A theme that runs parallel to the theme of the end of ideology and the “decline of mass-based political parties,” is the idea of “the social fragmentation of postmodern societies” (Burbach 72). Contemporary capitalism is marked by a “rise in flexible accumulation” (72) and the system is constantly in search of cheaper labour pools. These socio-economic shifts have resulted in “political fragmentation” (72) and the “rise of single issue politics” (72). The old kind of politics based on issues of class, trade unions and “numerous industrial working class is waning in importance” (73). This has affected left politics very badly in the advanced industrial societies of the west. The “decline of the blue-collar working class” (73) is seen as the virtual death-blow for communist parties in the west because it has “effectively destroyed their raison d’être” (73). Burbach avers that “Postmodern thought as it relates to politics is an intellectual minefield,” (76) however, “it can also lead to complete relativism, nihilism and a belief that political and social struggles are meaningless” (76). Therefore, there is a need to revitalize the radical intellectualism of Marxism “if the left is to recapture the political high ground in the new century” (82). A postmodern Marxist position will have to attempt a critical revaluation of both orthodox and neo-Marxist views on the state of late capitalism. This would require very serious intellectual effort: the kind of intellectualism that is lacking in an age dominated by pseudo scientists and cult philosophers.

Maurice Berube suggests that the “intellectual scene in America changed dramatically by the turn of the century” (Berube 3). Intellectuals were now no longer interested in influencing public policy “by intervening in politics” (3), on the other
hand, “they began to proselytize on cultural matters in the hope of changing the hearts and minds of the people” (3). By the end of the twentieth century they began “to preach a gospel of cultural politics” (3). The climactic moment for such anti-intellectualism in America was the 1992 presidential elections when “both George Bush and Bill Clinton avoided presenting themselves to the American public as the smart products of Ivy League universities that they are” (3-4). Post-war American politics shifted focus from urgent issues of socio-economic interest to cultural matters. Politics ceased to be the domain of intellectuals. Berube suggests that even “Thomas Jefferson in his lifetime was accused by his political foes of being a ‘cultural elitist’” (4). Unlike political leaders of Europe, especially French, who are known for their academic accomplishments, American politicians have mostly dabbled in cultural politics and issues of Puritanism. Sadly, the intellectual in America “is too often portrayed as an object of ridicule in films and television; as an ‘egghead’ at best, and a ‘nerd’ at worst” (4).

In such a general climate of anti-intellectualism, intellectuals either joined the cultural bandwagon of underrated politicians or quietly withdrew into the comfortable enclaves of the academia. It is therefore necessary to examine the conceptual framework in which the term intellectual gets defined and the historical circumstances that determined the functions of this class – if at all it qualifies to be termed a class. One can then place the intellectual in the contemporary public sphere to see if he continues to carry his traditional identity. The investigation can also seek to understand whether the traditional social function that the intellectual performed has undergone some transformation in the age of postmodern philosophers.
The concept of the intellectual is a much recent development. It gained importance only in the 19th and 20th centuries with the rise of the bourgeoisie in Western societies. To be precise, the term “intellectual” gained much significance, particularly political significance, with the involvement of “professors, artists, and writers” (“The Origin of the term Intellectual” 43) in the infamous Dreyfus affair in France in 1898. According to William M. Johnston, on 13th of January 1898 the open letter of Emile Zola addressed to the president of the republic got published on the “front page of Georges Clemenceau’s newspaper L’Aurore” (43). Later, on 14th January, the same newspaper published another article, this time written by Clemenceau himself and other Dreyfussards in support of Zola. This article was “circulated as a petition among professors, artists, and writers,” before the document got published “under the title ‘Manifeste des Intellectuels’” (43). The publication immediately raised huge public furore and controversy that ultimately divided France into two opposite camps of the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards.

In the words of William Johnston, it was Victor Brombert, professor of French at Yale University, who first gave the full account of this controversy surrounding intellectuals in France in the 1890’s. He is the first scholar to make a thorough enquiry into the employment of the term in public parlance. He “assembled an impressive array of early references to intellectuals” in his 1960 book “The Intellectual Hero” (43) and conclusively showed that the involvement of French intellectuals in the Dreyfus affair actually created the political scandal. The publication of Clemenceau’s article instigated the sharpest criticism of intellectuals. Anti-Dreyfusards like “Maurice Barres and Ferdinand Brinettiere” sneered at “these self-appointed watchdogs of public virtue, who poached beyond the limits of their expertise” (43). But such sneering comments were quickly rebutted by “scholars as
diverse as the socialist Lucien Herr, the biologist Emile Duclaux, and the sociologist Emile Durkheim” (43). Therefore, one can say that intellectuals gained immediate public recognition in France in the 1890’s when they stirred up a political controversy by intervening in the Dreyfus affair.

However, Johnston suggests that the origin of the term intellectual cannot be entirely attributed to Clemenceau’s article on the Dreyfus affair. The term was used by French writers “writing between 1891 and 1897” (45). After careful research, Johnston is finally able to narrow down to Henry Berenger the French writer of the 1890’s. According to Johnston, it was Berenger who “had specialized in discussing intellectuals,” and he was “the man who apparently did most to publicize the noun intellectual” (45). Therefore, Johnston argues that the credit given to Clemenceau for the first extensive use of the term has to be revised following this discovery. He accepts the fact that in the heat of the Dreyfus scandal, if Clemenceau had not invoked the term “some other Dreyfusard almost certainly would have done so” (45). Nonetheless, it was Berenger in 1898, who “had shown uncanny foresight in describing intellectuals as educated men who intervene abruptly in politics” (45).

This is a very useful definition of intellectuals which helps us understand the crucial role they are expected to play, especially with respect to politics. However, unlike radical intellectuals who are supposed to play a decisive role in politics, academic intellectuals are theoreticians par excellence who confine themselves to the enclosed spaces of the academies. Therefore, though the term does not have a long history, this thinking class of society has always been associated with the University and the academy. The academic intellectual has assumed the role of the producer and chief arbiter of knowledge disputes that arise mostly in academic sites of its
production. Hence, the academic, by default, represents a professional category of intellectuals who make thinking and the various forms of knowledge production and legitimation a separate domain. This domain distinguishes itself from another category of intellectuals referred to as “organic intellectuals” by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) in his Prison Notebooks. Gramsci begins the chapter titled “The Intellectuals” by asking whether intellectuals form “an autonomous and independent social group” or whether every social group has “its own particular specialized category of intellectuals?” (5) He explains that “every social group” that comes into existence with “an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals” (5). These intellectuals, according to Gramsci, are organic intellectuals who carry some homogeneous group identity.

Organic intellectuals emerge as a specialized group from within a particular social group; for example, “the capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician” (5). But, this is not true in the case of the peasantry. Although it “performs an essential function in the world of production, it does not elaborate its ‘organic’ intellectuals” (5). However, according to Gramsci, there is one category of intellectuals that has survived the political and social upheavals of history: the Ecclesiastics. Throughout history, these intellectuals have exercised monopoly over “a number of important services: religious ideology, that is the philosophy and science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, justice, charity, good works, etc.” (7). But, to which social group were the ecclesiastics bound? Gramsci argues that the “ecclesiastics can be considered the category of intellectuals organically bound to the landed aristocracy” (7). In that sense, they represented the ideas and interests of the dominant social group that traditionally opposed the interests
of the peasantry. Moreover, after enjoying a long and uninterrupted historical continuity as the thinking centre of its social group, many categories of traditional intellectuals severed their ties with “the dominant social group,” and “put themselves forward as autonomous and independent” (7). Therefore, the break-up of the traditional relationship between organic intellectuals and their social group can be taken as the significant historical moment that gave birth to a new class of non-traditional, autonomous intellectuals.

These autonomous intellectuals would like to think of themselves as independent from all forms of social, economic and political activity, which they presume, lie beyond their purview. Gramsci argues that these intellectuals give expression to a “social utopia” (8) through which they assume their independence. Therefore, he suggests that “the whole of idealist philosophy can be easily connected with this position” (8). But, if we look at intellectual effort as a method or activity that is inevitably linked to the processes of production, we understand that even in the “most degraded and mechanical” (8) form of physical work, there is “a minimum of creative intellectual activity” (8). From a Gramscian point of view, therefore, there can be no strict division between creative mental activity and productive physical activity. Hence he suggests that: “All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals” (9).

Nonetheless, intellectuals from every group constantly try to critically elaborate their intellectual activity in an effort to distinguish themselves from others in their group. In pre-industrial times, artists, writers and philosophers claimed the status of intellectuals, but in industrial society, as Gramsci suggests: “technical education, closely bound to ‘industrial labour’…. must form the basis of the new type
of intellectual” (9). Attempts were made to develop such a concept of new intellectuals and education can be understood as one such effort aimed at developing new intellectuals who would propagate the ideology of the bourgeois classes. Therefore, Gramsci proposes that the “school is the instrument through which intellectuals of various levels are elaborated” (10). Hence, the entire system of education from the primary school to the highest levels of the university becomes a human laboratory for the preparation of a new intellectual class.

This category of intellectuals understood as experts in specialized fields of knowledge like science, technology, business or law “has undergone unprecedented expansion”(13). This is largely due to a similar expansion of democratic and bureaucratic systems that has “given rise to a great mass of functions which are not all justified by the social necessities of productions” (13). On the contrary, “they are justified by the political necessities of the dominant fundamental group” (13). These intellectuals, being so highly diffused in the “great mass of functions” (13) presumably perform as part of their professions, and do not appear as if they contribute directly to the production process. However, they contribute indirectly by functioning as vital intermediaries who oil the capitalist machinery to ensure its smooth functioning. They become part of the bureaucratic structures of industry that connect the entrepreneur with labour. To that extent, these intellectuals continue to perform the role of organic intellectuals whereas professors, artists, writers and journalists are stuck to the role of intellectuals of the philosophical or pedantic kind. While the former are still connected in some way with the processes of production, the latter are far removed from the actual sites of economic production.
Gramsci elaborates the concept of the intellectual by pointing out that there are urban and rural types of intellectuals. Whereas the urban type has grown “with industry and are linked to its fortunes,” (14) the rural type are traditionally “linked to the social mass of country people and the town (particularly small town) petite bourgeoisie” (14). According to him, the rural type intellectuals, owing to the mediating role that they play between the “peasant masses” and “the local and state administration,” (14) “have an important politico-social function” (14) to perform. Their professional commitment as intermediaries of the state forces a political responsibility on them. This type of intellectuals can be lawyers, local government officials, doctors, priests and others. Generally, they enjoy a higher standard of living when compared to the peasant masses. Therefore, Gramsci suggests that: “the peasant’s attitude towards the intellectual is double and contradictory” (14). While he “respects the social position of the intellectuals,”(14) he also shows contempt towards them, at times. “His admiration” for the intellectual “is mingled with instinctive elements of envy and impassioned anger.” (14)

Gramsci’s intention in drawing out such categorical distinctions between organic and traditional intellectuals, is to show how such an approach to the study of intellectuals can ultimately lead to a better understanding of the modern political party; an understanding that will reveal “its real origins, its developments and the forms which it takes” (15). The relation that Gramsci establishes between social groups, intellectuals and politics serves as a very useful basis to develop an argument on the political function of intellectuals in contemporary times. Given the context of his own political experience under the Fascist regime in Italy, particularly as the founder of the Italian communist party, Gramsci provides important insights into the relation between intellectuals and the political party. He suggests that “the political
party for some social groups” is “their specific way of elaborating their own category of organic intellectuals directly in the political and philosophical field” (15). These intellectuals do not elaborate any “productive technique.” He makes a second point by proposing that for all social groups however, the political party “carries out in civil society the same function as the state carries out, more synthetically and over a larger scale, in politically society” (15).

The distinction that Gramsci draws between the state and civil society is extremely crucial for our debate. He tries to argue that intellectuals associate themselves with political parties to form a link with the organic intellectuals of a social group which is part of civil society. But the state, which is the political representative of civil society, wields control over the economic aspects of all social groups. It is important to note that Gramsci has in mind the idea of the revolutionary vanguard party, whenever he refers to the party. Therefore, he suggests that intellectuals have a very limited role to play in the affairs of the state that abrogates unto itself the power over economic life though “many intellectuals think that they are the State” (16). Intellectuals have a political function to carry, only as long as they are still connected with organic intellectuals, and through them, with the masses. But, the modern intellectuals of the pedantic kind, who one generally encounters in academic circles in universities and colleges, hardly come in this category. Even though many academic intellectuals come from peasant backgrounds, their class identities lie hidden behind the veneer of academic scholarship. Moreover, through many socio-economic transformations in the 20th century, the distinction between organic and academic intellectual seems to have considerably blurred. Therefore, in the present context when one hears the term intellectual, one tends to think
immediately of the professional commitments of the intellectual towards the academy, rather than his political commitments in the larger public sphere.

Gramsci developed the concept of the organic intellectual only to suggest that with their proletarian experience, they would eventually help articulate the aspirations of their social class in the political sphere. Hence, Gustavo E. Fischman and Peter Mc Laren in their article titled “Rethinking Pedagogy,” suggest that in Gramsci’s view, “intellectuals should become an elaborate, historical expression of traditions, culture, values and social relations” (Fischman, Mc.Laren 432). In this sense, intellectuals “carried out universal functions that situated social activity within local and specific class struggles and in the defense of class interests” (433). Therefore, one can say that it was not difficult for Gramsci to overcome problems of conceptual positions divided along class interests. At the same time, he understood the crucial role played by “class” in the shaping of ideologies and therefore, he “urged intellectuals to develop a relational knowledge of and with the masses to become self-reflective” (433). By this he meant that intellectuals should develop a relation between theoretical and practical knowledge. Such a synthesis would help the intellectual to develop a theory of knowledge itself. According to Fischman Mc. Laren, Gramsci “urged intellectuals to live their intellectual lives in a state of ongoing praxis” (433). Some would say that this would burden intellectuals with a huge responsibility of furthering knowledge of revolutionary praxis by situating knowledge in the political field of class-struggle. And, it would mean the replacement of knowledge of theory with knowledge of praxis. The argument developed by Gramsci resonates the argument developed by Louis Althusser in Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays (1968).
The similarity between Lenin’s and Gramsci’s thought is indeed striking. If Gramsci urges intellectuals to synthesize theoretical and practical knowledge, Lenin in a different context, was urging philosophers to renounce their idealism in favour of scientific materialism. Althusser suggests that Lenin recognized well that “philosophy, like religion and ethics, is only ideology, it has no history, everything which seems to happen in it really happens outside it, in the only real history, the history of the material life of men” (Althusser 38). Therefore, Lenin desired to have a shift in the traditional practice of ruminating philosophy to bring it closer to the level of praxis. He tried to do this by proposing “a quite different practice of philosophy” (32). This different practice was something like an “outline of an objective knowledge of philosophy’s mode of being” (32). But academic philosophers would not take too kindly to such a theory of knowledge out of fear that, it “may be fatal for philosophy” (32) itself. Therefore, Althusser proposes that the last thing that philosophy can bear is “the idea of a theory (that is of an objective knowledge) of philosophy capable of changing its traditional practice” (32). And therefore, according to Althusser, academic philosophy cannot “tolerate Lenin (or Marx for that matter) for two reasons” (32). On the one hand, “it cannot bear the idea that it might have something to learn from politics and from a politician,” (32) and on the other, “it cannot bear the idea that philosophy might be the object of a theory” (32).

The expectations of Gramsci from intellectuals are along the traditional Marxist line that proposes an inversion of philosophy into a materialist science. As Althusser rightly proposes in Lenin and Philosophy, this theory of knowledge is one of the best contributions of Marxism to philosophy and that is, “a new practice of philosophy” (68). He insists that “Marxism is not a (new) philosophy of praxis, but a (new) practice of philosophy” (68). A similar emphasis on praxis can be found in the
concept of “organic intellectuals” proposed by Gramsci. As suggested by Fischman and Mc.Laren, “Organic intellectuals were, for Gramsci, a fundamentally important expression of working-class life, critical agents that serve as vehicles for interrogating emergent patterns of thought and action” (Fischman and Mc. Laren 434). One can say that Gramsci assigns the function of critical agents to organic intellectuals, “who would not only resist hegemonic processes,” but also “attempt to displace the old hegemonic order by leading their class or popular front” (434). They should be able to lead their class into a better understanding of “capital’s incessant drive for self-expansion”(434). This was the historic role assigned to organic intellectuals by Gramsci.

However, what happens to such intellectuals when their historic role is pulled from under their feet by agents of history who do not recognize any such role for intellectuals in the making of history? This brings us to the crucial question of the political agency of historical subjects. Gramsci believed that the popular classes, that is, the working class and the peasants “are the only real determinant historical subjects” (435) capable of resisting and transforming “the hegemonic position of the bourgeoisie” (435). However, having said that, he continues to assert the importance of organic intellectuals in developing “other models of consciousness in political and cultural arenas” (435). Gramsci believed that this would help the working classes to overcome their shortcomings. More importantly, it would help them develop a collective class consciousness. But, such a belief in the possibility of a unified class consciousness appears like a romantic utopian dream. Therefore, the sharpest criticism of the Gramscian framework comes in the form of two exceptional challenges. One is the problem of organic intellectuals developing “some sort of supernatural level of consciousness,” and the other is its “belief in the existence of a
normal and teleological line of progress for all societies” (436). Fischman and Mc.Laren suggest that these notions reflect the same kind of romantic idealism that has been a part of the “positivist heritage” (436) of Western thinking. Therefore, they term Gramsci’s theory of the organic intellectual as “a valorization of the role of small group of leaders and organizers” (436).

As opposed to the Marxist view on intellectuals, we have the right-of-centre views of Julien Benda who thinks that Intellectuals are a select group of elite, who are gifted with special knowledge. Edward Said points out that Benda’s intellectuals are a “band of super-gifted and morally endowed philosophers-kings who constitute the conscience of mankind” (Said 4). Said points out that though Benda uses a religious term “clerisy” to refer to the intellectuals, “he does not endorse the notion of totally disengaged, otherworldly, ivory-towered thinkers, intensely private and devoted to abstruse, perhaps even occult subjects” (5). He suggests that real intellectuals stand up to challenges and take a stand against injustice and oppression. Said suggests that “Real Intellectuals, according to Benda’s definition, are supposed to risk being burned at the stake, ostracized, or crucified” (5). They are a small number of “symbolic personages marked by their unyielding distance from practical concerns” (5-6).

Said suggests that Benda was writing in 1927; a time when the mass media was virtually non-existent. This meant that the governments of the time had few means of spreading propagandist news to the people. Therefore, Said suggests that Benda well understood the importance of intellectuals who could stand by the side of the governments and “work as their servants…to consolidate the government’s policy, to spew out propaganda against official enemies” (5). Said argues that Benda was “spiritually shaped by the Dreyfus affair and World War One, both of them rigorous
tests for intellectuals” (6). This was in the 1930’s; around the same time Gramsci suffered the wrath of the Fascist regime in Italy and yet continued his intellectual battle without compromising his position. But Benda clearly stood on the side of the powers that be to accuse intellectuals of populism.

Both Marxist and non-Marxist views refer to the political engagement of intellectuals. However, if the Marxist view proposes an active engagement of intellectuals in politics, the other view denies any such role to intellectuals even as it grants them the position of moral philosophers. Hence, the question about the function of intellectuals remains unanswered, even if one willingly discards the Gramscian paradigm. Further, the efforts to redefine academic intellectuals and their pedagogical methods in contemporary times only indicate a movement in a different direction. The frequent invocation of Gramsci in cultural studies debates should be looked at with a certain amount of caution. It is not without reason that Fischman and Mc.Laren express their concern “about the lack of interest in class politics and class struggle on the part of the emerging strata of postmodern intellectuals” (“Rethinking Pedagogy” 436). They argue that the “educational postmodernists” have quite often appropriated Gramsci and “emphasized the priority of language and representation to the detriment of acknowledging how the social construction of race, class and gender are implicated in the international division of labor” (436). They further argue that the “educational postmodernists” do this because have failed to comprehend “the importance of understanding and challenging the totalizing power of capitalism” (436). Nonetheless, part of the blame for the “retreat from class and class struggle…has to lie with cultural studies exponents of Gramsci, including Hall himself” (436).
If cultural studies was going to deal strictly with culture alone, then why did British cultural studies experts choose to invoke Gramsci? It all began with Raymond Williams’ effort to “reintroduce Marxism into an understanding of culture” (437). E.P Thompson defends Marxist historicism against the attack of structuralist Marxists like Althusser and his followers saying “we have been suddenly struck from the rear – and not from a rear of manifest ‘bourgeois ideology’ but from a rear claiming to be more Marxist than Marx” (Thompson 2). He says that many Marxists only “glanced at the antagonist in a casual way” and hoped that this “weird apparition, a freak of intellectual fashion” (3) called structuralism would disappear on its own if they closed their eyes. He argues that this “particular freak” called “Althusserian Marxism” (3) has lodged itself in the “bourgeois lumpen-Intelligentsia” (3). He justifies his vituperance against Althusserian Marxists arguing that they were “aspirant intellectuals, whose amateurish intellectual preparation disarms them before manifest absurdities and elementary philosophical blunders” (3). They are bourgeois because “while many of them would like to be ‘revolutionaries’, they are themselves the products of a particular ‘conjuncture’ which has broken the circuits between intellectuality and practical experience both in real political movements, and in the actual segregation imposed by contemporary institutional structures”(4).

Thompson’s opposition to structuralist interpretations of Marxism created the famous “structuralism-culturalism” dispute (“Rethinking Pedagogy” 438). Fischman and Mc. Laren argue that the “Thompson/Williams” (438) debate was reduced to “a conflict between crude economic reductionism and naïve idealist humanism” (438) by Stuart Hall. He even recommended a complete rejection of the base-superstructure model and as a result, “positioned his project against Marxism,” instead of developing it as an argument to reiterate its continuing relevance. He could have developed the
dispute in such a way as to show that Marxism can exist “beyond deterministic and economistic models” (438). Therefore, Stuart Hall becomes one of the foremost Marxist intellectuals who begins the crucifying act on Marx. The high priests of theory detach the crucial element of praxis from materialist thought and begin to focus on consciousness. This is a significant shift from the kind of intellectualism that Gramsci proposes in his *Prison Notes*. Hence, Fischman and Mc. Laren suggest that “Hall rewrote the culturalist-structuralist dispute as the defining break away from Marxism” (438).

This break away from Marxism suggests that intellectuals were slowly beginning to drift away from the working class and peasants, to form a separate identity. The American sociologist Alvin Gouldner identifies them as the “New class” in his book *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (1979). This new class of intellectuals tries to keep a distance from significant political and social events of their times. The new class restricts its role to disseminating information in the academies and reproducing bourgeois social relations. They assume the role of forming future citizens who will fit into the capitalist system of production. Therefore, the new intellectual class is defined more by the passive articulation of bourgeois ideology than by an active involvement in struggle. The intellectual sphere now lies outside the sphere of class and political struggle and it is constituted by teachers and educators. Gradually this small group begins to acquire an autonomous character, developing its own class identity and interests. This new intellectual class sheds the radicalizing elements that its predecessor carried while leading some of the major revolutions of the twentieth century.
Gouldner traces the emergence of this new class to the growth of school and college education in France and Germany, after the French revolution. In his view, the extension of such a “non-church controlled” (*The Future of Intellectuals* 3) public education system at various levels became the “institutional basis for the mass production of the New Class of intelligentsia and intellectuals” (3). It also increases “the jobs available to the New Class” (3). However, a more interesting point he makes about teachers as intellectuals is that they “come to be defined and to define themselves, as responsible for and “representative” of society as a whole” (3). Though this may sound as if motivated by bourgeois idealism, Gouldner rightly insists that this is the dominant thinking among the class of teachers, and it is reflected in the way they perform their roles. He argues that by assuming such a role, teachers keep themselves away from having any “allegiance to the class interests of their students or parents” (3). As teachers, they develop a “semi autonomous” (3) identity, as the “structurally differentiated education system becomes “increasingly insulated from the family system” (3).

Public education system gradually moved away from the influence of the family but it began to move into “the influence of the state” (3). Moreover, it brought a certain “cosmopolitanizing influence” (3) on the students, while distancing them from “localistic interests and values” (3). This gave the teachers-intellectuals a new social status as providers of knowledge and information. However, having assumed an almost utopian role as builders of future societies, these teacher-intellectuals occupied a moral-ethical high ground when it came to cultural matters. They can be identified as “humanistic intellectuals,” (4) who having replaced the priestly class continued to preach the same ideology from a different platform and in a different
language, that is: the language of liberal humanism. The platform they used was one provided by the state, namely, the public schools, colleges and the universities.

Therefore, one can suggest that this development marks the emergence of public intellectuals in the secular sphere. This class continued to enjoy social privileges and prestige for a long time in the early industrial period. However, things began to change as industrialization revolutionized the very nature and structure of the society the humanistic intellectuals claimed to represent. This is why Gouldner suggests that “in a technocratic and industrial society,” their social position “becomes more marginal and alienated than that of the technical intelligentsia” (4). Thus, for the first time in its history, the new class of intellectuals “becomes internally differentiated” (4). The differentiation is more in terms of the income levels of the two categories mentioned above. The technical intelligentsia’s connection with the modern forces of economic production generating capital helped the newly differentiated class to gain a superior social status and repute. With greater market control over the forces of production, the technical intelligentsia also begins to come under the influence of the market. If the market gained control over reproduction of capitalist relations in the sphere of economics, the technical intelligentsia gained control over reproduction of technical knowledge in the sphere of education.

This dynamic has continued to dominate both the spheres even to this day and it is reflected in the education-industry partnership that is often advocated in the field of science and technical education. The teacher-intellectual begins to talk about knowledge capital and human capital, whereas the entrepreneur talks only about economic capital. Nonetheless, Alvin W. Gouldner suggests that it is better to consider both the technical intelligentsia and humanistic intellectuals as belonging to one class.
than to focus more on the internal differentiation. He argues that in Western societies, “the new class of intellectuals and intelligentsia pursues its class interests, both material and ideal, in various ways” (12). It finds its support base in industrial-capitalist relations of production even as it gets state support to further its own class interests. Further, the increasing power of the technical intelligentsia has also resulted in a considerable weakening of the position of humanistic intellectuals within the academies.

Nonetheless, intellectuals have consistently grown in numbers and consolidated their position in Western industrial societies where, as Edward Said suggests, “the ratio between so-called knowledge industries and those having to do with actual physical production has increased steeply in favor of the knowledge industries” (Representations of the Intellectual 5). This only reinforces the proposition of Gouldner that the new intellectual class had now completely replaced the old monied and propertied classes. The twentieth century in particular, has seen the extraordinary proliferation and rise of the intellectual as a powerful class. However, the increase in specializations in every field of knowledge has led to a diffusion of intellectuals in separate fields. Therefore, Said fears that “the figure or image of the intellectual might disappear in a mass of details, and that the intellectual might become another professional, or a figure in a social trend” (8).

He argues that the image of the intellectual “cannot be reduced simply to being a faceless professional, a competent member of a class just going about her/his business” (9). On the contrary, he believes that the intellectual has a “specific public role in society,” (9) and therefore, he insists that he is “an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or
opinion to, as well as for a public” (9). Said, like Gramsci, privileges the intellectual over the public he represents. However, he quickly clarifies the idea of representation by suggesting that all representation carries a double movement. A movement that is a “complicated mix between the private and the public worlds” (9). Given the extraordinary public role that the intellectual is supposed to play, he is under pressure to speak or articulate what is in the best public interest. Hence, Said observes that “there is no such thing as a private intellectual,” (9) because by writing or publishing something he enters the public world. But, in the same breath he also says that there is neither a solely public intellectual, “someone who exists just as a figurehead or spokesperson or symbol of a cause, movement, or position” (9). Said places the intellectual in a critical position between a set of ideas that can “confront orthodoxy and dogma,” (9) his own personal world, and the public he addresses. According to him, the intellectual is “someone who visibly represents a standpoint of some kind, and someone who makes articulate representations to his or her public despite all sorts of barriers” (10).

Said’s view brings to the fore the question of such fearless representation by the intellectual which would earn him credibility in the long run. In other words, he emphasizes the need for intellectuals to be committed to the cause of truth and justice. It is important, therefore, to investigate the commitment of intellectuals to this cause in the age of information explosion and knowledge industries. Intellectuals have evolved over time and come a long way from where Sartre – the last great French intellectual – left. Scarred by the politics of war, European intellectuals were tired of choosing ideological positions of the left and right. However, Sartre is the only one who stayed committed to the left, even when socialism itself was on the wane. For Sartre, the intellectual is an individual who, like others in society, is constituted by a
particular historical moment. However, unlike others, the intellectual, by virtue of being morally responsible, is called upon to be an active agent in the historical moment.

One should remember that being a witness to the World War II and also being a part of French society that was divided along ideological lines, Sartre was fully aware of contingencies that affect intellectual life. Nonetheless, Sartre does not allow the intellectual to “simply wallow in this contingency;” (Dimitriadis 5) on the contrary, he asks him “to act ethically within its situation(s)” (5). Dimitriadis points out that “for Sartre, this meant a commitment to Marxism” (5). But again, this commitment did not mean an unquestioned sticking to rigid doctrines and dogma. Sartre’s own criticism of Soviet-style socialism is well-known, and therefore, Dimitriadis suggests that for Sartre, Marxism was a way of “facing one’s historical moment with a radical imagination and a profound sense of responsibility” (5). It was this commitment to Marxism that forced Sartre and his intellectual friends “to struggle with the brutal realities of Stalinism and the USSR” (5). Most importantly, it cost him his “friendship with Albert Camus” which “ended over their respective commitments to Marxism” (5).

Nevertheless, it is Sartre’s continued commitment to Marxist humanism that made him criticize all forms of colonialism. Dimitriadis suggests that he “became a spokesperson for a broad condemnation of colonialism in all its forms.” His opposition to the Vietnam War and his particularly fierce criticism “of his government’s role in colonizing Algeria,” (6) are appropriate examples of his commitment to the principles of truth and justice. Sartre, through his own example, defines the historic role that committed intellectuals may be called upon to play in
contingencies. But how can one prescribe such a role to intellectuals in a world that is always contingent? One can probably say that national, ethnic or political identities can never be contingent. Therefore, one can argue that the intellectual does not carry a free, autonomous, and universal identity; on the other hand, he or she is always already implicated in a particular geo-political space. Therefore, the language used by the intellectual to articulate his ideas becomes very crucial. Said suggests that the articulations of the intellectual’s ideas, “are not meant primarily to fortify ego or celebrate status;” on the contrary, intellectual representations are a kind of activity that must necessarily depend on “a kind of consciousness that is skeptical, engaged, unremittingly devoted to rational investigation and moral judgment” (*Representations of the Intellectual* 15).

Said refers to the work of a remarkable intellectual, the American sociologist C. Wright Mills, to suggest that intellectual representations have faced challenges, especially in the last decades of the twentieth century. There is severe pressure of co-option on intellectuals from various quarters and this leaves them with little choice to take an independent decision or even make a public statement about it. Independent intellectuals are then faced “with a kind of despondent sense of powerlessness at their marginality,” or worse still, they have to join “the ranks of institutions, corporations or governments as members of a relatively small group of insiders” (15). Therefore, intellectuals who resist being co-opted or stereotyped must understand the political nature of demands made on him by the society at large. While society acknowledges the privileged position of the intellectual, it also expects him to articulate his views on current political issues. In other words, it seeks to know the political equivalent of his intellectual efforts. Said quotes C. Wright Mills to clarify this point: “These worlds of mass art and mass thought are increasingly geared to the demands of politics. That is
why it is in politics that intellectual solidarity and effort must be centered” (Qtd in Said 16). But, the independent intellectual cannot act on his own; he would need the solidarity of his colleagues and also the support of the public to speak the truth. Moreover, since the act of speaking the truth is always more difficult for the weak and the marginalized, “the intellectual belongs on the same side as the weak and unrepresented” (17).

The history of the twentieth century has been one of extraordinary intellectual development, especially in the field of science and technology. This development has often been seen as having two apparently contradicting sides to it. If, on the one hand, it has increased the pace of industrial change, it has effected an equally fast secularization of culture on a global scale, on the other. Scientific knowledge has always had additional application value that increases its exchange value. Hence, the production of scientific knowledge is more like material production that takes place in industry. And, owing to its practical application, scientific knowledge is valued by industry in its own terms of capital.

Knowledge capital or human capital are market-oriented terms used specifically with types of knowledge linked with production. Such (scientific) intellectuals, who sell their knowledge for industrial or military production, cannot call themselves humanistic intellectuals since they refuse to see the socio-political impact of their intellectual production. The main concern is about intellectuals in the human sciences whose intellectual production is mostly theoretical in nature. Therefore, the development of a theory like postmodernism, calls into question the role of intellectuals in the production of theory. It compels one to enquire into the processes of knowledge production in the academies. It raises crucial questions about
critical academic practices and one such question could be: Is critical practice still a part of theoretical enterprise?

To answer this question, one needs to analyze the history of knowledge production in the humanities. It is important to begin with the enlightenment thinkers and see whether the claims of the postmodernists about the failure of their intellectual practices are indeed valid. It is also important to note here that enlightenment thinking has its origin in France and Germany of the nineteenth century. But its criticism and overall devaluation is done mostly by emigrant postmodern intellectuals from North America. Beginning with Lyotard’s polemical attack on Marxism, postmodernism has consistently argued against every intellectual effort that claims the status of a science. Therefore, it is necessary to answer a very important question: Why this hatred of intellectuals from the discipline of science? Is it because these intellectuals are secular, objectively sceptical and open to relativism? Paul Johnson discusses these issues in his best-selling book *Intellectuals* (1988).

He admits that secular intellectuals of the last two centuries have played an important role in shaping the modern world. He argues that they are the latest incarnation of “priests, scribes and sooth-sayers” who, in earlier times, “laid claim to guide society” (Johnson 1). However, with the weakening of the clergy in the eighteenth century, the secular intellectual began to gain importance as he took upon himself the task of educating humanity with the same kind of earnestness as the clergymen. But he adopted “a far more radical approach than his clerical predecessors” (1) in this onerous task. Moreover, according to Johnson, the secular intellectuals were not bound by any traditional authority, religion or even “prescriptive codes of ancestral experience” (1). Hence the secular intellectual,
according to him, emerged as a much freer individual willing to challenge all traditional notions of knowledge and authority. And, unlike the priests, they were not ardent “servants and interpreters of God;” (2) on the contrary, they believed in the extraordinary power of man to design changes of his world. Therefore, Johnson remarks in a sarcastic tone that the hero of secular intellectuals was the Greek legend “Prometheus, who stole the celestial fire and brought it to earth” (2). Secular intellectuals, therefore, incur the wrath of traditional philosophers for whom the world is still a God-centred universe.

Johnson begins his examination of secular intellectuals by considering the life and works of Rousseau who, according to him, “is the first of modern intellectuals,” (2) and one who serves as the archetype of all secular modern intellectuals. Rousseau lived at a time when France was preparing itself for a historic revolution and contributed in a big way to the intellectual movement that resulted in the revolution of 1789. Although he died a decade before the revolution, “many of his contemporaries held him responsible for it,” (2) and also for the demolition of monarchy in Europe. Therefore, his contribution to modern civilization cannot be easily undermined. His thinking radically altered ideas of modern education as he advocated a critical revaluation of nature. Hence, Johnson suggests that “he popularized and to some extent invented the cult of nature” (3). His antagonism to materialistic culture associated with the sophisticated urban middle classes and the aristocracy, forced him to take a stand against urban sophistication and artificiality. In that sense, he was a critical intellectual who opposed the materialist outcome of enlightenment rationality. Johnson argues that it is this kind of thinking that initiated the Romantic Movement and modern introspective literature.
There are other important concepts that Rousseau added to enlightenment thought. He suggested that urban sophistication makes man “more selfish, competitive and acquisitive” (4) that lead to his alienation. The idea that reckless competition results in alienation, became the catch phrase for later thinkers like Marx who elaborated on the alienating conditions created by capital. In that sense, Rousseau can be taken as the precursor of Marx. The idea of alienation “together with the idea of cultural evolution” (4) served as the primary material for secular intellectuals of the enlightenment who followed Rousseau. Therefore, the middle of the eighteenth century can be taken as the time when French intellectualism was just beginning to grow in influence and power. However, one cannot claim that it grew without any resistance from the ruling political class of the time. As Johnson points out, in 1740’s and 50’s, “their position as critics of society was still precarious,” (6) for, whenever the state “felt threatened by their rancorous comments,” (6) it didn’t hesitate “to turn on them with sudden ferocity” (6). Rousseau “complained of the persecution he suffered,” (6) but his misery was comparatively lesser than that of his contemporaries. “Voltaire was publicly caned by the servants of an aristocrat….and served nearly a year in the Bastille,” while Diderot “was put in solitary confinement… for publishing a book on atheism” (6). Secular public intellectuals always faced the threat of persecution from the ruling political class whenever they made any public posturing against the establishment.

Therefore, any discussion on the decline or death of intellectuals must necessarily consider the historic role that intellectuals played as purveyors of common virtue. In order to make their ideas more purposeful and persuasive, the intellectuals had to adopt a different mode of speech which Alvin Gouldner refers to as “The culture of critical discourse (CCD)” (Gouldner 28). According to Gouldner, this
culture of discourse is a set of rules evolved by intellectuals to build and justify their arguments and to seek “voluntary consent of those addressed solely on the basis of arguments” (28). In fact, Gouldner suggests that this culture is a specific speech act which forms the basis of a “common ideology” (28) shared by the new class of intellectuals. It is a mode of speech that is more value-specific and one that refuses to be contextualized. Further, by differentiating itself thus from ordinary speech, the culture of critical discourse is not only able to explain things differently, but also makes “its own principles explicit” (28). This allows the intellectual a free space in which he can make claims and justify their validity “without reference to the speaker’s societal position or authority” (28). Gouldner tries to argue that intellectuals use a different “grammar” that forms the basis or “the deep structure of the common ideology shared by the new class” (28). And, it is this language of critical discourse that binds all intellectuals to form a new class although the class is internally divided in two categories: the technical intelligentsia and humanistic intellectuals.

According to Gouldner, the new class of intellectuals gains a unique identity for itself owing to a kind of “cohesiveness and homogeneity” (28) that is brought about by the culture of critical discourse. As a result, “the members of the new class can pursue a politics opposed to the old moneyed class” (30). The political posturing of the new class is made evident not only from the famous Dreyfus scandal but also from many other important historical occasions when radical intellectuals took a public stand on political issues. For example, the new intellectual class “was widely united …during the anti-Fascist movement of the 1930’s and, more recently, in their opposition to the United States war on Vietnam” (30). In recent times, we have intellectuals like Edward Said and Noam Chomsky who have been openly critical of the politics of Western nations. They have often taken a clear stand on issues like the
Israel-Palestine conflict, American occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and American intervention in North Korea. Therefore, it is not surprising that the intellectual’s public posturing on such political issues, often result in his own alienation.

The intellectual’s alienation can be two-fold in character: alienation from other social classes and alienation from his own class. If an intellectual’s views are so radical that they pose a serious challenge to the views of his colleagues, he may be alienated from his own class owing to differentiation. Further, even when intellectuals come in direct confrontation with other social groups, they may not be completely united in their struggle. As Gouldner argues: “classes as such are never united in struggle against others;” (31) they get a homogeneous, unified identity only when they are implicated within “organizations, parties, associations, vanguards,” (31) during the time of political struggle. Therefore, according to Gouldner, “there is no reason to suppose that the New Class, at least in ‘the West’, will ‘overthrow’ capital in a manner modelled after, say, the Russian October revolution” (31). Gouldner believes that the rise of the New Class will be more akin to the rise of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, than like “revolutions made in the name of the working class” (31). Intellectuals may play a key role in developing and nurturing critical consciousness, though they may not be the vanguards of political revolutions.

Gouldner uses the theory of American sociologist Edward Shils (1910-1995) to suggest that Western intellectuals always carried an adversary culture that looked at tradition with mistrust. Intellectuals differed from others by being “more rule, value and pattern-oriented,” or by showing that “they have more theoreticity than others who are more person-oriented, more situationally sensitive, and more responsive to differences in context” (32). They are also supposed to be “more committed to the
cultivation of alternatives” (32). It is this commitment to alternatives that makes the posturing of intellectuals on current political issues appear futuristic and utopian. In that sense, they share a common platform with political ideologues who also make futuristic claims about their political plans for the national economy. This view of intellectuals presupposes that it is the culture of Western intellectuals to constantly revolt against everything that goes in the name of tradition. Therefore, a radical questioning attitude together with a disdain for traditional authority became the leitmotif of Western intellectualism. Therefore the death of the intellectual is necessarily a symbolic death that marks the collapse of the ideology of critical discourse in Western societies.

As opposed to the view that intellectuals have a larger public role to play by intervening in politics, we have a non Marxist view which believes that intellectuals (mostly teachers) have a moral responsibility of integrating different social forces. Emile Durkheim and Max Weber belong to this school of thought. Kameshwar Choudhary examines their views in his book Intellectuals and Society (2004). According to him, Durkheim saw the French society of his own times as being in a state of crisis. The industrial society had created a moral crisis and therefore, it was necessary to build a moral consensus to consolidate various elements of society. In that sense, Durkheim also believed in social totality, much like other enlightenment thinkers of his times. Choudhary suggests that in order to build a moral consensus “he advocated a systematic creation and propagation of secular rational morality which was essential for social solidarity” (Choudhary 26). He argues that in Durkheim’s view this could be achieved only through the process of education. And so, by prescribing “an important role to the education system and the teaching community as a whole,” Durkheim privileges teachers over others intellectuals. The task of teacher-
intellectuals was “to create a modern secular rational social being,” (27) by rebuilding the system of moral education. For Durkheim then, teachers were no more than moral educators in the same way as priests were religious educators before enlightenment. The only difference being that teachers were supposed to be secular unlike the latter who could not speak anything without recourse to myth and allegory.

Durkheim also disapproved of the participation of teachers in any political activity. According to Choudhary, he regarded “participation in party and parliamentary politics as unsuitable and even harmful to them” (27). Thus Durkheim’s view on intellectuals turns out to be a conservative one much similar to that of Julien Benda who believed that intellectuals were moral philosophers. He differentiates between teachers and politicians by suggesting that teachers have a public role to play as enlightened citizens but that does not mean that they can choose a political career. “Men of thought and imagination are, in his view, not suitable for a political career which demands above all, the qualities of men of action.” (27) It is clear that Durkheim is against teachers using their academic authority to further political ends even outside the classroom: “I consider that a professor who, even outside the context of his teaching, seeks to exercise any political influence over his students thereby often puts himself in a delicate position” (Durkheim Qtd. in Lukes 87). Durkheim’s intellectuals are moral educators who are denied any functional role in politics.

Karl Mannheim, the Hungarian born sociologist, worked in the University of Heidelberg and later in the University of Frankfurt before he was dismissed by the Nazi regime in 1933. He fled Germany for England and began to teach sociology at the London School of Economics. He came under the influence of Marx and Weber quite early in life; however, he attempted to find a middle path between the idealist
approach of one and the materialist approach of the other. He was deeply interested in studying “themes of conflict: of classes (and their systems of thought), of political movements, and of the necessary dissenting role of the intelligentsia” (Perdue 388-393). While trying to study the wider sociological structure of knowledge, he came to understand the importance of ideological structure in the determination of knowledge. In *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) Mannheim argues that “ideological structure does not change independently of the class structure and the class structure does not change independently of the economic structure” (Mannheim 130).

Mannheim’s concept of different levels of structure contributing to the totality of social structure can be attributed to Marx. Like Marx, he believed that the mode of material production shaped the political structure which is ideological in character. He also believed that “change in the material base is closely connected with ‘transformations in class relations’ and corresponding shifts in power” (Perdue 388-393). And finally, he believed that certain ideological structures may dominate people at any given historical period. However, Perdue suggests that “these ideologies may be understood and their change predicted theoretically” (388-393). Although Mannheim appears to be closer to Marx, he differs from him with respect to the argument that the dominant ideas in society are always those of the ruling classes. He held the view that, in all class-divided societies, there exists a special stratum of individuals “whose only capital consisted in their education” (Mannheim 156). In his view, intellectuals form this special stratum by drawing individuals from different classes. And therefore, it is possible that intellectuals coming from different class backgrounds carry contradictory points of view on a single issue. He argues that due to this crucial fact, the social position of intellectuals cannot be simply deduced from their class-origins. On the contrary, the “multiformity” of its members allows the
“intellectual stratum to develop a social sensibility and to grasp the dynamic and conflicting forces of society” (Mannheim 156-157). Mannheim’s concept of knowledge suggests that it is always of this world as much as intellectuals who claim to possess it are also of this world.

This idea of intellectuals as possessors of knowledge of this world implicates them as subjects capable of understanding and interpreting the dynamics of society. However, the social world with contradictory ideologies is a challenge to the intellectual because it imposes certain conditions on him. It asks him to clarify his ideological position before he enters a political debate. From Mannheim’s argument one can conclude that ideological structure is always intricately connected to class structure. Further, if the social structure of knowledge is itself determined by ideological structure, it logically follows that knowledge cannot rid itself of its class connections. Therefore, knowledge of the bourgeois institutions and its practices had to be reproduced in order that the intellectual class maintained its class identity. This was done through educational institutions that Althusser lists among “Ideological State Apparatuses” (Althusser 110). According to Althusser, the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA’s) are distinguished from Repressive State Apparatuses in that, the latter being the executive wing of the state uses only repression as a method to control its subjects. Althusser clarifies that “in Marxist theory the State Apparatus (SA) contains: the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons etc” (110).

In contrast to the Repressive State Apparatuses, “the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression” (112). Althusser argues that though ideology
operates at the level of thought and imagination, it constructs a relationship between individuals and their real conditions of existence. The thesis of Althusser states that “Ideology is a ‘Representation’ of the Imaginary Relationship of individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence” (123). However, from a Marxist point of view, if “the representation of real conditions of existence” are themselves a result of “the relations of production,” (124) then ideology represents “not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live” (125). This is the second thesis he develops, “Ideology has a material existence.” (125)

Therefore, if ideology is constituted through the material practices of an individual’s existence, the opposite is also true. Every ideology realizes itself in its own material practice. Religious ideology, for example, has a religious practice. If one believes in God, then “he goes to Church to attend Mass, kneels, prays, confesses, does penance….naturally repents and so on” (126). Similarly, political ideology has a political practice, legal ideology has a legal practice, cultural ideology has a cultural practice and communicational ideology has a communicational practice. That is to say, if a person believes in the ideology of democracy, he goes and votes, if one believes in the bourgeois notion of justice, he appeals or submits himself to the power of law, if one believes in the ideology of culture, he values reading literature, playing sports or playing music and finally if one believes in the ideology of communication, he listens to the radio, reads the newspaper and watches television. Althusser uses this argument to show that it is ideology that constitutes individuals as subjects. Since “there is no ideology except for concrete subjects, and this destination for ideology is made possible only by the subject,” (128) Althusser concludes that “all ideology hails
or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” (130). Therefore, one can ask what interpellates concrete individuals as intellectuals.

Thus, by the same logic, one can conclude that it is ideology of knowledge that hails concrete individuals as intellectuals. The ideology of knowledge is constructed through knowledge derived from material practices and from developments in science and technology. However, knowledge in the humanities is a highly theoretical form derived from ruminations of social and political philosophers. Such knowledge divorced from material practices often ends up as purely theoretical. It gets institutionalized in educational apparatuses. Teacher-intellectuals, universities and libraries are the dominant symbols of such institutionalized knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the structure of intellectual pedagogical practices to discover the underlying ideologies.

Knowledge is instituted in the universities and the intellectual is the representative agent of its pedagogical practices. Knowledge is “certified according to established rules and procedures of an institution, specifically, the modern university” (Wrong 114). And, the quest to acquire certified knowledge has increased from time to time. This has not only resulted in an unprecedented growth of universities, it has also increased the numbers of university intellectuals: “those who have been properly certified as the possessors of knowledge” (114). Wrong points out that “there has been a general movement from ownership of land to ownership of capital to ownership of educational credentials,” (114) in the last two centuries. It must then be admitted that intellectuals converted their educational credentials into what Pierre Bourdieu calls “cultural capital” (Bourdieu 17). Bourdieu argues that cultural capital “can exist in three forms” (17). Firstly, it can exist “in the embodied
state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body,” second, it can be “in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.),” and lastly, “in the institutionalized state,” (17) it is “in a form of objectification,” but nevertheless, this last state must be set apart. Bourdieu believes that the institutional state “confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee” (17). Here, “cultural capital” is objectified “in the form of academic qualifications” (20). Bourdieu avers that academic qualification is, in fact, “a certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed, value with respect to culture” (20). The acquisition of such credentials, based on the idea of competition, often effectively negated “the universalism and equality of opportunity supposed to prevail in the competitive system of educational certification” (Wrong 114).

Wrong suggests that, “after the student revolt of the 1960’s the university has been the main locus of radically egalitarian political outlooks” (118). According to him, this resulted in “many incongruities and ironies” (118). Many Marxists who possessed certified knowledge entered the universities to occupy niche positions there as professorial Marxists. These Marxists often came under criticism for holding plum positions in state-funded institutions, “with a secure income and an assured audience, while whetting their appetites for greater power in the larger society” (118). Such criticism comes mostly from non-Marxist intellectuals who found support from conservative politicians and corporate leaders “who are not without material resources and have not been averse to bestow them on their intellectual defenders in the form of foundation support” (119). Therefore, the increase in income levels of a particular class of people, who were neither private owners of the means of production nor the
possessors of labour power alone like the proletariat, became the most important
criterion to classify intellectuals as the New Class. In that sense, the New Class is
neither typically bourgeois nor proletariat.

However, the internal differentiation between the technical-scientific experts
and humanistic intellectuals blurs the identity of the class further. Wrong argues that
“pure and applied scientists are the only authentically new ones that do not antedate
the modern era” (120). According to him, the humanistic intellectuals who cannot
convert their social capital into economic capital stand on the margins of the new
class with a confused identity. They are politically active agents who seek change and
often challenge the establishment. But, the knowledge they possess is often
discredited by the academic establishment because it believes that “such knowledge is
not a source of power in its own right” (121). On the other hand, the knowledge
legitimating institutions see it as “the content of a common culture or language, a
shared set of values” (121). It is not “functionally indispensable to the economy”
(121). The humanistic intellectuals do not form a distinctly new class but share the
characteristics of a dispersed set of intellectuals or professionals who occupy different
social positions owing to their real incomes. Nonetheless, their rebellious and non-
conformist attitude forms the common ground on which they gather at moments of
social or political conflict. But again, they are faced with familiar accusations from
conservatives within the academy who argue that they share “the philistine values of
the majority of the population” (121). The industrial-capitalist system that gave birth
to these institutions denies the humanistic intellectuals the right to expression of their
class identity and interests.
Academic intellectuals with their attachments to the university cannot play a pro-active role in politics. They fail to act as agents of social change though they might hold radical political views. In that sense, the traditional notion of intellectuals as the torch bearers of society does not exist today. It has been replaced by a different idea that suggests that humanistic intellectuals have an extremely limited role to play in the age of information technology and aggressive capitalism. The modernist intellectual who carried left-wing ideology was countered by another who carried right-wing jingoism. However, with the expansion of television, there emerged the idea of a public intellectual who began to share his ideas and thoughts already inscribed in his publications with a larger audience. The views expressed by an author on television on important issues of social and political relevance appear very impressive to the less informed public. In contrast, “contemporary academics who, preoccupied with tenure, promotion, and professional standing, speak and write only for their colleagues in specialized disciplines within the university” (124).

Russell Jacoby’s label “public intellectual” refers to writers and authors in the American context who sought more publicity for themselves by trying to reach a wider audience beyond the academic circle. The term came to be “used as an encomium bestowed on anyone who appears on “serious” TV panel shows or writes for non-specialist periodicals” (Wrong 124,125). Jacoby talks about the end of a generation of “New York intellectuals” (4) around the 1960’s in America in his book The Last Intellectuals (1987). The cold war had instigated a wave of anti-communist resentment in America and Western Europe. In such a context where McCarthyism and neo-conservative frenzy was beginning to grip American campuses, serious left-wing intellectuals quietly withdrew from the scene. Jacoby bemoans the loss of such radical intellectuals and Dennis Wrong avers that neo-conservative reactions against
them was not entirely justified since “their range and influence” (Wrong 125) was actually very limited. “They were a small and isolated circle who largely wrote for each other in low circulation magazines of eternally precarious financial status” (125). These New York intellectuals were driven into “early retirement and senility” (Jacoby 4) around the 1960’s. According to Jacoby, the old generation of left intellectuals did not find continuity in a younger generation in America for various reasons. He further suggests that political reasons notwithstanding, “deeper currents-social and economic-inform intellectual life” (4).

Jacoby problematizes the notion of public and private intellectuals by expressing doubts about the very character of the American public sphere. He argues that it is largely a visual construct of TV images and therefore an over dependence on newspaper, TV, and other non-specialist periodicals is fraught with potential risks. The media created public sphere is not entirely neutral, “it responds to money or power or drama, not to quiet talent or creative work” (5). Jacoby argues that it is not without reason that writers and critics, over many decades “have decried the press for distorting cultural life” (5). The public sphere constructed by the media is not the proper touchstone to measure the quality or relevance of ideas. There is the risk of “confounding glitter with substance, TV exposure with intellectual weight” (5). Moreover, the private commercial interests of corporate media hardly allow the representation of a neutral public sphere. Instead, it converts all ideas relevant to an essentially neutral public sphere into a market commodity with exchange value. Therefore, Jacoby says that “in as much as the public sphere is less a free market of ideas than a market, what is publicly visible registers nothing but market forces” (5).
Therefore, intellectuals who entered the public sphere - now much manipulated by the TV - began to distinguish themselves both from the public whom they addressed and private intellectuals who continued to write in journals and periodicals with smaller circulation. Jacoby believes that it is not just TV, news weeklies and popular periodicals that have generally impacted American cultural life; “the restructuring of cities, the passing of bohemia and the expansion of the university” (5) have also informed American cultural life. A significant change in cultural life of a people indicates a change in their perception of things. It suggests that the character of the public has undergone some change over a period of time. And quite obviously, the relation between the intellectual and the public also changes. Jacoby suggests that the younger generation of intellectuals in America have not been able to address the public because such a public hardly exists after the 1960’s. “A public that once snapped up pamphlets by Thomas Paine or stood for hours listening to Abraham Lincoln debate Stephen Douglas hardly exists, its span of attention shrinks as its fondness for television increases” (6).

Therefore, according to Jacoby, young intellectuals are “missing” not because of their inadequacy. It is because “a reading public may be no more. If younger intellectuals are absent, a missing audience may explain why” (6). The public sphere, according to Jurgen Habermas, is a category of bourgeois society that developed in the eighteenth century in France and England. Initially, it was a small group of writers, artists and critics belonging to the upper stratum of the bourgeoisie who engaged themselves in criticism and debate. The institutions of this “early public sphere” were “the coffee houses, the salons, and the Tischgesellschaften (table societies)” (Habermas 30). Here, the “humanistic aristocratic society” encountered “the bourgeois intellectuals” to build a bridge between a fast failing “courtly” public
sphere and an emerging bourgeois public sphere “through sociable discussions that quickly developed into public criticism” (30).

However, the American public sphere that Jacoby refers to has very little to do with the Habermasian public sphere. Moreover, as Barlas and Caliscan point out in their article titled “Virtual Space as Public Sphere” “…for Habermas, the public sphere is not an area of market relations but rather one of discursive relations” (Barlas and Caliscan 3). It stands between the private realm of civil society with its relations of commodity exchange and social labour, and “the sphere of public authority” (3). In contrast, the American public sphere reduced all relations into market relations and left the intellectual in the lurch. This development left the independent intellectual with little choice than to retreat into the safe environs of the academy. As a result, the public intellectual slowly began to disappear from the public scene. A few others who continued to stay in public gaze were those who turned their attention to culture and articulated a cultural idiom that suited the dominant cultural mood of the times. But, academics wrote “for professional journals that unlike the little magazines” created “insular societies” (Jacoby 7).

Thus, the intellectual, according to Jacoby, began to lose his public identity in America after the 1960’s. Many attribute this loss of public intellectuals to rapid urbanization plans that destroyed the urban settings which functioned as natural environments for bohemian intellectual activity. The favorite haunts of the urban intellectuals like “the salon, the coffee house, the scientific society…the literary market and the world of publishing….and finally, Bohemia,” (Jacoby 39) were now not part of the design of the city. Therefore, the loss of familiar habitat is also one of the reasons for the intellectual to withdraw into the safe enclave of the university.
Jacoby rightly points out that Bohemia lost its appeal when it was thoroughly “commercialized and popularized” (39). However, eventually it ceased to exist as “intellectuals no longer responded to its pull, they no longer had to, since bohemia, renamed the counter-culture, had entered the mainstream” (39). This explains the point made earlier in chapter two about elements of the avant-garde being appropriated by postmodernism. Therefore, one can say that the cultural climate that prevailed after 1960’s destroyed the familiar habitat of the urban public intellectual.

For a long time, “the urban cafés and streets” had “sheltered marginal intellectuals,” (Jacoby 30) who frequented these places. Jacoby says that it is difficult to show how such urban environments influenced “their oeuvre and their lives” (30). Nonetheless, he suggests that “Walter Benjamin mused on the relationship of eighteenth century Paris – its streets and arcades – to its intellectual types, such as the man of letters who wandered about, retiring in the afternoon to a café to write cultural fillers for the press” (30). Therefore, with the passing of such intellectual-cultural settings, the public intellectual is supposed to have given up his identity as an informer of public opinion, and retracted into a more exclusive preserve: the university campus. The disappearance of the public intellectual coincides with the emergence of the private academic intellectual who made publications in scholarly journals. He developed an identity of his own by sharing his ideas with others of his own ilk. This helped him to develop a small coterie, clique or circle of friends and colleagues around himself, who carried similar ideas. Therefore, one can say that the complete “academicization” (Wrong126) of intellectual-cultural life led to greater insulation of the intellectual from the public.
According to Dennis Wrong, things had begun to change by the end of the twentieth century with the “academicization of just about everything” (126). He aptly points out that the absorption of any theory into academic discipline removes its political sting and revolutionary character. This is what happened to Marx and Freud by the late twentieth century for “the doctrines of Marx and Freud have been thoroughly absorbed into the academy” (126). The university has “long been the graveyard of the dead or dying religious and political faith,” (126) and therefore, “the pervasive academicization of Marxism signifies not its strength as a political movement but rather its decline and domestication” (126). This is the postmodern turn of Marxist intellectuals. The appropriation of Marxism into the academy correlates with another interesting development in the field of arts: the appropriation of the avant-garde by the establishment. Wrong appropriately suggests that it has now become a cliché to consider the avant-garde’s “conversion into an establishment and to speak of the present as a ‘postmodernist’ period” (126).

For a considerably long time during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, men of ideas had comfortably placed themselves between cultural elitism on the one hand, and extreme political radicalism on the other. “The twentieth century intellectual has characteristically combined political dissent with a taste for complexity and innovation in the arts” (126). However, things began to change only after the 1960’s and today it is hard to believe that “there was a profound and intrinsic affinity between leftist political sentiments and aesthetic avant-gardism” (126). Wrong believes that “time and change have almost completely sundered what once went together.” The intellectual before the 1960’s, was able to combine radical politics and literary modernism, but now, “the academic absorption and encapsulation of both political radicalism and aesthetic modernism has resulted in their dissociation
from one another” (126). Hence, the academic intellectual was completely
disconnected from both politics and culture. Whereas popular culture became
institutionalized in various forms of postmodernism, Marxism got absorbed into many
theories of theories to lose its political character. The intellectual lost his political
moorings and began to lead a reclusive life confining himself to the university.

Moreover, unlike the first half of the twentieth century which saw revolution
and wars, the second half was mostly peaceful with “no new ideological movements
sweeping all before them” (127). The collapse of the former Soviet Union and Eastern
Europe in 1989-91, signaled the final collapse of an ideology that relied on perpetual
class conflict. It also sounded the death knell for the intellectual class associated with
the idea of perpetual crisis. The relative peace and comfort that was always associated
with the late Victorian age in England seemed to have returned to Europe after a long
break. The unprecedented sense of social, political and economic security in Western
capitalist nations during this time may have provided academic intellectuals with an
opportunity to improve their own social capital by focusing on “new educational
credentials” (128). Moreover, with greater circulation of “ideas and symbols” with
developments in “new high-technology fields,” the traditional academic intellectual
was under pressure to gain new educational credentials to continue “in old positions
of power and pelf” (128).

The 1960’s inaugurated an age of complacency for a new generation of young
intellectuals in the West. The older generation continued to hang on to the utopian
ideals of the enlightenment. They still believed, as C. Wright Mills did, that
intellectuals had a public responsibility to fulfill. However, there was great
disappointment even in intellectuals like Mills, who saw their own generation of
thinkers slowly fading away from the scene. As Jacoby points out in his book *The Last Intellectuals*, “Mills stated flatly in 1959, ‘Today in the United States,’ ‘there is no left’” (Jacoby 115). According to Jacoby, Mills summed up the academic scene in America in the 50’s very succinctly by presenting “a catalogue of resignation and retreat” (115). There he talked about “weary ex-communists” who “substituted nationalist celebration for politics, professional ex-communists who ‘sour’ the atmosphere and a band of ‘young complacents’ who desert politics for prospering careers” (115). Nevertheless, the dreary political landscape still left Mills hopeful of a “certain revitalization” of intellectual life since he always believed that “intellectuals constituted the new left” (116). But, voices like that of Mills are the voices of the last intellectuals. They signify the end of a generation of critical Western intellectuals.

Today, however, the category of intellectuals is no longer seen as a self-explanatory, descriptive category. On the contrary, the position of an intellectual with reference to dominant social and political events is constantly assessed to judge his “collective political, moral and aesthetic authority” (*Intimations of Postmodernity* 2). In the introduction titled “Intellectuals: From Modern Legislators to Post-Modern Interpreters,” Bauman suggests that in present times, it does not make much sense “to make a list of professionals whose members are intellectuals” (2). He argues that intellectuals have to break boundaries of time and place; “rise above the partial preoccupation of one’s profession….and engage with the global issues of truth, judgment and taste of the time” (2). Bauman tries to assign a new role for the intellectual in what he sees as an emerging post-modern intellectual climate. Bauman explains that he uses the terms modern and post-modern to theorize “the last three centuries of West European history (or West European dominated history) from the
perspective of intellectual praxis” (3). According to him, it is the modes and strategies developed under each specific intellectual practice that “distinguishes modernity and post-modernity as periods in intellectual history” (3). With reference to intellectual practices, the opposition between the terms “stands for differences in understanding the world, and the social world in particular, and in understanding the related nature, and purpose, of intellectual work” (3).

If a typically modern view of the world believed in an essential totality, the post-modern view of the world is “in principle, one of an unlimited number of models of order each generated by a relatively autonomous set of practices” (4). The intellectual practices related to these views would obviously contradict one another because legitimating knowledge practices would itself become highly contentious. The postmodern world view attempts to destabilize objective knowledge practices by pushing the slippery subject into the centre of theoretical knowledge. This becomes clear from Bauman’s argument where he tries to split the identity of the intellectual into two – the intellectual as a professional with certain commitment to rules and authority and the intellectual as an individual belonging to a traditional community in the public sphere. According to Bauman, “the typically modern strategy of intellectual work is one best characterized by the metaphor of the ‘legislator’ role” (4). By this, he means that the intellectual is empowered to make “authoritative statements which arbitrate in controversies of opinions” (4). Hence, the modern intellectual, according to him, is a person with legislative authority to make correct knowledge statements. “The authority to arbitrate” was “legitimized by superior (objective) knowledge to which intellectuals have a better access than the non-intellectual part of society” (4). But, in contrast, “the post-modern strategy of intellectual work is one best characterized by the metaphor of the interpreter’s role” (5). Here, the role of the
intellectual changes and he is no longer expected to act as an arbiter in knowledge disputes. On the contrary, his business is to translate statements “made within one communally based tradition, so that they can be understood within the system of knowledge based on another tradition” (5).

From Bauman’s argument it is clear that the post-modern intellectual has no great role to play as an authority on public affairs. He is divested of such a role, even as the area of knowledge over which he had some influence, is allowed to grow beyond boundaries. Hence, it becomes difficult to mark boundaries for “legislative practices” (5) of intellectuals in a postmodern age. Bauman is highly critical of intellectuals associated with the enlightenment as he believes that the enlightenment acted in the guise of “a powerful drive to bring knowledge to the people, to restore clear sight to those blinded by superstition” (74). However, on closer scrutiny one would discover that it was “the drive to legislate, organize and regulate, rather than disseminate knowledge” (74). The collapse of the Western intellectual can be attributed to the collapse of knowledge practices of “the writing elite of Western Europe” (110). This writing elite, according to Bauman, continued to believe in “the superiority of its own mode over all alternative forms of life,” (110) well into the twentieth century. Postmodernism destroys not only the idea of superior modes of practices, but also devalues the intellectual associated with those practices.

However, only towards the end of the twentieth century when notions of European superiority were challenged, did the structure of knowledge itself become a bit shaky. The confidence with which the legislators of knowledge “scanned the world as the field to be cultivated by Europe, armed as it was with reason, tend to speak today of the ‘failed’ or ‘yet unfulfilled’ project of modernity” (Bauman 121).
According to Bauman, the disenchantment with modernity has resulted in a “crisis of confidence” (121) in the Western intellectual, making it difficult for him to articulate his ideas. He argues that the only category of people that always described and defined itself “through describing and defining societies of which it is a part,” (121) is that of the intellectuals. They are now unable to perform their traditional roles that they were so well trained and habituated to play in the modern era. The end of modernist self-confidence is reflected in “the pessimistic and defensive mood of the intellectuals” (122). Bauman argues that what appears as “the crisis of European civilization” is, in fact, “a genuine crisis of a particular role and the corresponding experience of the collective redundancy of the category which specialized in playing this role” (122). Bauman suggests that the intellectual lost his legislative function and became redundant in the political sphere. And in postmodern times, his role becomes much limited as he is expected to do no more than interpret the nature or order of things.

Hence, the intellectual is once again restricted to play a limited role in society as “the contemporary world is ill-fitted for intellectuals as legislators” (122). Between modernity and postmodernity, the intellectuals are caught in a death trap: one that offers them no choice at all. Or, a choice between the “‘dictatorship over needs’ in the soviet-type system, and the consumer society of the West – one that has taken all the lids off human desires” (124). According to Bauman, in the first type of choice, intellectuals are “collectively expropriated of their shared function of generating and promoting values of the state,” (124) by the state itself. With the second choice also, the effect on intellectuals is all the same, since the removal of difference between the two systems renders all values irrelevant except those that can be treated as commodities. The commodification of values invokes “the mechanism of
the market, which now takes upon itself the role of the judge, the opinion maker, the verifier of values” (124). If, in the first case, the state expropriates the role of the intellectual, in the second case it is the market that does it. And, with greater commoditization and marketization of knowledge, the intellectual is completely divested of his traditional role and authority.

Therefore, one can infer that towards the end of the twentieth century, academic practices changed dramatically in the Western academia owing to complete “commoditization of knowledge” (Judy 124). The academy came under pressure to reframe curricula to include subjects and topics that had some relevance to the market. In America however, this process began much earlier and, as Ronald Judy points out: “already by the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the university in North America had become the house of business and science” (124). The scientific method became popular when it collaborated with “American big business between 1890 and 1900” (124). After playing a successful role in helping American business in “the scientific management of industrial production and distribution,” the scientific method entered the “the new research university” (124) to establish its hegemony there. Judy points out that the reorganization of Harvard as a research university on the basis of a money-power equation, “was exemplary of the interrelationship between the university and business, science and commercialism” (124).

This hegemony of scientific method and later business management over academic practices in the university resulted in “the displacement of the studia Humanitas” (125). Humanities, as a discipline, was subordinated to science and commerce. Hence, scientific realism destroyed the ground of humanistic intellectuals who still relied heavily on certain presumptions of non-exchangeable human values.
Nevertheless, such a development created an institutional crisis for the university since “the founding of the university on scientific realism delegitimized it as a social institution” (125). Judy clarifies that the legitimacy of an institution like the university, derives mainly from “the organic relation the university bears to the society outside it” (125). In that sense, the university functions only with relation to the world outside it. But, unfortunately, in the context of North America, the outside world was already determined by capitalist-business enterprise and corporate-funded scientific research.

Therefore, the turn towards scientific method - both pure science and management - was a betrayal of the vision that American founding fathers like Thomas Jefferson had for the university. According to Judy, the university as an institution was supposed to carry forth “the intellectual project of the revolution” (126). However, the latest transformation of the university into an industry of research, rendered all humanistic intellectual efforts futile and irrelevant. This continues to be detrimental to humanism as it can no longer carry certain lofty ideals like egalitarianism or emancipation. The “vision of Benjamin Rush and Thomas Jefferson” for the university was that it should be “an institution of socialization that formed the new man, not re-created the old” (126). However, by prioritizing scientific research over humanities, universities betrayed this vision of creating social intellectuals with a desire to promote humanism. The university became “less and less the place of cultivation,” as they got transformed into “skyscraper schools of business built around the cyclotron” (126). The humanities had to inevitably succumb “to the claims of managerial science, commercialism, and practical success” (126). Hence, the relegation of humanities to a less important position in the university is also a major factor contributing to the death of humanistic intellectuals.
The humanistic intellectuals are replaced by postmodern philosophers whose only ambition is to govern the production sites of humanities by creating instabilities. They introduce a new discipline by invoking theories of the death of art and end of history. Jameson, for example, is the foremost postmodern Marxist intellectual who makes use of Marxist theory to solve the jinx of postmodernism’s elusive relation with history. Therefore Maurice Berube suggests that “with Jameson we not only get an astute narrative of post-modernism, but the founding of cultural studies” (Berube 12). Jameson makes “connections with cultural, historical, political, economic and philosophical narratives with a tilt to race and gender as variables” (12). With this mix of diverse yet related elements, he is able to produce “the stew that is now called cultural studies” (12). Berube argues that the “cultural politics” worn as a “new style” by many postmodern intellectuals emerged “from the placenta of cultural studies” (12). And, cultural studies, as it is known today, are a form of identity politics “emphasizing race and gender rather than a politics based on class issues” (12).

The marketization of knowledge marginalized humanistic intellectuals. For the first time in history, humanistic intellectuals faced a serious crisis of legitimation. Traditional intellectuals were now under duress “to maintain their legitimacy” (Bove 33). And, as a mode of defense, they had to block “their own and others investigations into their origins and purposes” (33). Bove argues that “traditional intellectuals are not and cannot be ‘autonomous’,,” (33) exactly for this reason. In order to “protect the illusion of their privilege and the structures it assures” they “rule out of play certain areas of investigation” (33). Therefore they “restrict the development of critical, especially political knowledge” (33). The traditional intellectual kept his silence all through the dramatic events of ’68 and the following decades. And, by choosing not to speak or represent others or even any ideology, the intellectual landed himself in an
apolitical vacuum. He is now unable to speak anything, let alone speak ‘for’ or ‘against’ anybody or any ideology. Postmodernism expects its intellectual subjects to remain non-committal to all ideological forms of knowledge. The postmodern intellectual maintains silence on all forms of political knowledge.

This poses a new challenge to the intellectual who, for a long time, served as an effective “replacement for the church as a form of legitimation” (99). Both Gramsci and Althusser have referred to “the inevitable complicity of traditional intellectuals with the ruling class in maintaining hegemony and manning the ideological state apparatuses” (98). However, with the ever increasing appropriation of cultural ideology by the media in the latter half of the twentieth century, the traditional intellectual began to lose his legitimizing role. Bauman argues that during the period of modernity, the policy of the state on cultural matters and “the civilizing efforts of the intellectuals,” (“Legislators and Interpreters” 159) worked, more or less, in the same direction. However, with the state giving up its dependence on cultural legislators for running the administrative machinery, culture itself became free from any need of legitimation. In postmodernism, culture became a value-free entity with no future relevance in “systemic integration” (160). However, postmodern began to encroach upon the social sphere to “find a new integrating role there” (160).

According to Bauman, the modern state effectively destroyed the “communal bases” (160) of local powers. Therefore, when culture returned to the social sphere, it could not find its former institutional sites nor its practices since they had been abrogated by the modern state. Moreover, during the process of systemic reproduction, culture lost its communal significance and got reduced to mere symbolism. When this symbolic culture returned to the social sphere as
postmodernism after many decades, the social had undergone complete transformation. It had assumed an “institutional shape of a very different character and consequence” (160). Hence, late-modern culture began looking for patrons in a transformed space. This culture was a hybrid form between the institutional high-brow culture and the non-institutional popular culture. It found its institutional bases in “the network of the market” where, like other commodities, it came to be judged on the basis of “profits and effective demand” (160). Hence, one of the sharpest criticisms against mass-culture theorists like postmodernists is that they pretend to promote a so-called popular culture only to regain their lost role as cultural legislators.

Postmodern culture develops its own consumer narratives and therefore requires no authorial subject. Therefore, Bauman suggests that “within the context of consumer culture no room has been left for the intellectual as legislator” (167). The humanistic intellectual played a “proselytizing role” (167) in a different environment; however, he cannot play the same role in a postmodern context since he has “no control over market forces” (167). The living bases of postmodern culture are the market-oriented social structures of consumer society that are very different from “the tradition of les philosophes” (167). Bauman argues that Western humanistic intellectuals always belonged to this tradition which served as “the historical foundation of the living memory of intellectual legislation” (167). Postmodern culture cut at the very roots of traditional Western philosophical knowledge, and in doing so, it destroyed the historical foundations of humanistic intellectuals.

The intellectual who had all along enjoyed the privilege of representing the masses was now relieved of this burden. In fact, the act of representation itself came to be looked at with suspicion as processes of knowledge formation and legitimation
were analyzed as extended processes of power and domination. In such a scenario, the intellectual’s will to subordinate others to his knowledge discourse is understood as anti-democratic. Paul Bove agrees with Foucault’s idea of the intrinsic relation between knowledge and power and suggests that democratic forms of representation “require that the ‘representative intellectual’ give way as a ‘representation’ of intellectual authority and be displaced by the counter image of the ‘specific intellectual’” (Bove 39). This idea of the specific intellectual is similar to that of the “organic intellectual” proposed by Gramsci. The specific intellectual “always struggles against power locally” (39). Bove argues that the “aim of Gramsci and Foucault, and….Habermas as well, is to theorize (albeit in very different ways) an intellectual capable of practical political action against domination” (41). Bove says that the Western world has developed subtler forms of domination and “forms of surplus value extraction” and hence it is imperative for the Western intellectual to develop a critical discourse that will help him in his “struggle against forms of oppressive power” (47). Linking the processes of intellectual production to other processes of capitalist production, Bove suggests that “Western intellectuals must confront the historicity of the current surplus of ideological production” (47).

In a postmodern context of flexible ideologies, the intellectual is faced with a dilemma of how to confront the system on which he has himself become so dependent. The postmodern intellectual has become heavily dependent on the publishing industry and the media for his own survival in the market. Paul Bove makes a critical analysis of Regis Debray’s best-selling book Teachers, Writers, Celebrities (1979) in the chapter titled “Celebrity and Betrayal: The High Intellectuals of Postmodern Culture.” He suggests that Debray aims to destroy “all traces of aura from intellectual life and production by analyzing the social reality of the Western
Intelligentsia and its relation to mass media and the system of commodity production” (Bove 98). The postmodern intellectual acquires the status of a celebrity from the attention he gets through the media. Once he gets such a status, he commits “treason against the people’s interest” (101) by working with self-interest. However, the intellectual cannot be held entirely responsible for this historic betrayal since, he depends upon the “structures of betrayal” (101) that he wants to critique. This is the essential paradox of the postmodern intellectual.

Bove argues that “the structure is such that the very critique of that betrayal must always hand itself over to the very media it critiques and give itself to the very structure it tries to date and designate” (101). The postmodern logic of media images renders philosophical discourse impossible. Therefore, the critical intellectual who was always implicated in such discourse becomes irrelevant. If traditional intellectuals were complicit with the ruling class, postmodern intellectuals are complicit with the market-oriented structure of media practices. The structure of discourse in media technology is different from the one that supported modernist intellectual practices in an earlier period. In modernist practice, intellectual discourse could be held “strictly to standards of reason, verification, and independence;” (102) however, in the postmodern world such a practice becomes a “persistent ideological illusion” (102). Hence, in postmodern discourse, intellectuals can “legitimate their power, positions, and activities” only through their ability to “produce, advertise, distribute, and defend them” (102). These are the fundamentals of capitalist production and distribution. Therefore, Debray’s attack on postmodern intellectuals’ betrayal of the public stands validated.

Debray perfectly understood that he was trying to critique postmodern
intellectual practices from within the very sites of their production. Nevertheless, he proceeded to do so “with high ironic apologies for being like those he attacks” (103). His criticism of postmodern intellectuals becomes more authentic as “he is himself a leading intellectual political celebrity in France” (103). Debray tries to show how the media replaced the symbolic and social functions of intellectuals in late-capitalism. In his rational theory of media, “mediology”, he attempts to analyze “the new political and cultural technology introduced by the modern mass media” (Debray 1). Debray was a leading intellectual of modern France made famous “since his capture by Bolivian forces in 1967 at Che’ Guevara’s killing; the object of a political and media blitz to free him, as Genet had been freed earlier, from a thirty year jail sentence” (Bove 103). These facts about his political affiliation and the later glamorous stature granted him by the media, gives his criticism of both the media and celebrity intellectuals a certain sense of credibility.

His climb up the social ladder to become a celebrity intellectual began with politics. He was a “leading participant in the events of 1968 and one of the most insightful commentators on those events, a leading member of the P.S.F; and finally a member of Mitterrand’s government” (103.) Therefore, Bove argues that the irony of his celebrity status in postmodern France and “his roots in the Ecole Normale only validates the demonstration he affords us of the scene of general intellectual treason in postmodernity” (103). Historically, the intellectual has always found ways of adapting himself to different social and political environments. But now, in the age of rapid economic and technological change, the postmodern intellectual decides to make a historic compromise with the forces responsible for such change. He succumbs to the pressure of the market in the interest of his own survival. And according to Debray, this is the betrayal of postmodern intellectuals.
Edward Said also refers to the work of Debray in his book *Representations of the Intellectual*. In the chapter titled “Professionals and Amateurs” he argues that around 1968 in France, many intellectuals “largely deserted their publishers’ fold and flocked to the mass media – as journalists, talk show guests and hosts, advisors, managers and so on” (*Representations of the Intellectual* 50). Intellectuals now found a wider audience but they got caught in the consuming logic of the media as “their entire life’s work as intellectuals depended on their viewers” (50). The logic of the media puts the postmodern intellectual subject in a tight spot by imposing “its own market logic on cultural production” (Bove 104). Hence, the critical intellectual is forced to surrender the only weapon he carried all along: his critical faculty. There can be no authentic critique of the media since, as Debray points out: “the object of criticism (and a boycott is part of the very wording) has the material ability to reduce the subject to nothing by withdrawing it from circulation” (Debray 245). Debray’s account of intellectual life is steeped in the same kind of pessimism that we find in Frankfurt school Marxists like Adorno about the effects of mass culture industry. Nonetheless, Debray’s criticism of intellectuals should be seen more as a cautionary note given to intellectuals to become more conscious of their own position in the mediated culture of their times. Such awareness, according to Bove, would make them realise that “intellectual life has no independent identity or history but it is always, in all forms, a function of the material world in which it is inscribed” (104).