since then are closer to a fascist model (police, internal surveillance, confinement).”<sup>148</sup>

Bourgeoisie tried to keep one section away from criminality because it was a form of revolt by using new methods – e.g., morality taught in primary schools, imposition of a system of values disguised as teaching of literary, etc. Similarly, judicial system “has always operated in such a way as to introduce contradictions among the people.”<sup>149</sup>

Foucault sees struggle against the judicial system as an important one but not the basic one. Through this apparatus bourgeois ideas of what is just and unjust, about theft, property, crime and criminals have successfully infiltrated among proletariat. Foucault sees two kinds of Plebians - proletarianised and non-proletarianised plebians. And it has been given certain choices, therefore, it has been racist when colonialist; has been nationalist, chauvinist when armed; and fascist as a police-force.

Foucault does not want imposition of the old form of court even with a new content. The court sets a kind of division of labour. “There are those who judge - or who pretend to judge - with total tranquillity, without being in any way involved.”<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, p.18

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*, p.21

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, p.30

Hence popular justice needs to be seen as (1) an action carried out by the masses (homogeneous unit) against their immediate enemy; and (2) it “cannot achieve its full significance unless it is classified politically, under the supervision of the masses themselves.”<sup>151</sup>

Even after revolution if there is a state judicial apparatus it will take over popular justice. Is Foucault looking at state judicial authority as a unifying universal category?

Defines what can be counter-justice. “A *counter-justice* would be one that enabled one to put into operation, in relation to some person who would in the normal course of events get away with what he has done, some kind of judicial proceedings (that is, to seize him, bring him before a court, persuade a judge, who would judge him by reference to certain forms of equity, and who would effectively sentence him to some punishment which the person would be compelled to undergo). In this way one would precisely be *taking the place* of the judicial system.”<sup>152</sup> But he thinks that it is idealist and “it is impossible for there to be a counter-justice in the strict sense.” The judicial system, as a state apparatus, can only divide the masses. There cannot be anything as proletarian counter-justice.

“The idea that I wanted to introduce into the discussion is that the bourgeois judicial state apparatus, of which the visible, symbolic form is the court, has the basic function of introducing and augmenting contradictions among the masses, principally between the proletariat and the non-proletarianised people, and that it

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<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, p.31

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*, p.34

follows from this that the form of judicial system, and the ideology which is associated with them, must become the target of our present struggle.”<sup>153</sup>

### **Changing Socio-economic situation and the power dynamics**

“Historians, like philosophers and literary historians, have been accustomed to a history which takes in only the summits, the great events.”<sup>154</sup> But now in history has been introduced the plebian element.

Through the debates on hospital and prison Foucault wants “to reconstitute...the enmeshing of a discourse in the historical process, rather on the lines of what Faye has done with totalitarian discourse.”<sup>155</sup> He believes that with such studies the problem is that the corpus of data cannot be defined because of its fluidity, unlike linguistics and mythology.

When it became clear that it would be more profitable for the economy to place people under surveillance than exemplary penalty new mode of exercising power started in 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By “mechanisms of power he means “the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives.”<sup>156</sup> A regime of power whose exercise was “within the social body, rather than from above it” was invented in 18<sup>th</sup> century. “This more or less coherent modification in the small-scale modes of exercise of power was made possible only by a fundamental structural change. It was the instituting of this new local, capillary form of power which impelled society to eliminate certain elements such as the court and the king. The mythology of the sovereign was no longer

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<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*, p.36

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*, p.37

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.*, p.38

<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*, p.39



possible once a certain kind of power was being exercised within the social body. The sovereign then became a fantastic personage, at once archaic and monstrous. Thus there is a certain correlation between the two processes, global and local, but not an absolute one.”<sup>157</sup> Foucault wants to raise the issue of global and local versus absolute.

Prison was no different and it was also an instrument, like the school, the barracks, or the hospital, “acting with precision upon its individual subjects.”<sup>158</sup> Nature of prison changed because the economy could derive more profit by producing delinquents. They were not only used in flourishing prostitution business, as Napoleon’s help but surveillance and infiltration...”<sup>159</sup>

But with the changing times as the socio-economic situation changed the forms of domination have also experienced change. Consequently, bourgeoisie broke its ties with criminality and became moralistic.<sup>160</sup> Criminals were being treated alike by all - bourgeoisie, aristocracy as well as peasantry, and protected by all. “But once capitalism had physically entrusted wealth, in the form of raw materials and means of production, to popular hands, it became absolutely essential to protect this wealth. Because industrial society requires that wealth be directly in the hands, not of its owners, but of those whose labour, by putting that wealth to work, enables a profit to be made from it. How was this wealth to be protected? By a rigorous morality, of course: hence the formidable layer of moralisation deposited on the nineteenth-century population. Look at the immense campaigns to christianise the workers during this period. It was absolutely necessary to constitute the populace

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<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*, p.40

<sup>159</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*, p.41

as a moral subject and to break its commerce with criminality, and hence to segregate the delinquents and to show them to be dangerous not only for the rich but for the poor as well, vice-ridden instigators of the gravest social perils. Hence also the birth of detective literature and the importance of the *faits divers*, the horrific newspaper crime stories.”<sup>161</sup>

“Prison professionalised people”.<sup>162</sup> They became pimp, policeman or an informer after coming out. And bourgeoisie needed criminals because it needed police, whose presence and oppression can be justified by the fear of criminals.

### **Power and Knowledge - A Dialectical Relationship**

Objects to the word ‘progress’ as in *Madness and Civilisation* because the need is not to ask ‘How we have progressed?’ But rather it should be “how do things happen? And what happens now is not necessarily better or more advanced, or better understood, than what happened in the past.”<sup>163</sup>

History has never studied the mechanisms of power but only “those who held power”. Much less has been studied the relation between power and knowledge. There is no need to remark that power needs such-and-such discovery or such-and-such a form of knowledge, but there is a need to understand that “the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information. One can understand nothing about economic science if one does not know how power and economic power are exercised in everyday life. The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. The university

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<sup>161</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, p.42

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.*, p.50

hierarchy is only the most visible, the most sclerotic and least dangerous form of this phenomenon. One has to be really naïve to imagine that the effects of power linked to knowledge have their culmination in university hierarchies. Diffused, entrenched and dangerous, they operate in other places than in the person of the old professor. ... it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power. 'Liberate scientific research from the demands of monopoly capitalism': maybe it's a good slogan, but it will never be more than a slogan."<sup>164</sup>

### **Archaeology of Human Sciences as a Necessity to Understand Power Dynamics**

Taking the case of psychoanalysis as an interesting one he sees its establishment "in opposition to a certain kind of psychiatry, the psychiatry of degeneracy, eugenics and heredity." However, "in relation to that psychiatry - which is still the psychiatry of today's psychiatrists - psychoanalysis played a liberating role."<sup>165</sup>

"I have attempted to analyse how, at the initial stages of industrial societies, a particular punitive apparatus was set up together with a system for separating the normal and the abnormal. To follow this up, it will be necessary to construct a history of what happens in the nineteenth century and how the present highly-complex relation of forces - the current outline of the battle - has been arrived at through a succession of offensives and counter-offensives, effects and counter-effects. The coherence of such a history does not derive from the revelation of a project but from a logic of opposing strategies. The archaeology of the human sciences has to be established through studying the mechanisms of power which

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<sup>164</sup> *ibid.*, pp.51-52

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*, p.60

have invested human bodies, acts and forms of behaviour. And this investigation enables us to rediscover one of the conditions of the emergence of the human sciences: the great 19<sup>th</sup> century effort in discipline and normalisation. Freud was well aware of all this. He was aware of the superior strength of his position on the matter of normalisation.”<sup>166</sup>

At such a juncture it becomes essential to understand how positivism wishes to intervene and establish its own hegemony as the guiding force for each and every science. And discounting himself from that category of positivists he asserts his desire of not acquiring the “role of a referee, judge and universal witness” because it seems to him “to be tied up with philosophy as a university institution...I have never had the intention of doing a general history of the human sciences or a critique of the possibility of the sciences in general. The subtitle to *The Order of Things* is not ‘the archaeology’, but ‘an archaeology of the human sciences’.”<sup>167</sup>

### **Power and Knowledge**

It becomes easy “to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power” if it can be analysed within the categories of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition. “There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge and which, if one tries to transcribe them, lead one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region and territory. And the politico-strategic term is an indication of how the military and the administration actually come to inscribe themselves both on a material soil and within forms of discourse. Anyone envisaging the analysis of discourses solely in

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<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, p.61

<sup>167</sup> *ibid.*, p.65

terms of temporal continuity would inevitably be led to approach and analyse it like the internal transformation of an individual consciousness. Which would lead to his erecting a great collective consciousness as the scene of events. Metaphorising the transformations of discourse in a vocabulary of time necessarily leads to the utilisation of the model of individual consciousness with its intrinsic temporality. Endeavouring on the other hand to decipher discourse through the use of spatial, strategic metaphors enables one to grasp precisely the points at which discourses are transformed in, through and on the basis of relations of power.”<sup>168</sup>

Mechanism of power cannot be seen to be embodied only in state apparatus “making this into the major, privileged, capital and almost unique instrument of the power in its exercise goes much further, passes through much finer channels, and so much more ambiguous, since each individual has at his disposal a certain power, and for that very reason can also act as the vehicle for transmitting a wider power. The reproduction of the relations of production is not the only function served by power. The systems of domination and the circuits of exploitation certainly interact, intersect and support each other, but they do not coincide.”<sup>169</sup> If one looks only at an exclusive element or symbol or embodiment of power one tends to ignore the other fields or arenas or mechanisms and effects of power that don’t pass via the state apparatus.

“The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces.”<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*, pp.69-70

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*, p.72

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*, p.74

## **Marxism - A Totalising/universalising Ideology**

“As far as I’m concerned, Marx does not exist. I mean the sort of entity constructed around a proper name, signifying at once a certain individual, the totality of his writings, and an immense historical process, deriving from him. I believe Marx’s historical analysis, the way he analyses the formation of capital, is for a large part governed by the concepts he derives from the framework of Ricardian economics. I take no credit for that remark, Marx says it himself. However, if you take his analysis of the Paris Commune or *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, there you have a type of historical analysis, which manifestly doesn’t rely on any eighteenth century model. It’s always possible to make Marx into an author, localisable in terms of a unique discursive physiognomy, subject to analysis in terms of originality or internal coherence. After all, people are perfectly entitled to ‘academise’ Marx. But that means misconceiving the kind of break he effected.”<sup>171</sup>

It has been the original Marxist thought that Foucault has critiqued but also “para-Marxists” like Marcuse. “I would also distinguish myself from para - Marxists like Marcuse who give the notion of repression an exaggerated role - because power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage and repression, in the manner of a great super-ego, exercising itself only in a negative way . it on the contrary , power is strong this is because, as we are beginning to realise, it produces effects at the level of knowledge. Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it. If it has been possible to constitute a knowledge of the body, this has been by way of an ensemble of military and educational disciplines. It was on the

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<sup>171</sup> *ibid.*, p.76

basis of power over the body that a physiological, organic knowledge of it became possible.”<sup>172</sup>

The objection that Foucault has against Marxism is that cannot be science. And those who uphold the Marxist discourse by investing some kind of power in it, which the West has attributed to science after Medieval times are opposed by Foucault.

Foucault feels that there has been a need to analyse the formation of discourses and the genealogy of knowledge “in terms of types of consciousness, modes of perception and forms of ideology, but in terms of tactics and strategies of power. Tactics and strategies deployed through implantations, distributions, demarcations, control of territories and organisations of domains which could well make up a sort of geopolitics where my preoccupations would link up with your methods.”<sup>173</sup>

### **Localising Criticism - Globalising vs. Localising Tendencies: the Genealogy of Knowledge - Local vs. Unitary Discourse**

Local criticism means “an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production”<sup>174</sup>, whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought. Foucault argues a case for this because to him the totalitarian idea proves an hindrance to research.

The emerging localising tendencies are full of hope for him because they have an element of “an *insurrection of subjugated knowledge*”, by which he refers “to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemisation.”<sup>175</sup> However, Foucault believes that criticism has been

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<sup>172</sup> *ibid.*, p.59

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*, p.77

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.*, p.81

<sup>175</sup> *ibid.*, p.81

able to reveal/expose this. By subjugated knowledges one must also understand “a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.”<sup>176</sup> Foucault calls these low-ranking knowledges/disqualified knowledges “a popular knowledge though it is far from being a general common sense knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it - that it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work.”<sup>177</sup>

Through these methods and elaboration on the form of knowledges - one that seek to dominate and the other, the local, popular, disqualified knowledge that stands as an insurrection. He has been trying to rescue the “buried knowledges of erudition and those disqualified from the hierarchy of knowledges and sciences.”<sup>178</sup>

These subjugated knowledges were concerned with “a historical knowledge of struggles.” The popular knowledge reveals those hostile encounters that have been “confined to the margins of knowledge.”<sup>179</sup> All these could not have been possible without eliminating “the tyranny of globalising discourses in their hierarchy and all their privileges of a theoretical *avant-garde*.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*, p.82

<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*, p.83

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*



To “the union of erudite knowledge and local memories” that allows establishment of “a historical knowledge of struggles” Foucault wants to call *genealogy*.<sup>181</sup> “...a genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from that subjection, to render them, that is, capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse. It is based on a reactivation of local knowledges...in opposition to the scientific hierarchisation of knowledges and the effects intrinsic to their power: this, then, is the project of these disordered and fragmentary genealogies.”<sup>182</sup> And Foucault wants to use archaeology to analyse the local discursivities and genealogy would bring the subjected knowledges into play after this. But then how does this genealogical project unfold itself? The genealogical does not unfold itself through empiricist or positivist methodology. It “entertains the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects. Genealogies are therefore not positivistic returns to a more careful or exact form of science. They are precisely anti-sciences. Not that they vindicate a lyrical right to ignorance or on-knowledge: it is not that they are concerned to deny knowledge or that they esteem the virtues of direct cognition and base their practice upon an immediate experience that escapes encapsulation in knowledge. It is not that with which we are concerned. We are concerned, rather, with the insurrection of knowledges that are opposed primarily not to the contents, methods or concepts of a science, but to the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organised scientific discourse within

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<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*, p.85

a society such as ours. Nor does it basically matter all that much that this institutionalisation of scientific discourse is embodied in a university, or, more generally, in an educational apparatus, in a theoretical-commercial institution such as psycho-analysis or within the framework of reference that is provided by a political system such as Marxism; for it is really against the effects of the power of a discourse that is considered to be scientific that the genealogy must wage its struggle.”<sup>183</sup>

The unitary discourse wants to take over fragments of genealogies. “In fact, as things stand in reality, these collected fragments of a genealogy remain as they have always been surrounded by a prudent silence.”<sup>184</sup> This silence might mean that it has generated a fear among the opposition (unitary discourse) or has not been able to inculcate any fear at all. Under such circumstances our task should be that “we must proceed just as if we had not alarmed them at all, in which case it will be no part of our concern to provide a solid and homogeneous theoretical terrain for all these dispersed genealogies, nor to descend upon them from on high with some kind of halo of theory that would unite them. Our task, on the contrary, will be to expose and specify the issue at stake in this opposition, this struggle, this insurrection of knowledges against the institutions and against effects of the knowledge and power that invests scientific discourse.”<sup>185</sup>

Ideally speaking two notions of power existed: (1) juridical liberal notion of political power whose “formal model is discoverable in the process of exchange, the economic circulation of commodities and in the (2) Marxist notion of political power the source and functioning is located in the economy. But then can there be

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<sup>183</sup> *ibid.*, pp.83-84

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.*, p.87

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.*

a non-economic analysis of power? Very few. Some see power as an organ of repression and other as a war, “a war continued by other means”,<sup>186</sup> or as “the hostile engagement of forces”.<sup>187</sup> Hence, there are two major systems of approach to the analysis of power: one, found in 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophy sees it as “contract-power, with oppression as its limit, or rather as the transgression of this limit.”<sup>188</sup> Second, sees it as “war - repression” which is “the mere effect and continuation of a relation of domination.”<sup>189</sup> But Foucault believes that these two notions need to be modified, and through studies on prison or psychiatry he tries to bring forth the vastness and complexity of the nature of exercise of power.

### **The Dynamics of Power, Truth and Right**

In our society the truth is produced through power and power can be exercised only the production of truth. The relationship between power, right and truth is organised in a “highly specific fashion” in our society, meaning that “we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function: we must speak the truth; we are constrained or condemned to confess or to discover the truth. Power never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition, its registration of truth: it institutionalises, professionalises and rewards its pursuit. In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place. In another way, we are also subjected to truth in the sense in which it is truth that makes the laws, that produces the true discourse which, at least partially, decides, transmits and itself extends upon the effects of power. In the end, we are judged,

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<sup>186</sup> *ibid.*, p.90

<sup>187</sup> *ibid.*, p.91

<sup>188</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *ibid.*, p.92

condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power.”<sup>190</sup>

Foucault’s aim in the last some years has been to expose domination in its “latent” as well as “brutal” nature. There is a dynamics of power and domination that includes the issue of rights and its dynamics.

Power cannot be taken as an individual’s or collective’s homogeneous and consolidated domination over other. Rather, power circulates and functions as a chain. “It is never localised here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net like organisation ... individuals are the vehicles of power, nor its point of application.”<sup>191</sup> The individual is an effect of power in the sense that he/she is constructed by power and it also act a vehicle of power.

With regard to doing analyses Foucault looks at the necessity to investigate historically, beginning from the lowest level, to understand how mechanisms of power have been able to function . Then only can we understand that bourgeoisie was never interested in the insane/mad but only in mechanisms to keep them under control so as to perpetuate its own hegemony.

### **Ideology as a Vehicle of Power**

Instead of analysing things/phenomenon (like education, democracy, monarchy etc.,) in terms of ideology. Foucault believes that ideology “is the production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge” -

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<sup>190</sup> *ibid.*, p.94

<sup>191</sup> *ibid.*, p.98

comprising of methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control.

There is a need to direct our researches towards “the nature of power not towards the juridical edifice of sovereignty, the State apparatuses and the ideologies which accompany them, but towards domination and the material operators of power, towards forms of subjection and the inflections and utilisations of their localised systems, and towards strategic apparatuses.”<sup>192</sup>

Comparing the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century Foucault thinks that the exercise of power in 16<sup>th</sup> century was in terms of sovereign; however by 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century new mechanisms evolved and specific procedural techniques and novel instruments of power were introduced. The new mechanism stresses on body and “permits time and labour, rather wealth and commodities to be extracted from bodies.”<sup>193</sup> Surveillance as an important tool of power exercise. It is “disciplinary power”<sup>194</sup> Power is exercised in the arena of sovereignty and discipline. But these two cannot be grouped together as a homogeneous element but function heterogeneously.

Today power functions through two “absolutely heterogeneous types of discourse”: through reorganisation of right that invests sovereignty and the mechanics of coercive forces that seeks to enforce discipline. This can explain the “global functioning of...a society of normalisation.”<sup>195</sup> Due to conflict between two elements a neutralising force is needed, which is achieved through the power knowledge dynamics established through the sanctity of science.

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<sup>192</sup> *ibid.*, p.102

<sup>193</sup> *ibid.*, p.104

<sup>194</sup> *ibid.*, p.105

<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*, p.107

Suggesting the solution to this crisis he writes that: “If one wants to look for a non-disciplinary power, it is not towards the ancient right of sovereignty that one should turn, but towards the possibility of a new form of right, one which must indeed be anti-disciplinarian, but at the same time liberated from the principle of sovereignty.”<sup>196</sup>

### **The Power/Knowledge Paradigm and Its Failure to Initiate Debate on the Discourse of Power**

Foucault says that he wrote *Madness and Civilisation* within the horizons of ‘power-knowledge’ debate he wanted to flag off. His intention has been to relate psychiatry with the whole range of institutions, economic requirements and political issues of social regulation.

But issues he wanted to raise could not appeal to the people he wanted because:

- I. Marxist intellectuals in France wanted to gain acceptance among the university intellectuals, meaning pro-establishment. “Medicine and psychiatry did not seem to them to be very noble or serious matters, nor to stand on the same level as the great forms of classical rationalism.”<sup>197</sup>
- II. Though Marxism had a tradition of discourse on science in 19<sup>th</sup> century but lately it did not happen, especially after Stalin. “The price Marxists paid for their fidelity to the old positivism was a radical deafness to a whole series of questions posed by science.”<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> *ibid.*, p.108

<sup>197</sup> *ibid.*, p.110

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*

III. "Psychiatric politics and psychiatry as politics were hardly considered to be respectable topics"<sup>199</sup> among the French Left.

And the saddest part is the transition or evolution of intellectual from being 'universal' to being specific.

"...it's not so much a matter of knowing what external power imposes itself on science, as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statements, what constitutes as it were, their internal regime of power, and how and why at certain moments that regime undergoes a global modification."<sup>200</sup>

"...structuralism formed the most systematic effort to evacuate the concept of the event, not only from ethnology but also from a whole series of other sciences..."<sup>201</sup>

It is not a question of looking everything at one level but of realising that there is "a whole order of levels"<sup>202</sup> with differing power.

Foucault was asking, for the first time, whom does the discourse serve when structuralism and semiology was fashion. And he differentiates between semiology and dialectics: "'Dialectic' is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton, and 'semiology' is a way of avoiding its violent, bloody and lethal character by reducing it to the calm Platonic form of language and dialogue."<sup>203</sup>

Foucault is against *just* historical contextualisation of subject. One needs to do an analysis that could look "for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework". This he calls "genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account

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<sup>199</sup> *ibid.*, p.111

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.*, p.113

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.*, p.114

<sup>202</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> *ibid.*, pp.114-115

for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of subject etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.”<sup>204</sup>

Though he used the notion of ‘repression’ in *Madness and Civilisation* as being present wherein the mechanisms of power and psychiatry tried to repress madness and reduce it to silence. But later it seemed “inadequate” to him “for capturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power.”<sup>205</sup> Power becomes a juridical notion in such an analysis. Instead “what makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does to only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.”<sup>206</sup>

In political theory ‘power’ is studied in terms of sovereign and sovereignty. We need to overcome this. “We need to cut off the King’s head: in political theory that has still to be done.”<sup>207</sup>

The analysis of problems, generally, must extend beyond the state. There is a network of power that needs to be located into. “True, these networks stand in a conditioning-conditioned relationship to a kind of ‘met-power’ which is structured essentially round a certain number of great prohibitions can only take holds and secure its footing where it is rooted in a whole series of multiple and indefinite

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<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*, p.117

<sup>205</sup> *ibid.*, p.119

<sup>206</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> *ibid.*, p.121



power relations that supply the necessary basis for the great negative forms of power.”<sup>208</sup>

In 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century new technological innovations introduced “a new technology of the exercise of power”<sup>209</sup> and their striking feature is “their concrete and precise character, their grasp of a multiple and differentiated reality.”<sup>210</sup>

Power cannot be experienced by an individual but there is a whole dynamics behind it. Power is not invested in an individual, who can exercise it. “It’s a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised.”<sup>211</sup> Hence, it implies that every individual is invested with a power, which he/she exercises at junctures whenever they get opportunities. This was the characteristic feature of the societies installed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “Power is no longer substantially identified with an individual who possesses or exercises it by right of birth; it becomes a machinery that no one owns.” However, “everyone does not occupy the same position; certain positions preponderate and permit an effect of supremacy to be produced. This is so much the case that class domination can be exercised just to the extent that power is dissociated from individual might.”<sup>212</sup>

Even family needs to be seen as an extension of power of State, the dynamics of domination within family reveals this. Power is not based on individual or collective will, or interests but is rather constructed and functions on basis of particular powers and its “myriad effects”. However, it never means that it functions outside economic process and the relations of production. However,

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<sup>208</sup> *ibid.*, p. 122

<sup>209</sup> *ibid.*, p. 124

<sup>210</sup> *ibid.*, p. 125

<sup>211</sup> *ibid.*, p. 156

<sup>212</sup> *ibid.*

every power relation makes a reference to a political field, hence is political. Stresses on the need to bring new schema of politicisation.

### **The Politics of Health and the Power Dynamics**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the role of medicine was “to set the ‘able-bodied’ poor to work and transform them into a useful labour-force, but it is also to assure the self-financing by the poor themselves of the cost of their sickness and temporary or permanent incapacitation, and further to render profitable in the short or long term the educating of orphans and foundlings. Thus, a complete utilitarian decomposition of poverty is marked out and the specific problem of the sickness of the poor begins to figure in the relationship of the imperatives of labour to the needs of production.”<sup>213</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the functions of order, enrichment and health is assured “less through a single apparatus than by an ensemble of multiple regulations and institutions which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century take the generic name of ‘police.’”<sup>214</sup> The police activities were classified under eleven heads and had three main aims: economic regulation, measures of public order (surveillance...) and general rules of hygiene.

Main characteristics of 18<sup>th</sup> century “*noso-politics*”:

1. *Privilege of the child and medicalisation of family.* Now the issue was no longer to produce maximum number of children but their correct management. New series of obligations on children was imposed. Now the family “is to become a dense, saturated, permanent, continuous physical environment which envelops maintains and develops the child’s body” against the traditional notions. From this period onwards the family becomes the most

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<sup>213</sup> *ibid.*, p.169

<sup>214</sup> *ibid.*, p.170

constant agent of medicalisation, and a target of medical acculturation.<sup>215</sup>

2. *Privilege of hygiene and the function of medicine as an instance of social control.* Medicine, as a techniques of health and as a service to cure acquires an important place in the administrative system and the machinery of power, strengthening itself throughout 18<sup>th</sup> century. “A ‘medico-administrative’ knowledge begins to develop concerning society, its health and sickness, its conditions of life, housing and habits, which serves as the basic core for the ‘social economy’ and sociology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>216</sup> “The doctors becomes the great advisor and expert, if not in the art of governing, at least in that of observing, correcting and improving the social ‘body’ and maintaining it in a permanent state of health.”<sup>217</sup>

### **Power and Madness**

In the Classical Age there was a negative use of power when people were excluded on the grounds of being mad. Everything was being seen in terms of binary oppositions of reason and unreason. But then in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century madness turned positive. “The technology of madness changed from negative to positive, from being binary to being complex and multiform. There came into being a vast technology of the psyche, which became a characteristic feature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it at once turned sex into the reality hidden behind rational consciousness and the sense to be decoded from madness, their common content, and hence that which made it possible to adopt the same modalities for dealing

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<sup>215</sup> *ibid.*, pp.172-73

<sup>216</sup> *ibid.*, p.176

<sup>217</sup> *ibid.*, p.177

with both.”<sup>218</sup> In this study he wanted to show how the issue of madness can be placed in the discourse of truth, the true scientific discourses of the WEST.

In the exercise of power the importance of ‘apparatus’ is strategic and acts as a driving forces - the techniques if implementation of power dynamics and relations in a society and among individuals. “...the apparatus is essentially of a *strategic* nature, which means assuming that it is a matter of a certain manipulation of relations of forces, either developing them in a particular direction, blocking them, stabilising them, utilising them, etc. The apparatus is thus always inscribed in a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain co-ordinates of knowledge which issue from it but, to an equal degree, condition it. This is what the apparatus consists in: strategies of relations of forces supporting, and supported by, types of knowledge.”<sup>219</sup>

Colin Gordon writes “that communism as a political institution has exercised the most rigorous and exclusive control over the political utilisation of historical knowledge, an ideological policing codified in the axioms of ‘determination in the last instance’ and the Leninist/Stalinist strategic lore of the ‘objective conditions’ of the ‘current conjecture’.”<sup>220</sup> Historical materialism has sought to write a history of Western rationalism and scientism and has tried to impose a universal idea. These factors were important in shaping Foucault’s anti-Marxist ideas. And it is from these ideas of Marxism, which tried to put forth an analysis of social system as a whole as an interplay of classes, that Foucault and the subsequent Post-modernists branded Marxism as a representative of Modernity and an

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<sup>218</sup> *ibid.*, p.185

<sup>219</sup> *ibid.*, p.196

<sup>220</sup> See Afterword by Colin Gordon in Foucault, Michel; *Power/Knowledge – Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*; Harvester Wheatsheaf; London; 1980

universalising idea that repressed the localising tendencies and particular phenomena.

### **Assessing Foucault**

Foucault's two books acquaint us sufficiently with his ideas, which implied a break from existing notions and a strong criticism of the tendencies of universalisation, whether it was expressed through the notion of 'class' or 'ideology'. Not only this, his contribution has been termed pioneering for the manner he used history and argued the case for his newly developed notions such as *genealogy*. He re-interpreted the notion of power and show how the treatment meted to body in the prison or the asylum demonstrated the techniques and technologies of power in history.<sup>221</sup>

Foucault's "conflicted emancipatory" interest can be compared to the Frankfurt School. They share their interest in "the critique of domination and in the problem of practice."<sup>222</sup> While on the other hand due to his "aesthetic –individualist" influence of Nietzsche he re-mystifies "the linkage between theory and practice" that the Frankfurt School hoped to clarify through making critical theory a critique of domination. "Though Foucault adds some quite useful historical material to their legacy, his theoretical conundrums appear to problematise the project of emancipatory theory at its root, reducing his pessimistic activism to a curious sort of utopian despair."<sup>223</sup> Foucault wanted to mask and unmask the complexities of this system. He believed that totalising tendencies were harmful to research and were intrinsically reductive. However, he could not deal with issue of

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<sup>221</sup> Foucault invites great support on his ideas about body from the feminists.

<sup>222</sup> Fairlamb, Horace L.; *Critical Conditions – Postmodernity and the Question of Foundations*; Cambridge University Press; Cambridge; 1994;p.174

<sup>223</sup> *ibid.*

“accountability of the agents of state and class.”<sup>224</sup> It is in the context of his opposition to the totalising theories that he critiques Marxism, which, he felt, advocated totality through its notions of history (historical materialism), class and ideology. Marxism subordinated individuals to a total socio-economic pattern or structure that leaves hardly any space for the individual to function. In this sense it is totalising. “Against a homogeneous field of power relations, Foucault wants to posit the heterology of power...”<sup>225</sup>

Marx’s criticism as a totalising theory emanates from a fallacious understanding of its dynamics. Engels in the Preface of the *Communist Manifesto* had clearly stated that Marxism talks of a global agenda because of its inevitability which will be implemented through local agencies considering and taking into account the specificities and particularistic nature of local societies. The critiques have also rejected the term ‘class’ used in Marxist discourse on grounds of its imposition as a generalised perception of an apparently diversified world order. But the experiences have shown that in the process of capitalist development as the ethics of commercialisation followed by individualisation moves forward in a society, the identities highlighted as otherwise gradually get integrated into a larger world order, as capitalist aims at integration of all identities into market. Therefore, the gradual withering away of caste identities like in the case of India or integration of tribes in the market-based order brings home the above point very strongly.

Foucault’s opposition to the term ‘ideology’ is also based on the same notion that it universalises everything. He rejects it because it is (1) opposite to truth; (2) has a humanist understanding of the individual subject and (3) deep rooted in the

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<sup>224</sup> *ibid.*, p.177

<sup>225</sup> *ibid.*, p.191

determinist base-superstructure Marxist model.<sup>226</sup> As an alternative model he developed the notion of discourse. “Discourses are composed of signs, but they do more than designate things, for they do more than designate things, for they are ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’... the rules of discursive practice ‘define not the dumb existence of a reality, nor the canonical use of a vocabulary, but the ordering of object.’”<sup>227</sup>

“Foucault’s notion of totality remains undertheorised”<sup>228</sup>. His theory of heterogeneous relations of power is a general theory seeking block reductions, though it itself becomes reductive when local criticism is given privilege over global criticism. It is in this context that Fairlamb argues that even his notion of history, which appear as local narratives, always gets limited to “partial and local inquiry.” His theory is analytic as far as criticisms are concerned but when it comes to practice, action he could not be prescriptive.

Foucault did not locate power in agencies like state, individuals, economic forces etc., but saw in terms of ‘micro’ operations, which has its own strategies and technologies.<sup>229</sup> The mental normalisation of individuals, psychiatric internment and penal institutions represented the functioning of power. His was a critique of Marxian notion of power developed in terms of class. Power is exercised rather than possessed. “Power is not exclusively negative, either, but produces pleasure and meaning as well as more coercive dimensions”, and that is why it is seductive as well as powerful.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Barrett, Michele; *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1991; p. 123

<sup>227</sup> *ibid.*, p.130

<sup>228</sup> *ibid.*, p.184

<sup>229</sup> *ibid.*, p.134

<sup>230</sup> *ibid.*, p.135

“We are all already regulated, already participants in networks of power, already constituted within the operations of power.” That the notion of ‘free individual’ becomes meaningless.”<sup>231</sup> The necessity is to see how power operates and how the shift in its relationship (regulation, discipline etc...) vis-à-vis individuals take place.

He shows how surveillance is internalised by the victims also; how space becomes a political problem or how power can be heterogeneous. The asylums and prisons were embodiments of surveillance. They represented the various ways used by the positivistic way of live – the modern civilisation – to keep a watch over individuals in order to control it in a better way.

In the two books Foucault brings out the following points:

- In this study he wanted to show how the issue of madness can be placed in the discourse of truth, the true scientific discourses of the WEST.
- Looks at Madness in historicity, which reveals the way mad became a confined person from being a free person. It shows how reason came to be considered as completely alien to Madness.
- Surveillance has been a part of civilisation for quite long the difference being it acquired more sophisticated forms with the development of new techniques and science.
- Psychiatry never made the madmen free but it revealed that beneath the surface, the deep structures of power and the relations that

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<sup>231</sup> *ibid.*, p.136



functioned were still the same, with an amount of sophistication attached to it.

- Science and rationality claimed to salvage the madmen but they only tightened the noose around the madmen, which people did not realise. Science tried to establish “a moral and social order.”
- Beneath the surface of images are hidden diverse meanings, which exercises a power, maintains a facade for the dominant ideas and prevents any possible antagonism or backlash related to it. The words and images are nothing more than enigmas.
- 18<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century did not recognise madness against the back ground of nature but against the background of *Unreason*. Madness threatened space and possibility of an absolute freedom.
- Psychiatry, in a way, popularised confinement because it declared the mad a patient who was ‘abnormal’ and hence needed a separate abode.
- Formation of asylums is seen as an example of monarchical and bourgeois order being established in period.
- Capitalism also used confinement to resolve its economic crisis, as revealed the capitalist aversion to idleness and mendicancy. As an example in 1532 Parliament of Paris decided to arrest all beggars and make them work in sewers. The city was full of beggars (30,000 out of a population of less than a lakh). Once crisis was over confinement was no longer a necessity.

- Christianity viewed madness as a lowly status whereas Reformation ushered new notion of work and ethics/morals. Confinement and insistence on work is not related only by economic factors but also ‘a moral perception sustains and animates it.’
- Confinement hid away unreason, and betrayed the shame it aroused; but it explicitly drew attention to madness, pointed to it. Confinement reflected the most horrendous, but secretive, manifestation of power. The terrors of confinement marked the boundary of reason and unreason.
- Through categorising madness as a medical problem an effort is made to control reason in a much better and sophisticated way.
- The modern system has introduced a judicial system, which is neutral only at apparent level. It creates a barrier and can never be regarded as a popular justice. It is impersonal and therefore cannot be popular.
- History is should not narrate only the summits, the great events. There is a need to introduce the plebian element in history. History has never studied the mechanisms of power but only “those who held power”.
- When it became clear that it would be more profitable for the economy to place people under surveillance than exemplary penalty new mode of exercising power started in 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- By ‘mechanisms of power’ he means ‘the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and

inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives.’

- Opposed Marxism on the grounds of it being totalitarian and generalising.
- Positivism intervenes and establishes its own hegemony as the guiding force for each and every science.
- There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge and relations of power, which pass via knowledge.
- The emerging localising tendencies are full of hope because they have an element of ‘an *insurrection of subjugated knowledge*’, which that the hitherto buried and disguised historical contents, which were considered inadequate or were disqualified, are being dug up. They are naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.
- Need to establish ‘a historical knowledge of struggles’, which he calls *genealogy*, which would emancipate historical knowledges from that subjection, to render them capable of opposition and of waging struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse.
- In our society the truth is produced through power and power can be exercised only the production of truth. Power is employed and exercised through a net like organisation. Foucault begins his analyses of power at the lowest level to understand how mechanisms of power have been able to function. Power function at

various levels - even family needs to be seen as an extension of power of State. However, every power relation makes a reference to a political field, hence is political. Stresses on the need to bring new schema of politicisation.

Foucauldian analyses of modernity, indubitably, throws new insights into the functioning of the modern world. A look at his conclusions indicate his unhappiness with the agenda that modernity has thrown for the people in general. The whole ideological basis of modernity has been shaken by Foucault's research. Apart from a critique he has provided alternatives as well, as in the case of history writing or understanding the notions of disciplines and treatment of body as a 'thing' that can be manipulated whenever one wants. History writing initiated by the subaltern historian in India seems to be tremendously influence by his notion of genealogy and the need to have a plebian history rather than of the rulers. His notion of surveillance marks another breakthrough in the history of anti-modernity thinking because it has tried to explain how the hegemonic class keeps tab on the movements of society.

Despite these new additions to the thought process Foucault has not been able to suggest methods to transform the society. His alternatives at the level of ideas also do not indicate the role of various players in society, i.e., the class roles, and it will be erroneous to reject the notion of class because the nature of society reveals that the hierarchisation, whether on the basis of knowledge or power, derived from other sources, is ultimately related to class. The power that an intellectual of an elite Indian university possesses and the use to which he puts it shows his class interests. Opposition by certain academicians of humanities as an useless course in the era of globalisation and liberalisation (which itself means the expansion of

capitalist system) means that he/she aspires to establish a system wherein the critical faculties are ignored and not allowed to develop and only vulgar positivistic sciences and courses are established, meaning any opposition to the rapaciousness of capitalist system is calmed down. Moreover, the absence of any practical alternative to the crisis induces fears of an anarchic theory. Otherwise it has the possibility of reducing the whole criticism to being just another attempt of the ruling class/bourgeois theorists to put forward an apparently 'progressive/radical' alternative to misguide the discontent that accumulated in the capitalist society due to its inherent deficiencies. Instead, there is a need to look at modernity's positive potentials as reflected in the possibilities of protest it has provided.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> For further details see Callinicos, Alex; *Against Postmodernism – A Marxist Critique*; Cambridge; 1992

CONCLUSIONLOOKING BEYOND THE CRITIQUES: AN  
AGENDA OF LIBERATION

It cannot be denied that “the tension between universality and difference has come to the fore once again as perhaps the central issue informing contemporary debate in social and cultural theory...”<sup>1</sup> There is a need to deal with the agenda of modernity and take a look at the debates that have earlier taken place. However, many contemporary sociologists feel that the agenda raised by the anti-modernity thinkers was dealt with sufficiently. The modern social science “tacitly assumed” that the human beings lived in one social world at a time. The modern social science has paved way for a notion of “bounded and internally integrated societies”<sup>2</sup> and considered exchanges between cultures as problematic. “Monolinguality and religious orthodoxy have been taken as normal, and multilinguality and religious syncretism or variation as deviant cases to be explained.”<sup>3</sup> However, the horizon of human experience cannot be fixed within a single framework.

The developments that were taking place in the European world were affecting the sociological studies as well. The “classical thinkers” had analysed the world in a ‘very linear fashion’. Durkheimian preoccupation with ‘collectivity’ wanted a universalised social order where even if the agenda of rationality was insufficiently dealt the elements of difference, homogeneity, order and indifference towards

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<sup>1</sup> Calhoun, Craig; *Critical Social Theory – Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference*; Blackwell Publishers; 1995; Cambridge and Oxford; p. xii

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p.xv

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

variety showed his absorption within the positivist line of thought, if not completely, then partially. Weber on the other hand through his rationalisation and bureaucracy theories reflected his inclination towards the principles of 'rationality', though his work 'Science as a Vocation' puts us in some confusion.<sup>4</sup> However, during the inter-war years (i.e., between the First and Second World War) the classical sociology of liberal tradition was crumbling. "In the larger crisis of the liberal utopia, both the intelligibility of society by the classical sociological means and the manageability of social order by drawing conclusions from such means were increasingly doubted...In Europe sociological discourse fell to pieces."<sup>5</sup> Two distinct trends emerged, out of which one emphasised on a theory of action, which "underpinned the idea of a strong man and his will and power to rejuvenate the nation."<sup>6</sup> The other trend represented the empirical social research, "to acquire strategically useful knowledge about the state of the population."<sup>7</sup>

Parsons tried to consolidate the position of sociology. Modernity again became organised, and as a more coherent system. The 'grand theory' of Parsons trying to resolve the contradictions of the system aimed at this very thing. "Nation, class, and state were the main conceptual ingredients"<sup>8</sup> to this whole exercise of consolidation, which tried to build collective identities and set up boundaries. But within thirty or so years modernity faced yet another crisis. If conventionalisation of social practices and norms is taken as a feature of 'organised modernity' new changes started threatening it. "Flexibility and pluralisation" and "disorganisation, instability, or fragmentation" came to prevail. Decline of nation-states and disorganisation of capitalism was witnessed. Sociologists started questioning the ordered society "that

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<sup>4</sup> For further details see Weber, Max; 'Science as a Vocation'; in Lassman, Peter and Velody, Irving (ed.); Max Weber's Science as a Vocation; Unwin Hyman; London; 1989

<sup>5</sup> Wagner, Peter, Crisis of Modernity: Political Sociology in Historical Contexts; in Turner, Stephen P. (ed.); Social Theory and Sociology: The Classics and Beyond; Blackwell Publishers; 1996; p.103

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p.107

had dominated the discipline.”<sup>9</sup> The questioning began. However, it will be relevant to note that not only the disorganised status of capitalism, but a whole dream had also crumbled with the inability of the Russian brand of socialism to produce any alternative to the capitalist system. Emancipation was the desire; it was expected out of socialism but could not materialise, hence, a threadbare re-examination of the system, including all the elements and all the thoughts since Enlightenment began. Sociology was not able to address the questions of difference, popular movements, universalisation before this trend began<sup>10</sup>. It was a break and a significant one for the discipline as well as the society.

Anti-modernity thinkers argue that a general perception dominated the development of sociology as a discipline - that of looking at the developments in a linear fashion, discounting the difference and elements of variety. The issues that were raised by the discipline after the emergence of an anti-modernity trend was not dealt with before, for instance the issue of dissent, difference, mechanistic world order, determinism, universalism, homogeneity, space, domination through technology, repression of instincts and desires etc. Marcuse showed through his concept of false consciousness how, in this advanced capitalist society, the true consciousness is replaced by it thereby leaving no space for dissent. The technological domination weaves a web of illusion that makes everything look rational and then sanctions through its various mediums and instruments its validity. In this society the instinctual desires are repressed on the grounds that it is irrational and images of Promethean heroes are constructed as the symbol of society rather than Narcissus, who is outrightly rejected as a pervert form of personality because he expressed the instinctual desires. Similar treatment is meted out to the arts, which are the highest products of human consciousness joined with the deepest layers of unconscious by phantasy. It denotes the man’s desire to break away from repression, it speaks the

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> It has been on this basis that the feminists have critiqued sociology as a discipline, which never bothered to take up the issue of difference, therefore, of gender. The contribution to such hitherto ‘obscure’ fields has certainly increased after the evaluation and criticism of modernity began.



language of pleasure principle. It is due to this reason that the instruments of domination also attack it. The question of evolving a meaningful dissent, as basis of a healthy society, is absent as there are agreements to the processes in which a society indulges.

Similarly, the agenda of difference was never raised so prominently before thinkers like Foucault rejected the manner history is seen and interpreted – a linear fashion – and the world is sought to be developed into – into a zone without difference, where universal and totalising values reign supreme. This agenda came into focus when the feminists started defining and re-defining the agenda of gender in the post-modernism epoch. Dorothy Smith feels the need to use the women's perception to reconstitute sociological enquiry as 'a critique of socially organised practice of knowing'.<sup>11</sup>

The anti-modernity thinkers, especially the post-modernists critiqued the modern world and the theories they relate with it as mechanistic, especially Marxism, terming it as deterministic as well. Their criticism emanated from the fact that it treated the varieties of a social system throughout the world in terms of 'class'<sup>12</sup> and has a pre-determined role for various social actors<sup>13</sup> leaving no space for the specificities of the local situation. The other criticism in this context blamed Marx as laying more stress on the 'base' than the 'superstructure' thereby making him a 'economic determinist' who ignored the significance of cultural factors.<sup>14</sup> Later on,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Dorothy Smith as quoted in p. xix from 'Conceptual Practices', p.13 On the issue of how postmodern thought affected the women's studies see Walby, Sylvia; *Post-postmodernism?: Theorizing Gender – in The Polity Reader in Social Theory*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1994 And Wolff, Janet; *Feminism and Modernity – in The Polity Reader in Social Theory*; Polity Press; Cambridge; 1994

<sup>12</sup> The term 'class' had been critiqued by Foucault as well as Gandhi, but for different reasons. Gandhi hated it because to him it perpetrates violence in a society, while for Foucault a class meant assigning the same character to every society. His opposition was also with the principles of historical materialism, which, he thought, was also an effort to write a history of Western rationalism and scientism.

<sup>13</sup> However, it would be erroneous to brand him as such. Engels in the Preface of Manifesto of Communist Party (Pearl Publishers; Calcutta; 1984, p.29) wrote: "The practical application of the principles will depend, as the Manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, *on the historical conditions for the time being existing* (stress mine), and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II."

<sup>14</sup> Engels wrote a letter to J. Bloch on September 21(-22), 1890 explaining this relationship between base and superstructure: "...According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately

the critiques of modernity elaborately discussed the use of technological advancement, and more importantly its uses, for perpetuating the domination of the existing order. It is used to create authority, universalise so that uniformity could be effected which in turn would facilitate the domination of a capitalist world order.

The three thinkers that have been discussed above have very scathingly, in their own way, critiqued the development that we have been asked, in a subtle fashion, to term as 'modernity' – all that has happened since Enlightenment. But is it really justified – to treat a variety under one head, as one category? Perhaps, it would go against the very idea of the anti-modernity trend – the issue of difference and variety. The three thinkers as discussed above represent the three different critiques of modernity, largely because they experienced modernity in a different fashion, depending on the spatio-temporal milieu where they lived. Gandhi presented a religio-spiritual critique because he was caught in a peculiar situation, which none of other anti-modernity thinkers experienced – a colonial trauma and an underdeveloped society. However, despite being placed in such a situation his criticism of modernity traversed all those concepts that were taken as points of departure by other anti-modernity thinkers. Marcuse, born in Germany, experienced a situation created by the advanced capitalism and came in contact with the socialist ideas in a much closer sense, therefore his thought being gravitating around those ideas. His was a dream that turned foul and resulted in a critique of the system that fomented such a crisis. Foucault, a product of French cosmopolitan culture, was trying to dig up the

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determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The superstructure – political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, further development into systems of dogmas – also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form.” (Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick; Selected Works, Vol.3; Progress Publishers; Moscow; 1977; p.487)

archaeology of human sciences and sources of knowledge, power and hegemony in order to know and unravel the mysteries of rationality. In the cases of these European thinkers their criticism emanated from their Western experience, a developed society, whereas Gandhi, people would argue does not fit in this group because of his background of a colonised citizen.

Very significantly, a close observation of these thinkers reveal that they were opposing the different forms of capitalism, or more precisely the functioning of capitalism, when they claimed to critique 'civilisation' or 'repression' as a way of domination, and 'technology' as an overpowering agent of capitalist state. Gandhi was fighting, to a certain extent, the traditionalists, the conservative *brahmanical* order as well as the western civilisation but trying to keep the Indian morals and values intact. His fight against western imposition of its own instrumentalities, as education, books, law, medicine or technology was not only guided against the British State but also its representatives like Nehru and Tagore.<sup>15</sup> He had a vision of India after Independence, where the traditional form of knowledge and way of life was to be revived because its existence itself was a proof of its rationality and looking at the condition of India – the unemployed, underemployed, poor and hungry Indians - he by and large discarded the use of machinery.

Marcuse was presenting an analysis of the capitalist system where he believed that the hegemony within the system is created with the help of technological rationality. It is a techno-rational society, where the one-dimensional human being is 'constructed'. Very interestingly, we find tremendous similarities with what Marcuse is talking of the contemporary society and the India of today. The hegemonic forces, who control technology, use various means to create a culture and

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<sup>15</sup> The conflict was subtle and low profile but very intense.

ideology which, thereafter, does not need them to toil much for perpetuating that hegemony but the oppressed people themselves act as their own oppressors. They develop aspirations, which does not allow them to think about their bondage, because they are made to think that they are 'free' and 'liberated' beings. Even a salesman (called by alluring job titles) in this liberalised India dreams of buying a costly and luxury brand of cars because Narayan Murthy and McDonalds, *Outlook* has showed them, are people believing in egalitarian social order and they give their own workers a share in their companies. Hence, one can sit in the same Management Committees meeting where the owner sits, and 'take decisions' about the future of the company. The dreams and illusions are being nurtured in this contradictory modern world. But nobody looks at this contradiction. If anybody questions why Shahrukh Khan's role in the advertisement of the Santro car is not taken as an example of deviance in legal terms because it affects people as they try to imbibe him, he is declared an 'abnormal', an or 'out of the world' person. Liberation as defined through permission to wear 'whatever' and do 'whatever'<sup>16</sup> is not being analysed.

The critical faculty has been suppressed. The interrogation mark of 'why' is conspicuously getting absent from the normal interaction process. Leave aside the 'general' masses the academicians prefer to do the same things – they work on predefined roles. Hence, in an interview of sociology definitions are asked rather than the ability or orientation to understand the subject. Marcuse would argue that these have been very cleverly cultivated by the instrumental reason, the technology driven world. Technology is also used in instinctual repression. The happiness of a

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<sup>16</sup> This 'whatever' is, in fact, not the liberation because a person cannot do whatever he wants to do. There are rules for everything, roles are pre-defined. If one cannot speak English, he will not be taken for a job or if one does not want to wear a suit for interview he cannot get through etc.

human being is defined by the techno-rational worldview. The pleasure principle is suppressed by the reality principle and *phantasies* are reduced to being perversions. These are done because they are taken to be hostile to reason and can breed anarchy. Hence, for order and reason they must be repressed.

Foucault on the other hand developed certain tools of analysis that showed the functioning of the modernist world. His books like *Discipline and Punish, Madness and Civilisation* (discussed here) and the essays on *power/ knowledge* relationship (also discussed here) have shown how in the modern world there has been an effort to control the body, implement structures and ideas, establish generality, and how knowledge<sup>17</sup> has been used as a source of power. He demonstrated powerfully how a sense of nothingness, i.e., an arena of negativity, where everything, which is nothing, is expressed through signs and gestures. Gradually science was incorporated in the world of madmen as an instrument of treatment, which meant institution of an effective instrument of control in asylum. Mad became the irrational minor and reason the responsible, rational father. He furthermore goes on to show how power and knowledge share a dialectical relationship and help each other to function. He stressed on the need to eliminate the totalising and universalising tendencies that does not provide an identity (collective or individual) sufficient space to function.

It would be erroneous to take the three thinkers together and deal with them as representing one ideology, as the post-modernists have generally done – combining Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Parsons... together and critiquing them as one. This in

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<sup>17</sup> Within this ambit of knowledge Foucault included all the elements used as components of a scientific rational world. Therefore, the use of science as an authority and creation of symbols and spaces of authority, through their projection as 'proves correct' or impeccable categories, has also been critiques by him.

fact, is a rebuttal of the post-modernist theory of providing space to everybody and considering the element of differences. Gandhi tried to look at the development process in a different fashion, wherein he wanted the reinstatement of the traditional form of society, with slight changes – for example with singer sewing machine. However, it will be relevant to add that the Gandhian thought never reflected upon a systemic position, which remains the major drawback. His criticism of the western modernity for an altogether different reason as Foucault or Marcuse, who were critiquing other and most advanced forms of technological dilemmas, never took into consideration the necessity to develop a system with clear cut definitions of mode of production. He was living in a global capitalist order, which meant that the viability of his alternatives should have been gauged within that limit. When capitalism is a global power, it is impossible to create isolated islands with *ramrajyas*.

On the other hand, the grounds on which Foucault was presenting his critique of the modern system were insufficient in the sense that he never identified the social actors or agencies of change. The decentralised Foucauldian world was perhaps trying to present an alternative within the system, meaning that the overarching systemic paradigm of the rule of private capital was to remain but the popular protests were to be provided space. However, this amounts to ‘no change’ because the system, which developed the principles of modernity, has very well liberated the people from bondage – the freedom to invest, in economic sense or cultural sense, has been provided. The freedom of nudity, to scale the limits of glory in a free market situation, where the apparent governing principle is absent has already been provided. But the underlying principles of power dynamics remain active – this ‘freedom’ is only apparent and obvious the subterranean logic is different. Hence,

Foucauldian theses came to be restricted to nothing more than an attempt of rule of capital to ease its own crisis through a façade of liberation, space and symbols.

Marcuse reaches more closer to the achievement of his agenda of liberation. He identifies his enemy – the capitalist world order and understands the way in which this system functions. It is also true that the working class today is not able to put up a strong resistance. But does that imply that it has lost its revolutionary potential because its aspirations are same as the owner of the means of production. The Defeat of Russian brand of socialism does not imply that Marxism as an idea is dead. It's one experiment/version has failed. It needs to be, perhaps, re-looked at with the new developments that has taken place in mind. Students or the classes in periphery cannot bring about revolutionary transformation in a society because they do not have a homogeneous class interest, which is necessary for an organisation. However, Marcusean elaboration of the functioning of the advanced capitalist system (or even 'developing' one like India) is extraordinarily illuminating but it lacks the definition of the role various segments of population play in the system as well as their future role.

Modernity was born along with capitalism. In fact, the reality has been that *the term 'modernity' refers to the history of capitalism from its birth to maturity, its functioning and the ideological and philosophical understanding that it evolved to sustain itself.* However, there has been debate about whether the Russian brand of socialism, which followed the principles of rationalisation, secularisation and bureaucratic rationalisation more strictly was also modernist, it would be relevant to remember Marcuse here who saw it at functioning and repressing the individuals in the same way as the counter-part. The point here is not that whether that 'socialism' represented a deviant form of Marxism or not but the matter of concern here is that

whatever be its character its contributions to fight the capitalist consumerist culture, which leads to subjugation of individuals is also under question mark. The various techniques and agenda put forward by modernity has been nothing but an effort by capitalism at different junctures of its development to resolve its contradictions. When economic crisis loomed large over it fascism emerged and when the expansion and growth of private capital continues unhindered the whole civilisation is in peace. Had the various ideas represented as anti-modernity been severely damaging to its existence capitalism would not have allowed them to develop. And it is no point arguing that the level of freedom and transparency and the strength of public opinion and protest has reached to such a level in this 'post-modern' (?) world that it is difficult to suppress voices.<sup>18</sup> Marcuse was correct when he said that this suppression does not take place necessarily through coercion but rather through consensus, hence no opposition. These thinkers ultimately proved harmless because they not only in identifying the role of social actors in the processes of transformation but also because they could not suggest the translation of their theory into practice. The ideological statement of both have been one, but quite surprisingly the critiques of modernity, especially those falling in the category of post-modernism have not been able to identify and deal with it in the same spirit of criticism, as an intrinsic part of capitalist ethics. Hence, critique of modernity implies a critique of capitalism. When capitalism has been in crisis emerged various brands of criticisms – some evolving a critique of capitalism, while some others trying to perpetuate the capitalist hegemony, knowingly or unknowingly, through offering masses yet another illusion.

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<sup>18</sup> It has been seen even in advanced capitalist nations like USA that any voice of dissension, if threatens the system, is suppressed and the era of McCarthyism or the treatment of 'suspected' radical/communist ideas have proven that capitalism allows only ideas to flourish which does not appear detrimental to its interests.



Liberation from absence of criticism, is one of the paramount needs of the current society, which is being otherwise transformed into a machine. The criticism of modernity is not necessarily a criticism of the all that happened but of the functioning of the capitalist system and a resolution to this crisis lies only in a systemic transformation and nothing else. The problem of modernity lies with the way the social system is characterised. There are contradictions in the society, but they are either subtle or even if they have reached to a point of explosion the lack of mass consciousness, because the capitalist/modernist processes are active at every level trying to subdue it, has stopped its conflagration.

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