CHAPTER - V

BEHIND THE SURFACES
The postmodern condition is one that is characterised by the collapse of the grand narratives based on reason. It shows the chaos that is the result of the emergence of a host of ideologies and theories. Discourses which are political, consumerist, ethical, economic, and professional exist together in the new intellectual climate. By their coexistence, the new systems of thought create an impression of pluralism and multiplicity. A careful examination will reveal that these systems are marked by contradictions and ambiguities.

The excess that has resulted because of this, has in turn deprived history of its relevance. Baudrillard has pointed out in "The illusion of the end:"

"[...] acceleration of modernity, of technology, events and media, of all exchanges -- economic, political and sexual -- has propelled us to 'escape velocity,' with the result that we have flown free of the referential sphere of the real and of history" (Jenkins, The Postmodern History Reader 39). There is no time for events to condense into history. The disappearance of history is also caused by the reverse process of deceleration. Here the slowing down is caused by the excess of inert matter in society. Baudrillard has analysed the nature of this excess:

This inert matter of the social is not produced by a lack of exchanges, information or communication, but by the multiplication and saturation of exchanges. It is the product of the hyperdensity of cities, commodities, messages and circuits. It is the cold star of the social and around that mass, history is also cooling. (Jenkins, The Postmodern 41)

The only model of history we have now is the simulated one which comes into being when news is broadcasted.
The wide gaps that separate the different epochs of history, have in turn fragmented it. In *Criticism and Culture. The Role of Critique in Modern Literary Theory*, Robert ConDavis and Ronald Schleifer have pointed out how history is now characterised by lack of continuity:

The sequence of history itself elaborates relationships that belong to what Foucault calls an 'episteme,' not a mode of thought that characterises an age (as in the 'old' historicism), but the discursive limits on what can be thought or 'discursivized' at any particular moment, so that history as a discipline necessarily traces ruptures rather than continuities and empty spaces of thought with and between epistemes[...].(212)

Historical experiences have now become hybrid. These experiences transcend the barriers erected by nations and the associated ideologies. Edward W. Said has analysed this aspect in *Culture and Imperialism*: "We need to see that the contemporary global setting -- overlapping territories, intertwined histories -- was already prefigured and inscribed in the coincidence and convergence among geography, culture, and history [...]")(56). At the same time, one cannot deny the negative aspects: "But the truth of contemporary historical existence is sterile and chaotic, and its elements--the social, the historical, the political, the sexual, the sociological, the psychological, the autobiographical--cannot cohere as a whole [...]") (Bradbury, *The Modern British Novel* 351-52). Hence it is only natural that philosophers tend to think about the end of history. They feel that western democracy is the end of the ideological evolution that has been going
The memories of Hiroshima and the Holocaust create the impression that history consists of a series of disasters. Since it is said that history repeats itself, they seem to point towards disasters that are yet to come. Such apocalyptic visions of history torment the human consciousness relentlessly.

Ideology has played its own role in shaping history and culture. The term ideology itself is something that needs a careful analysis. Ideology acquired its new meaning after the rise of Fascism and Nazism. Today it does not refer merely to a collection of political ideas. It should instead be seen as a political movement bringing about great changes in the realm of culture. Thus ideology is not an abstract entity, but something concrete that interacts with the historical situation. However it is contaminated, distorted and warped by forces which are personal, psychological, historical, and political.

Ideology has power associated with it and it exerts this power through what can be called the principle of panopticism. This is the exercise of power through the relation of the observer and the observed. This results in the creation of subjectivity in the observed. Power is mediated here in all its totality and it gets inscribed on the observed: "In many ways we live in a society in which the technologies of surveillance have achieved the Benthamite intention of a society disciplined according to panoptic principles" (Fox 32). These surveillance systems show the excessive use of power and ideology.

Althusser has pointed out in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses:"

"Remember that in Marxist theory, the State Apparatus (SA) contains: The Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons etc [...]] (Easthope and McGowan, A Critical and Cultural Theory
The state apparatus uses force and violence to achieve its ends. Associated with the one state apparatus, there are a number of ideological state apparatuses. Althusser has analysed the process through which ideology exerts its power on individuals:

I shall then suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all), by that very precise operation which I have called 'interpellation' or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!' (Easthope and McGowan, *A Critical 55*)

When the individual does not respond or does not obey, the repressive state apparatus takes some action against him. Under ideology, freedom becomes a problematic concept. It posits the individual as a free subject. But his freedom lies in the submission to the rules and demands of the state.

Marxism sees individuals as agents of production. Ideology deals with the imaginary relationship of individuals to their existence which involves them in production. The collectivity that forms part of the Marxist society is based on such an imaginary relationship. Marxism thus makes excessive use of ideological mystification. Žižek has analysed this process of mystification:

The very concept of ideology implies a kind of basic constitutive naivety: the misrecognition of its own presuppositions, of its own effective conditions, a distance, a divergence between so-called social reality and our distorted representation, our false consciousness of it (Žižek, *Mapping Ideology* 312).
The human consciousness pervaded by ideology gets a distorted picture of the reality that underlies society. People who follow ideology, are actually following only an illusion or more precisely a fetish. This fetish functions as an excess within the Marxist society.

The forces of liberalism and radicalism that are transforming social and cultural values, dominate the political scenario of HM. This phase of history as such has provided the people with a sense of urgency. The students demonstrating in Paris in May, is an instance of this restlessness. When they all "looked back to history, it was generally not to some steadily evolving cultural continuity, but to shards and fragments which often stood in some strange, dislocated 'archaeological' relationship to the present" (Bradbury, The Modern British Novel 409).

Sociologists propagating Radicalism, like Howard, reflect the spirit of the day. Howard is interested in the sociology of social tensions that have arisen as a result of the great historical changes that have taken place. He is one who certainly experiences the pressure of history. Howard's aim is to study an environment where there is class struggle, racism, and alienation. Hence he undertakes a rehabilitation study of the area in which he lives. This, in turn, is an attempt to make democracy more real and practical. He tries to raise social awareness about the hippies by writing about them. Howard is also associated with a free school for unprivileged children and a rescue campaign called people in trouble. Howard's radicalism is supposed to be his tool for attacking the culture of excess that has come into prevalence as a result of capitalist strategies. Howard regards capitalism as something that has overloaded itself: "We are in a world of late capitalism, and capitalism is an over-ripe plum, ready to fall. It is cracking,
bursting from its inner contradictions [...]" (HM 68). As a result "the consumer culture of the passive nihilist does a reversal and in a catastrophic implosion flips into its opposite number -- the suicidal nihilism of excremental culture" (Kroker and Cook 10). Howard has only a vague idea as to what would be the aftermath of this. At the same time, Howard has no doubt about the need for an armed struggle and for shedding blood. There is the hope that a new reality will come at the end of the bloodshed. Howard's socio-cultural point of view is revealed in all his hopes and aspirations.

He claims to have transcended bourgeois individualism. Hence he regards his self as the product of an interaction that is social, cultural, and economic. On the other hand, the bourgeois self exists in a state of emptiness: Neither fully mediated nor entirely localized, the self is an empty sign: colonised from within by technologies for the body immune, seduced from without by all of the fashion tattoos; and energized by a novel psychological condition -- the schizoid state of postmodern selves who are (simultaneously) predators and parasites (Kroker and Cook VII).

The self is ultimately a product of history, subject to all the changes associated with it. Lodge has analysed Howard's concept of the self: "Howard Kirk believes that the self is an outmoded bourgeois concept, that individual human beings are mere bundles of conditioned reflexes; and that the only way to be free is to identify the plot of History (with the aid of Marxist sociology) and co-operate with it" (The Art of Fiction 118). Howard points out that one can define a person in a socio-psychological context. "A particular type of relationship to the temporal and historical process, culturally conditioned and afforded; that's what human nature is. A particular performance within the available role-sets.
But with the capacity to innovate through manipulating options among the role sets" (IM 33). Though Howard is of the opinion that one should be a part of the flow of history, he strongly protests against the present historical situation which shows the dominating presence of industrialism, the fetish of the commodity, and the repression of the worker. The excesses of capitalism have created problems like, poverty, inequality, repression, imperialism, sexism, and racism. James Acheson has analysed Howard's views on consumption in "The Small Worlds of Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge:" "The explanations Howard offers for public consumption are based partly on Marx's belief that historical events are determined by the struggle of opposing social classes, and partly on Freud's that individual behaviour is determined by various psychological drives" (Acheson, The British and Irish Novel Since 1960 81).

In fact, Howard and Barbara had not been born radicals. A slow process of evolution related to the cultural and historical changes, made them so. Their childhood was spent in conservative backgrounds dominated by vestigial Christianity and puritanism. Obedience and conformity were the qualities they were expected to have. They were also entangled in the class-distinctions of their society. The ethical standards enforced on them promoted self-denial. They were not expected to aim for social and material success. These standards limited and oppressed their selves. Their lack of freedom placed restrictions upon their relationship with the larger historical process. The Kirks held onto these values during the early days of their married life. But they could not remain like that for long:

For the Kirks moved through a world in which their pallid acceptance was becoming absurd, where self-suppressive achievement was being seen for what it was, weak conformity,
psychic suicide. Historical circumstances were changing, the whole world was in transformation, undergoing a revolution of rising expectation, asserting more, demanding more, liberating itself. (IM 24)

Soon it becomes evident to the Kirks that they also had to change. The constraints were weakening and liberation was at hand. They had to partake of the historical situation which had witnessed an explosion in the consciousness of mankind. However it was the sexual revolution that really changed the lifestyle of the Kirks. Barbara had an affair with Howard's student Hamid, and this led to the dissolution of the traditional values in their life. At first Howard felt anger, but his awareness of the forces influencing his personal life helped him to control himself:

He had known it all the time, now he realized it. For some time he had been feeling obscurely touched by and dispossessed by the way in which, in the onward transactions of the historical process, some new human rhythm, a new mode of consciousness, seemed to be emerging. (IM 26)

Thus the Kirks realised that it was true to liberate themselves, to move along with history. They decided to accept the politics of growth and thus get rid of their old selves. Thus the Kirks underwent a great change which can be analysed as an elaborate dialectic of self-statement. Though radical, this change has the bourgeois element deep within it. The inspiration given by the change made Howard, by then armed with demography and social psychology, move towards the centre of culture growing around him. It was a culture on which leftist ideology was laying claims: "The New Left itself was looking to popular, mass, and youth culture as a force for radical change--'the imaginative resistance of the people who lived within capitalism,' as Stuart Hall
put it in the first issue of the *New Left Review*, in 1960 *(Bradbury, The Modern British Novel 342-43). Howard also started selling *Red Mole* in the city centre. The ideas of Marx and Freud thus began to influence the Kirks. In other words, their ideology and their sexuality underwent a great change. Finally the Kirks became "a couple moving buoyantly self-realizingly, through the exploding consciousness of man in history, perhaps even complicating and improving it" *(HM 31).*

The campus of the University of Watermouth where Howard works, is a hotbed of revolutionary causes. Bradbury's portrayal of the campus is based on his own experiences: "My third academic novel is set in a British new University, the kind that I was teaching at that time. It is about the student radicalism of the 1960s and a teacher who wants to capitalise on this for his interest. It was a kind of 1970s response to the 1960s" *(Mohanty interviews Bradbury in The Hindu Magazine Literary Review 5 March 2000 IX).* Students, who belong to this university, are inspired by the radicalism that is changing the world. The demonstration by the students at Paris in May has its repercussions in the campus. The Maoist and Marxist groups, are very strong here. The members of the Revolutionary Students Front go so far as to ask the Vice-Chancellor to declare the University a free state. They want their institution to be one that resists capitalism. They are even prepared to indulge in violence to show their protest. The faculty of the college, itself is a divided lot as far as politics is concerned: "[...] there were posters in the windows that said 'Smash the system,' 'Reality does not exist yet,' 'Power to the people'" *(HM 49).*

The classes are held in an atmosphere that shows the domination of politics and ideology. They are conducted in the form of therapy. The teachers probe into the psychic recesses of the students to decipher their
ideological complexions. This often results in the exposure of the elements of bourgeois materialism or racism that lie hidden within them. Howard clashes with his student Carmody on the basis of ideological difference. Since Howard believes in changing along with history, he considers Carmody a historical offence. Howard considers Carmody's paper as an irrelevant one containing a hollow ideology. Howard brands it a product of the pretensions that form the substance of a false consciousness. According to him, Carmody has written the paper not out of any ideological conviction but out of the tendency to serve himself. He points out to Carmody the defects in his paper: "It's an arty-farty construct that isn't sociology, because it happens to exclude everything that makes up the real face of society by which I mean poverty, racialism, inequality, sexism, imperialism, and repression, the things I expect you to consider and account for" (HM 137). Carmody's paper certainly rejects change. In fact, he wants to protect society from change. Thus the society portrayed in it is one that lacks momentum and conflict. Michael, a student who believes in Marxist ideology, criticises the paper for the bourgeois self-justification that it contains. Carmody tries to resist the Marxist criticism with his view that gives importance to culture as a value.

The prospect of the arrival of the geneticist Mangel at the University generates ideological debate. Many denounce him as a racist, just because he studies the genetics of race. This in turn leads to a debate about the nature of a sociology itself. Some argue that sociology has no connection with the concept of biology. Dr. Zachery comes out in the defence of Mangel. First of all, he points out the difference between race and class. As far as Mangel is concerned, he shares a common history with him. Both of them are Jewish and both grew up in Nazi Germany. The present allegation that Mangel is a fascist is foolish,
since he fled Germany, to free himself from the clutches of fascism. Dr. Zachery defines fascism using his own point of view: "Fascism is therefore an elegant sociological construct, a one-system world. Its opposite is contingency or pluralism or liberalism that means a chaos of opinion and ideology. There are people who find that hard to endure" (HM 158). Dr. Zachery's definition makes it clear that the excessive radicalism preached and practised by Howard and his followers is something akin to fascism. Dr. Zachery's definition is authentic since he is one of those who have experienced the use of power to defeat human beings along with their culture and language. He also analyses the reasons underlying fascism, and the circumstances that gave birth to it:

Fascism, and the associated genocide, arose because a climate developed in Germany in which it was held that all intellectual activity conform with an accepted, approved ideology. To make this happen, it was necessary to make a climate in which it became virtually impossible to think, or exist outside the dominant ideological construct. (HM 158)

Those who oppose Mangel under the pretext of supporting pluralism and liberalism, are actually creating an intellectual climate congenial for fascism.

The history of the University is in a way the history of modern times. The stages in its development correspond to the arrival of the bourgeois era, the industrial revolution, and the birth of the factory and the crowd: "The fading of the old rural order and the rise of the new urban masses, the march of 'progress' and 'reform,' the surge of new technologies and communications, were altering, shrinking and cosmopolitanising the world" (Bradbury, The Modern British Novel 7). But all these gigantic developments have eroded humanistic values. Hence the students frequently ask: "What is man any more?" (HM 64).
Human relationships have now become limited to the momentary contacts that happen during the fast life inside the campus. Hence many students experience serious psychological problems. Some lose their mental health and stability. Others survive by becoming political activists of one revolutionary group or other. Excessive introversion and extroversion are just the reactions of the youth to the excesses of the historical period in which they exist. The process of dehumanisation is clearly evident in the newly established computing centre in the university which issues identity cards to each person. The working of bureaucracy is made effective through this system that identifies humanity with the help of numbers. Because of all these the students hate the university as well as the world. They express their feelings in their own ways: "The graffiti experts have been at work, inscribing 'Stop Police Brutality' and 'IRA' and 'Spengler Bootboys' on concrete and steel [...]" (HM 66). The psychic strain in many cases drive the students towards the ultimate option of suicide. Some take refuge in the organisations that represent modern spirituality like the multi-denomination chapels. For instance, there is the contemplation centre where rabbis, gurus, ethical realists, and macrobiotic organicists come together.

Richard Hofstadter gives a picture of the excesses of ideology in a small socialist country, Slaka. Some of the events that constitute the history of the twentieth-century has given the term 'ideology' new meanings. Clifford Geertz has analysed this aspect in *The Interpretation of Cultures*:

A concept that once meant but a collection of political proposals, perhaps somewhat intellectualistic and impractical but at any rate idealistic [...] has now become to quote Webster's, 'the integrated assertions, theories, and aims constituting a politico-social program, often with an implication of factitious propagandizing;' as Fascism was altered in Germany to fit the Nazi ideology -- a much more formidable proposition. (193)
Slaka is a country that shows the triumphs of proletarian endeavour and the achievements of socialist planning. Collectivism is preached and practised in all fields there. The country has witnessed many socialist miracles like agro-organisation, pre-fabrication, and pre-planning. The people of Slaka, identify progress with the statistics of production. In fact, the state regards the workers as machines whose only motivation is production:

Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* state that the forces bringing about social change -- and we might add, bringing society into existence and keeping it going -- are 'real active men as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of their intercourse corresponding to these.' (Lindsay 11)

Petworth experiences the contrast between the political set-up of England and that of Slaka. Petworth has been sent by the British Council, a cultural organisation, with the political backing of the capitalist world. It is another capitalist strategy to send emissaries to countries having a different ideology. Petworth belongs to an England which shows the presence of recession, unemployment, decay, and above all Sado-Monetarism. It is a country whose political scenario shows extremities of all sorts like bomb explosions, Ulster, a Royal wedding, and the collapse of the coin. Economic powers are undergoing a fierce competition in the capitalist world. Money power dominates every field. Capitalism has reduced even the English language to a commodity. This commodity is now being used as a strategy in its relationship with the socialist world. It also helps in dealing with the recession that has hit the capitalist world. Petworth visits Slaka as a part of a cultural exchange agreement motivated by political interests. The British Council arranges Petworth's visit and the lady
who works there explains the nature of the politics behind his visit: "'You know how these things work. They flow when it thaws and block up when it freezes, just like the lav down the corridor" (RE 50).

Factors like problems in Afghanistan, the collapse of SALT, and so on might bring about a great change in the relationship between the capitalist world and the socialist world. Thus Petworth's cultural tour is something that takes place in a world of "frontiers and fences, Comecons and Common Markets, tariff walls and spheres of influence, politics and ideologies, language barriers and vowelshifts. There are spies and searches, arrests and imprisonments, iron curtains and Berlin walls, Alps and buttermountains, oil and SALT" (RE 28).

Petworth experiences the excessive power of ideology while in Slaka. Acheson has probed into this aspect:

Slaka is a communist country in which the dictatorship of the proletariat has been fully realised: the usual freedoms enjoyed by the Citizens of Western nations -- freedom of expression, movement and religious belief -- are severely limited by a ruthless secret police. [...] Moreover, history and reality are shaped by those in power. (Acheson, The British 82)

The surveillance system is the agency through which the state exerts its power. The state security police, "HOGPo" (RE 34) are present everywhere. They monitor all activities especially of the foreign visitors. They take special interest in the sexual activities of the visitors. Any sign of sexual indiscretion or perversion can be used to trap them. Sometimes the agencies of the state themselves offer temptations to trap the visitors. Military men are present everywhere in Slaka. Their presence makes it clear that the state is totally under surveillance. Petworth is interrogated and his documents thoroughly examined as soon as he lands at the airport.
Technology makes the process of surveillance very efficient. The rooms of hotels which are likely to be frequented by foreign visitors are filled with bugs, multi-directional microphones, mirrors and so on. We see here a mechanism similar to Jeremy Bentham's 'Panopticon.' Foucault has analysed this in *Discipline and Punish*:

[...] the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use. (205)

The person who stays in these rooms, is observed from all angles and this results in "the creation of a subjectivity in the observed as 'prisoner,' 'patient' or whatever" (Fox 28). There are hidden devices which take photographs and record conversations. Such devices tend to act in a dehumanising way: "[...] and on, doubtless, the tapes and the film, the screens and the consoles, that whirl and flicker in some technologized office nearby, where the HOGPo men sit, reducing Petworth, that virtuous subject, into sign or object, transient image" (*NF* 178).

The information thus got is filed, stored, rearranged, and produced at the politically appropriate moment. Here ideology combines with technology to carry out the motivations of power. Foucault has analysed this process:

Our society is one [...] of surveillance; under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge; the play of signs defines the anchorages of
power; it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies. (217)

Such spying and bugging affects the human psyche adversely. Budgie is one who has been victimised by the surveillance system. She makes clear to Petworth the extent of bugging in Slaka: "You've been warned that walls have ears, windows have eyes, that the maid flashes signals to the security police with her stockings?" (RE 158). Budgie has become tired of a life which is an endless routine of being spied upon and being photographed. Life becomes a prison in such circumstances. Wherever she goes, there will be somebody following her. She does not have enough privacy even to make love. Music has to be played loudly to escape the hidden ears listening. It is also difficult to quarrel because the agencies of surveillance are looking for signs of marital discord. The acquaintances and friends of the Steadimans are also subjected to intense observation. The fear that they would be photographed, prevent many from attending the party held by Budgie and Steadiman. Such photographs will be filed for later use. Travelling is very difficult in Slaka because there are many forbidden areas where one is always checked. One has to report at the central points on every route out of the city. Once the militia caught hold of Budgie and Steadiman just for driving into a forbidden area. They held them in their custody for two days. Their explanation was that Budgie and Steadiman had seen things that they should not have seen.

Dissident writers like Princip are also kept under close observation. Information that will help to implicate her is collected in this manner. Princip discusses with Petworth the psychological implications of surveillance: "It is a state of mind you know, to be watched. We like, don't we, to see our lives
from the inside. But, if you are watched, you see them from the eyes of those others. You can’t remember any more if you have really an inside, or if the inside is already the outside’ " (RE 210-11). Panopticism reduces the human being who is observed into an object: "He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault 200). Continuous exposure to this process leads to fragmentation and alienation of the psyche. Princip feels that her self has been taken away from her. The self that is spied upon loses all value and becomes a meaningless sign. Ideology even makes one doubt whether one’s self is really one’s own. Thus the state acquires complete control over the self:

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary [. . .] in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. (Foucault 201)

Princip’s words reflect the terror of this condition:”’ You begin to agree it, because it fits, because it has your images, your voice in a tape. You begin to confess it, yes, I am like that, how well you know me. And they are right, because in all of us is a doubt that we do not know ourselves at all’ " (RE 211). Ideology here works upon a person’s existential angst. The oppressive strategies of ideology make one feel that even to exist is a crime.
Several characters in the novel function as mouthpieces of ideology. There is Lubijova whose speech has the overtones of the classic Marxist discourse. She talks about the miracles of socialist production. "The productions of our agro-industries rise thirty times since socialism. Per capita floor space is ten square metres" (RE 124). Jameson has analysed this aspect: "There is certainly a Marxist practice of politics, but political thinking in Marxism when it is not practical in that way, has exclusively to do with the economic organization of society and how people co-operate to organise production" (Žižek, Mapping Ideology 283). Lubijova takes pride in the fact that all institutions of arts and science are under state control. She also speaks highly of the state sponsored writer's union.

Tankic also speaks with ideological fervour. He refers to the cultural achievements that all the people of Slaka can be proud of. He praises the state vineyards which are very advanced. He speaks about religion in a derogatory manner. In fact, he has converted monasteries into vineyards. He identifies monks with wine bottles and points out that there will be no more monks under socialism. Meanwhile Plitplov praises the Slakan people's love for work. He sees this as an outcome of the socialist attitude towards life. They are so much interested in their work that they often ask the managers permission to work more. He believes that one day the capitalist economy will transform itself into a socialist one.

Throughout the novel, capitalism is severely criticised by many characters. Lubijova points out the capitalist society is facing serious problems as far as its economy is concerned. The very fact that there are strikes in Britain proves this. She looks upon Petworth as a representative of the capitalist world and hence she says: "You are bourgeois reactionary without a correct sense of reality" (RE 273-74). Tankic asks questions about the relationship
between England and Ireland so as to create the impression that there is political instability in capitalist countries. Professor Rum is more concerned about the presence of beggars in London. He echoes the belief of the people in socialist countries that capitalism collapsed under Thatcher. He also says that the press of the capitalist world tries to deceive the people by hiding the defects of the system. According to him, the collapse of capitalism is inevitable in terms of the evolution of history. In order to point out that Petworth's ideas are wrong, Rum brands him a bourgeois relativist. Plitplov also refers to the impending collapse of capitalism. According to him, it is a system with inherent defects. Capitalism has caused the fragmentation of culture:

[. . .] the breakdown of the inclusive totality in cultural expressions, in a capitalism which had lost its driving force, revealed what the class-world was doing to people with its increasing fragmentation and alienation[. . .] with even sharper limitation of perspective and lack of interest in the wholeness of experience[. . .] and so on. (Lindsay 42)

Professor Vlic is quite broad-minded in his criticism of monetarism: "'I think now money is not making any sense anyone. All our economies are wrong, capitalist and socialist'" (RE 266). The postmodern world is pervaded by the nihilism created by monetarism: "Money is caught in the grand cancellation of the sign of political economy. It finds itself homeless and constantly put to flight" (Kroker and Cook IV).

Inspite of the excessive power exerted by the state, the political set-up in Slaka shows signs of instability. While Petworth is in Slaka he gets hints that a linguistic revolution is about to happen there. This revolution points towards the prospects of a political upheaval in Slaka. The people of Slaka differ in their attitude towards this revolution. Princip supports it, whereas
Talkic is against it. The party feels that the people are trying to take advantage of its liberal attitude. Meanwhile the newspapers are creating the impression that there will be no reform. According to them, those who ask for reform will only get prison. The question of linguistic revolution comes up because of the problem caused due to the existence of many languages in Slaka. This diversity appears as a threat to the unity enforced by ideology. The opinion of the state is that such reformist movements should be suppressed. As Althusser points out, such reformers form "the 'bad' subjects who on occasion provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (repressive) state apparatus" (Easthope and McGowan, *A Critical 56*). Hence there is the possibility that the entire event will turn out to be a farce with the state using its power to crush the liberals and dissidents. Thus change becomes just an illusion in a socialist country. The rule of ideology as Žižek points out "is secured not by its truth value but by simple extra-ideological violence and promise of gain" (Žižek, *Mapping Ideology* 313). Hence Petworth’s concept of a new form of language emerging in the world, faces severe criticism in Slaka. The so-called intellectuals and academicians who blindly believe in ideology refuse to accept a concept of a language that breaks all conventions.

*DEC* focuses on a world whose political climate is characterised by turbulence and uncertainty. The great changes brought about by the process of evolution of history are reflected in every nation. They make it clear that history is characterised by ruptures. One major historical event is the coming down of the Berlin Wall. This in a way symbolises the collapse of ideology. The bricks of the wall have now become mere pieces of historical interest to be sold at the market place. Bradbury has made a close analysis of this political situation.
The world after the wall has come to seem a much more varied and a much more confusing place. It opened the international marketplace to new energies [...]. Further fundamentalisms and tribalisms have asserted themselves, even as, at the same time, the cities of the world became even more polyglot and pluri-cultural and the intersections of cultures rapidly increased. (Bradbury, *The Atlas of Literature* 324)

Bradbury has elaborated more on the subject in his introduction to *New Writing*:

We too live in a time when the systems and ideologies a whole century has constructed are beginning to come apart, when two of the dominant ideologies -- Marxism and liberal capitalism -- are themselves showing in their different ways, signs of crisis, when old systems are weakening and new ones are only just beginning to take shape. (Bradbury and Cooke, *New Writing* 7-8)

Bradbury gives a panoramic view of this historical situation in *DC*. He refers to the condition in the Soviet Union after the introduction of glasnost and perestroika by Mikhail Gorbachev. Meanwhile in Eastern Europe, ideology and those who used ideology to repress the people are losing their prestige and power. Many newly formed republics are asserting their identity. In America, Ronald Reagan's presidency has ended and George Bush has taken over. In Britain, Thatcherism dominates the realms of politics and economics. In Brussels, the concept of a new Europe is slowly becoming real. There are conflicts in Yugoslavia and the Baltics, whereas Kuwait is facing the invasion of Saddam Hussein. Ethnic and tribal tensions are there in other parts of the world. However the cold war has come to a close.
These political events have certainly played a role in the evolution of postmodern culture: "For the study of human culture addresses to itself to the question of how these world-historical issues shape up in lived experience, how they pass through the defiles of the signifier to emerge as symbolic meaning [. . .]" (Regan, *The Eagleton Reader* 155). History can be considered to be "the succession of cultural epistemes, or dominant discourses, separated from each other by the deepest fissures and discontinuities" (ConDavis and Schleifer 206). Historians now predict that history itself is coming to an end. Niall Lucy has discussed this matter in *Postmodern Literary Theory: An Introduction*:

In a word, 'the death of history' does not refer to the death of *history* but rather to the 'death' of 'history' as a sign. For signs to have any referential value they must exist under certain historical conditions, according to Baudrillard: conditions that, for him, no longer hold. In the absence of those conditions—in the absence of history—there can no longer be any signs, only simulacra. (42)

The novel traces historical events that occurred as far back as 1889. The year 1889 is important, for, it was in this year that certain literary works that marked the beginning of modern thought, came out. Twenty-five years after, the Archduke was shot at Sarajevo. This resulted in the fall of the Habsburg empire. But beyond that, it was the event that triggered off the First World War. This catastrophic event changed the very map of Europe. Twenty-five years later, Hitler emerged with his totalitarian philosophy and the Second World War erupted. This war unleashed the horrors of the Holocaust and Hiroshima. The Holocaust showed how efficiently genocide could be perpetuated. Hiroshima revealed the full extent of the destructive
powers of the atom bomb. All these events led to the formulation of a very pessimistic view of history: "The sense of recent history as a sequence of past disasters pointing to some future coming catastrophe [. . .] intensified [. . .]" (Bradbury, The Modern British Novel 410). Twenty-five years after, the world experienced the intensity of the cold war. Still twenty-five years later, ideology crumbled and the statues of many leaders fell down. The progress of history has seen "the Age of the Holocaust and the Age of Hiroshima, the times of Stalin and Eisenhower, Kruschev and Kennedy, Castro and Mao, Andropov and Khomeini, Gorbachev and Reagan" (DC 92). The world has witnessed a host of crises like "the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Revolution, the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War and the Prague Spring, the Paris events of 1968 and the Watergate Crisis, the Afghanistan Crisis and the Iran Hostage Crisis--and [. . .] the Gulf Crisis" (DC 92). Thus it can be seen that recent history gives a very fragmented picture. It is one that shows the presence of occupied cities, dangerous borders, gulags, and other such things that evoke terror. Totalitarian ideologies have been there which tried to dominate over and eliminate realms of intellectual activity. History has certainly witnessed fascism which is a system "of exclusion and of the stabilization of boundaries that can only be penetrated by excess, that is, violently" (Habermas 217).

The postmodern age has evolved out of these catastrophic historical events that mark this century. At the present, international politics has become centred on the "New Europe" (DC 280). "Eurocrats" (DC 281) like Commissioners, Directors-General, Chefs de Cabinet, and Principal Administrators are all now engaged in the task of building up a new world centred on Europe. They are surrounded by a shady group of "Euro-lawyers," "Euro-lobbyists," "Euro-fixers," "Euro-framers," and "Euro-bimbos" (DC 281). The
King of the Belgians and Jean-Luc Villeneuve, the Deputy-President of the European commission, are all a part of this conspiratorial world. The activities of these people clearly reveal the corruption that has invaded the realm of politics. The Restaurant *La Rochette* in Brussels, which forms the heart of the "New Europe," (*DC* 280) becomes the venue for the political deliberations of the "Eurocrats" (*DC* 281). Jay experiences this new world while at Brussels:

So how did I come to be here [...] in the heart of the heart of Europe: the New Europe where, as at some great medieval court, the world's princes and plenipotenariies gathered, where the ministers of great nations came to consult, the lawyers to plead, the modern courtiers to make their courtly careers, the framers to frame, the fixers to fix, the sick, the poor and the foreign to beg for crumbs from the princely European Table? (*DC* 282).

This Europe will contain many different cultures and languages. It will also have a new language called "Euro-speak," (*DC* 295) which consists of acronyms like "ERM" and "EMS" (*DC* 295). Natural resources are there in plenty, and hence no shortage will be experienced in the matter of wine, milk, and olive oil. This Europe has given birth to a complex and extensive bureaucracy. This in turn has resulted in corruption on a very large scale. "Only political acts which violate modern conception of the normal or are contemptuous of the political" (Fox 129) can be seen here. Postmodern politics is without doubt associated with complicity. In such circumstances, the statement that a great budget has been made means that a good fraud has taken place.

The world has seen the collapse of Marxism as an ideology. The world, in fact, had been divided on the basis of ideology. The effects of this division can
be seen in countries like Budapest. In Budapest, there is a monument for the Russian soldiers who gave them freedom. The progress of history results in changes in loyalties. This year, the people there are supporting the Americans. The disillusionment with ideology is clearly evident in Hollo's words: "You see, Marx believed in the great historic progress of materialism. Unfortunately he did not know how to make it work." (DC 104). Hollo's voice is one that can be heard throughout Eastern Europe: "In Eastern Europe the dismay of those who felt imprisoned in Marxism and the tired command economy could no longer be contained" (Bradbury, The Modern British Novel 399).

However there are those like Gertla who blindly believe in Marxist ideology. For her, Marxism is the ultimate truth. She is not affected by the present set-backs that Marxist ideology has suffered. Her strong belief is revealed when she puts forward the following questions to Jay:

Do you really think none of them, those intellectuals, ever meant not to build the Marxist dream? You think nobody ever believed it, all of it? The crushing of the bourgeoisie, the destruction of property, the struggle against Fascism, the rise of the proletariat? Let them admit it, that was what they thought. And in a few years from now, people will say, of course, they were right. (DC 278)

Thus she asserts that those who denounce ideology will finally have to realise its power and come back to its fold. Her criticism is in a way directed against Criminale. Gertla goes to the extent of denouncing democracy. "[...] Marxism is a great idea, democracy just a small idea" (DC 276). She feels that democracy gives only commodities like the Kentucky Fried Chicken, but not anything having real value. According to her, it has created a society which concentrates
on the production and consumption of material goods. She denigrates capitalist society pointing out its defects like inflation, class difference, and political instability.

History provides instances of many intellectuals who changed according to the circumstances. It was the pressure from history that forced them to adopt double standards. It was a question of survival for them. No one can deny that the philosophers of this century had to struggle with terror and contradiction:

Silence, exile and cunning were James Joyce's prescription for the task of the modern writer and thinker in an age of brutality and unreason, bombardment and slaughter, ideology and holocaust, a century of intellectual terrorism, an age, as Canetti once said, of burning flesh, when police thuggery had turned on thought itself. Thanks to silence, exile and cunning some artists and intellectuals had had strange flirtations with the mad ideological world. Pound had played with Fascism, Heidegger with Nazism, Brecht with Stalinism, Sartre with Marxism, and so on and on. (DC'41)

Hence it is history itself that forces intellectuals to make mistakes. Criminale managed to survive in such an age and has emerged now as a great postmodern philosopher. The work Bazio Criminale: Life and Thought, studies Criminale's life and thought in relation to history:

It started in the time of Hiroshima and the Holocaust, of [....] Angst, of the collapse of the old pre-war philosophies and the need for new ones. [....] It followed those brave new dreams into times when they were cursed and corrupted, and then shifted into
the age of Adidas and IBM, the materialist, multiple, post
technological age, the era of the economic miracle when the
vague proletarian dream gave way to the late-twentieth-century
bourgeois revolution, hi-tech, scattered, multi-national. (DC'285-86)

Bradbury's awareness of the significance of the philosopher in an age that shows
great complexity and uncertainty, prompted him to make one the central character
in DC. He has pointed out: "Well I 've stopped writing campus novels. I find
the figures I need are the philosophers, they could suggest ways of solving some
of our problems now" (The Hindu Magazine Literary Review 2 Nov. 1997 X). Criminale's career as a philosopher shows several phases. He had involved
himself with Stalinism in 1956. Then he became a reforming socialist democrat
and the Stalinist critics began to hate him. The Marxist countries banned his
books. At the same time, the Marxists encouraged Criminale to print his books
in the west. They needed the money from this for their own projects. This was
an arrangement from which Criminale as well as the Party officials benefitted.

However Criminale has an explanation for the contradictions and flaws
in his career that are being subjected to criticism. This is revealed during
Criminale's conversation with Jay:

Remember, the philosopher is only the clown of thought. He is
granted the role of wisdom, he must appear wise. Every age,
every idea comes along and demands him, give us a describable
portrait of reality. He tries, he considers, he picks up the
tools of thought. But he is no different from anyone else.
Dirty with history, a man after all. Perhaps against his intention,
the thought betrays. (DC 328)
This has proved true in Criminale's own case. He read history in a particular way, but the events that occurred made it clear that his assumptions were wrong. A person attempts to predict the future because he wants to understand the past as it impinges on the present. However such predictions will turn wrong. But there is no way that Criminale can correct himself now. His misreadings are recorded in his books. It will be meaningless to destroy them now. Criminale admits his mistakes, but denies having betrayed anyone. In fact he is the victim of an age in which lying is essential for survival. To survive one has to support the history and ideology of those who wield power. Then only will the philosopher get the freedom to philosophise. The helplessness of the philosopher points towards, the passive condition of the human consciousness in the postmodern world. Waugh points out in the "Introduction" to Postmodernism: "Consciousness itself is [. . .]'decentred,' no longer agent of action in the world, but a function through which impersonal forces pass and intersect" (5). It is true that thought and history cannot exist in harmony. They always reflect the underlying chaos. Criminale understood this condition, as evident in Miss Markova's analysis of his nature and circumstances: "'He was born in chaos, he lived in chaos. He expected chaos, he wrote of chaos. He saw the chaos that is hidden in all things [. . .]. He had no certainties to live by, nowhere safe to go. He did not only play with nothingness. He knew it" (DC 338). He is a philosopher who belongs to a culture that shows the loss of meanings which results from excess.

Criminale has made certain mistakes in understanding history. He feels that philosophy should change according to history. The philosopher should study history and then create philosophy. According to him, philosophy is 'a form of irony.' It changes with time as well by chance. It should change once it ceases to have relevance for the contemporary society. Thus Criminale points
out that there is no absolute truth. However this "view tied philosophy irretrievably to muddle, historical directionlessness, moral confusion. It also robbed him of the means of being free to think, or even to decide" (DC 289). This resulted in "'Criminale's silence'" (DC 289). This silence is philosophical in its essence. It reveals the paradoxes and contradictions that are inherent in the thought process. It is also symptomatic of betrayal and deception. Poststructuralist thought finds "in contradiction (binary opposites or the antinomies revealed by a deconstructive reading) both beginning and end" (McGowan 49). However Criminale provides an explanation for the concept that history has ended. According to him, history has not ended. It is that people no longer believe in history. Criminale points out that it is really "'the end of homo historicus, the individual who finds a meaning or an intention in history'" (DC 237). In totalitarian countries like China, people believe that history is made through violent events like war. Criminale points out that this is an old-fashioned way of looking at history. The present historical situation is one that shows chaos. The end of humanism is also being prophesied. Criminale's reaction to this situation is clear in his words: "'I think always we need a morality, a politics, a history, a sense of self, a sense of otherness, a sense of human significance of some kind'" (DC 239). He is against ideological oppression. He does not believe in the dogma that art constructs politics and that politics in turn constructs reality. He criticises Marxism from this point of view: "'Today we see the end of that oppressive monologue called Marxism. Now we say we live in the age of pluralism, the age without what Hegel called an Absolute Idea. For once we are adventuring into history without an idea, and this is like trying to sail the Atlantic without a map'" (DC 148). The realms of thought as well as of writing have become multi-dimensional spaces where many points of view come together and enter into conflict. Criminale refers to the appearance of "The Communist Manifesto" (DC 149) a hundred and fifty years ago. Then it spoke about the spectre of communism that was
haunting Europe. On basis of this, Criminale gives an explanation for the situation in the postmodern world: "The spectre that haunts us is the spectre of too much and too little. It is an age of everything and nothing" (DC 149). These words reveal Criminale's awareness of a world where excess and emptiness exist side by side.

Professor Codicil, who is an authority on Criminale's thought, gives his own explanation regarding the discrepancies in it: "To understand thought, you must first understand thinking, and where it occurs. In the mind and in history. To understand history, you must first have experienced it" (DC 62). Hence Codicil is of the opinion that one has no right to criticise Criminale's view of history. The complexities of the age will inevitably affect thought:

The prevalence of the logic of contradiction in postmodern thought is perhaps so obvious as to escape notice [...]. Marxism, structuralism, poststructuralism, and other derivatives of Hegelianism (including psychoanalysis) all render visible contradictions that are [... ] hard to discern. (McGowan 49)

An analysis of the different aspects of the culture of excess has been done in the preceding chapters. There still remains the question of the logic behind this excess. It can be found in the signs that dominate all the realms of culture. The following chapter which concludes the thesis, is devoted to a study of this excess of signs.