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with existence as such.”<sup>468</sup> Thus, the world retains its inauthentic commodity character because idea of the Kantian thing-in-itself is preserved, which maintains the subject-object dichotomy. This further feeds into the erroneous idea that the world is an *a priori* and can simply be understood as ‘facticity’, which leads to a failure to acknowledge the culture of bourgeois society that has created reification in the first place.<sup>469</sup> Further, with the separation of the subject and object, the movement toward totality is blocked off. As such, the reified consciousness that bourgeois thought maintains misunderstands the historical situation. History as a dynamic, unified process cannot be understood, blocking the dialectical process between subject and object. Consciousness of one’s social being is suppressed by the “they”, and because the subject loses its autonomy and adopts a contemplative attitude, the subject lives a passive existence in which the unfamiliar reified conditions of society go unnoticed since, as Goldmann states, Dasein spontaneously accepts a form of consciousness that leads to a *Vorhandenheit* orientation. It is thus evident that the reified *objective* conditions of society, promote and sustain reified *subjective* experience under capitalism, due to the pervasiveness of the unified structure of reified consciousness under capitalism. This does not allow for the authentic historicizing of Dasein.

## 4.7. Conclusion

I have highlighted how Heidegger’s account of history as historicity may be concretized by bringing in the dialectical materialism of Lukács, along with Marcuse’s synthesis of Heideggerian phenomenology with Marxism. In doing so, I have demonstrated how the “they” may be characterized differently depending upon socio-historical circumstances. Specifically under capitalism, the “they” reproduces a reified society, which inhibits a proper understanding of history. Much of this is rooted in the unified structure of reified consciousness that has emerged under capitalist society. I have also briefly discussed how the reification that the “they” upholds fragments subjectivity, which leads to a passive, contemplative existence. While I have specifically focused on a discussion of consciousness as it relates to Lukács, the connection of consciousness to Heideggerian philosophy will be explained in more detail in the next

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<sup>468</sup> Lukács, 119.

<sup>469</sup> Lukács, 120.

























































(overlapping) modes of authenticity: genealogical/historical (related to origin) and identity or correspondence (content) .<sup>580</sup>

The emergence of authenticity as an *individual* moral ideal, tied to one's identity, along with the ways in which it serves to remedy anxiety that Taylor, Trilling, and Lindholm discover is extremely important to highlight because it has important ramifications on the emergence of contemporary forms of identity politics. In my view, identity politics succumb to the same failures as Heideggerian philosophy that I have outlined above (at least taken on its own).<sup>581</sup> While this warrants a completely new project, my thesis may serve as a starting point for such a discussion, which I will outline briefly, below.

The term "Identity Politics" emerged from the Combahee River Collective's (CRC) statement in 1977, which made important contributions to black feminism.<sup>582</sup> It states:

The focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics. We believe that the most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else's oppression.<sup>583</sup>

Even though the starting point of identity politics was grounded in individual identities,<sup>584</sup> the CRC focused on expanding the feminist principle of "the personal is political" by emphasizing the need to include an economic analysis, along with coalition building for

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<sup>580</sup> Lindholm, 2.

<sup>581</sup> It is not my intention to claim that identity politics is inherently problematic. As Francis Fukuyama claims, it is only when identity is interpreted or asserted in certain ways that it becomes problematic (Fukuyama 2018, 115).

<sup>582</sup> Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017), 8, 61, 120-121.

<sup>583</sup> Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" In *This Bridge Called My Back* ed. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 212.

<sup>584</sup> While identity politics as a term emerged out of the social movements of the 1960s, Francis Fukuyama argues that the such identity-based liberation movements of the 60s were actually a replication of earlier nationalist and religious movements, which surfaced due to the shift from living in a village community (*Gemeinschaft*) to an urban society (*Gesellschaft*) (Fukuyama 2018, 64-65). Rather than embracing the freedom to choose one's identity, the disappearance of a shared moral horizon (due to decline of religious values), led individuals to search for a common identity in order to re-establish inclusion into a social group based on shared moral values (Fukuyama 2008, 56). This is truly when the personal became political (Fukuyama 2008, 66).

revolutionary action.<sup>585</sup> Therefore, structural change, along with unification was key, which would result in the liberation of all.<sup>586</sup> Similarly, Asad Haider perceives the identity-based 1960s Black Panther Party as an successful form of identity politics, as it effectively mobilized and recognized that the struggle for black self-determination was intertwined with an anti-capitalist struggle.<sup>587</sup> This is also the basic premise of Marxist feminism, which recognizes that the oppression of women is intertwined with concrete, material, social reality.

Using identity politics as a form of empowerment and social liberation can be successful if asserted in the manner above, as there is an interrogation of the *material* conditions of society that create oppression for certain identities in society. In Lukácsian terms, these orientations may be authentic because it focuses on how a collective group in society are able to gain consciousness of their specific powerless place within the *objective* capitalist structures of society. These forms of identity politics adhere to a form of authenticity that is beyond the individual, as it is not fetishized as a thing to be owned by the individual, neither is it accepted as an absolute. It breaks through reification.

However, contemporary forms of identity politics appeal to a notion of authenticity that focuses on the *individual* subject in order to overcome a form of inauthenticity of the factual conditions that Dasein finds itself in. It focuses on the attainment and recognition of an 'authentic' identity as an end goal and is founded in the Politics of Recognition. Fukuyama highlights how the assertion of a separate identity has been created:

[i]dentity grows, in the first place, out of a distinction between one's true inner self and outer world of social rules and norms that do not adequately recognize that inner self's worth or dignity...But only in modern times has the view taken hold that the authentic inner self is intrinsically valuable, and the outer society systematically wrong and unfair in its valuation of the former. It is not the inner self that has to be made to conform to society's rule, but society itself that needs to change<sup>588</sup>

Furthermore, Fukuyama demonstrates that there are three facets to modern identity: first, identity has become related to *thymos*, which is rooted in the human desire for

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<sup>585</sup> Combahee River Collective, 213.

<sup>586</sup> Combahee River Collective, 215.

<sup>587</sup> Asad Haider, *Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump* (London: Verso, 2018), 14.

<sup>588</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (New York: Picador, 2018), 9-10.

recognition; second, a greater importance has been placed on the inner self rather than the outer self; and finally, it is related to a concept of dignity, which posits that *everyone* should gain recognition.<sup>589</sup> This leads to a politicization of the self, as there is a demand for the inner self to become not only recognized, but also embodied in rights and laws. Crucial to this modern concept of identity is authenticity, where the inability to assert such authenticity leads to *anxiety* and *alienation*.<sup>590</sup> In this regard, the search for the authentic self may be driven by a desire to overcome a form of anxiety.

Though such an 'authentic' claim to identity is an important step for empowerment and may serve to alleviate a form of anxiety, too much emphasis on the *subject* results in ineffective political action, as the important, socio-historical structures of neoliberal capitalism are ignored. Without a materialist investigation to interrogate the concrete, socio-historical conditions that perpetuate the forms of oppression that identity politics wishes to abolish, the primacy of the subject prevails, just as it does in Heideggerian philosophy. Fukuyama, like Taylor argues that the culture of narcissism is to blame.<sup>591</sup> This is similar to how Heideggerian philosophy functions, insofar as the *individual* Dasein's Being is prioritized, which maintains the primacy of the subject. Because identity politics has become narcissistic and/or places the burden on specific groups in society to fight for their 'own' issues, separatist politics arise. The importance of coalition building that once belonged to identity politics is abolished because instead of unifying and working with others, tense battles over asserting authentic identities is instead emphasized.<sup>592</sup> Radical Women of Colour feminists of the 1970s have already asserted the problematic separatist ideology that arises out of identity politics.<sup>593</sup> As Cherie Moraga states,

I worry about the tendency of racial/cultural separatism amongst us where we dig in our heels against working with groups outside our own particular race/ethnicity. ... But the making of a political movement has never been about safety or feeling "at home" (Not in the long run, anyway) Cultural identity – our right to it – is a legitimate concern and basic concern for all

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<sup>589</sup> Fukuyama, *Identity*, 37.

<sup>590</sup> Fukuyama, 26.

<sup>591</sup> Fukuyama 103.

<sup>592</sup> Taylor, *How We Get Free*, 64.

<sup>593</sup> Cherríe Moraga, "Refugees of a World on Fire" in *This Bridge Called My Back*, ed. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 46;263 258.



women of colour. ... But to stop there only results in the most limiting of identity politics: "If I suffer it, it's real. If I don't feel it, it doesn't exist."<sup>594</sup>

Because the subject merely seeks inclusion and recognition of an injured identity within the existing societal framework, objective society is taken as an *a priori*, which again reflects one of Heidegger's main flaws, in that he accepts the world as always already there, yet not to be transformed or changed. Instead, contemporary forms of identity politics operate under a model in which the subject expresses a need for solidity by becoming unconsciously, passionately attached to an identity.<sup>595</sup> Therefore, the subject becomes preoccupied with choosing and *owning* an 'authentic' identity that it can claim on its own terms. As bell hooks argues, the politicization of the self is important but when it becomes the end goal, it becomes narcissistic, as the 'personal' in 'the personal is political' takes over.<sup>596</sup>

Like Heidegger's 'neutral' project, identity politics have become de-politicized or operate under a neutralized framework, as it has become solely focused on the individual and their attainment and recognition of an authentic, injured identity within the existing societal framework.<sup>597</sup> bell hooks has already made similar arguments regarding the de-politicization of identity politics in *Talking Back*, published in 1988 where she criticizes identity politics for being too focused on the immediate concerns of one's identity, which does not lead to a radical, critical consciousness of how one's personal is connected to political reality.<sup>598</sup> So while identity politics does focus on *collective* action by identity-based group in society, their demands are confined an *individual* specific identity, which does not lead to collective revolutionary action, as the possibility of unification is undermined. Therefore, like Heidegger, identity politics also appeals to an individualized sense of authenticity that one can claim as one's *ownmost*, which results in a false concreteness that covers over the necessity to acknowledge the structural forces that contribute to oppression. This maintains the broken dialectic between subject and object and upholds the primacy of the subject.

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<sup>594</sup> Cherie Moraga, 258.

<sup>595</sup> Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 74.

<sup>596</sup> hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist Thinking Black* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1989), 109.

<sup>597</sup> Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 14-15.

<sup>598</sup> bell hooks, *Talking Back*, 106.

Further, the pseudo-form of concreteness and empowerment given to identity-based groups places the onus on the individual *subject* to make change. Like Heidegger's Dasein, the individual becomes burdened and conceived of as a helpless entity, as it strives for the attainment of an authentic identity within a world that it has no power over. Similar to Adorno's critique of Heidegger's Dasein, a false sense of freedom is given to identity-based liberation groups as a structural analysis is not explored.

The focus on the *individual* subject, along with the acceptance of the world as an *a priori* leads to the argument that, like Heidegger, contemporary forms of identity politics fail to account for the materialist conception of history, thereby operating under a falsely concrete framework. As discussed above, when identity politics was first introduced by the CRC, it focused on a feminist, anti-racist, and anticapitalist framework that moved beyond "the personal is political", and also reinforced the importance of solidarity.<sup>599</sup> The dialectical relationship between subject and object was thus asserted, as the subject was recognized as having influence over object and vice versa. However, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor argues that "Since 1977, [identity politics] has been used, abused, and reconfigured into something foreign to its creators."<sup>600</sup> Instead, focus has shifted to the attainment and recognition of an 'authentic' identity that a group in society shares, without questioning the root of the problem. In other words, there is no interrogation of what *drives* this search for authenticity: how do the objective structures of neo-liberal capitalism influence the subject? As Fukuyama states,

Identity politics for some progressives has become a cheap substitute for serious thinking about how to reverse the thirty-year trend in most liberal democracies toward greater socioeconomic inequality. It is easier to argue over cultural issues within the confines of elite institutions than it is to appropriate money or convince skeptical legislators to change policies.<sup>601</sup>

And while identity is real, it is also abstract and does not tell us how social relations have constituted it. Therefore, as Haider states, a materialist approach is required to move from the abstract to the concrete.<sup>602</sup>

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<sup>599</sup> Combahee River Collective, 213-214.

<sup>600</sup> Taylor, *Free*, 8.

<sup>601</sup> Fukuyama, *Identity*, 115.

<sup>602</sup> Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 11.

Furthermore, Haider argues that identity politics re-naturalizes capitalism because “to demand inclusion in the structure of society as it is means forfeiting the possibility of structural change.”<sup>603</sup> Because of the inability to organize, ideology prevails, where the white bourgeois, masculinist ideal maintains its status as the ‘neutral’ identity.<sup>604</sup> As Haider states,

“[i]f [capitalism] is not questioned, people of color, along with other oppressed groups, have no choice but to articulate their political demands in terms of inclusion in the bourgeois masculinist ideal.”<sup>605</sup>

This maintains the subject-object duality insofar as the subject seeks inclusion within an objective world that it is opposed to – that it did not create. When ideology takes over and no alternative is given (i.e. political organization), those who critique identity politics become subject to scrutiny because it appears as though they are speaking out against those specific struggles, which comes across as a denial of the agency of oppressed groups.<sup>606</sup> Adorno’s critique of Heidegger’s concept of authenticity in *Negative Dialectics* is extremely relevant in this discussion, as he states,

authenticity ... will promptly recoil into positivity, into authenticity as a posture of consciousness – a posture whose emigration from the profane powerlessly imitates the theological habit of the old doctrine of essence.<sup>607</sup>

Therefore, like Heideggerian philosophy, identity politics operates in the realm of idealism appealing to a notion of authenticity that is accepted as the absolute, end goal. The subject remains reified – it is fragmented and splintered under capitalist conditions. As Haider argues, identity politics has become a “politics ... reduced to the anxious performance of authenticity.”<sup>608</sup> And as Haider states, “identity politics identity politics paradoxically ends up reinforcing the very norms it set out to criticize.”<sup>609</sup> It is a one sided approach to overcome reification. In other words, identity politics attempts to overcome reification – though this attempt is confined to a subjective plane and as a result, it

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<sup>603</sup> Haider, 22.

<sup>604</sup> Hider, 21-22.

<sup>605</sup> Haider, 22-23.

<sup>606</sup> Haider, 62.

<sup>607</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 113.

<sup>608</sup> Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 67.

<sup>609</sup> Haider, 24.

remains within an objective reified framework. As Fukuyama rightly asserts, identity politics therefore threatens collective action.<sup>610</sup> This is similar to Heidegger's efforts to overcome *vorhandenheit*, which is merely a one-sided critique of reification, since isolation is only overcome in Heidegger's account of Dasein's concerned engagement with entities in the world like tools. Therefore, the form of authenticity that identity politics appeals to is as false and inauthentic as Heidegger's is, because both, which seems like a response to reification, actually becomes entrapped within reification in itself.

Despite the failures of contemporary forms of identity politics, Lukács, Haider, and earlier forms of identity politics demonstrates how identity politics may be reformulated to overcome reification. Though Haider does not mention reification in his text, he, like Lukács, focuses on a *unified* subject, as he seeks a construction of an authentic humanity, by focusing on an insurgent universality which is organized around class interests and explicitly opposed to the entire capitalist system.<sup>611</sup> Opposition to capitalist society is required, otherwise, one remains entrapped within the realm of reified society, and as Audre Lorde states, "*the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.*"<sup>612</sup> Authenticity must be de-fetishized and while bell hooks calls for the use of confession and memory to "[shift] the focus away from mere naming of one's experience ... [and] to talk about identity in relation to culture, history, politics, whatever and to challenge the notion of identity as static and unchanging", it is extremely important to assert what Haider calls for: an insurgent universality.<sup>613</sup> He states,

Our world is in dire need of a new insurgent universality. We are capable of producing it; we all are, by definition. What we lack is program, strategy, and tactics. If we set the consolations of identity aside, that discussion can begin.<sup>614</sup>

Unification will bring about the de-reification of society allowing for the re-establishment of the dialectical relationship between subject and object. With this unification, however, is the need for *organized* action. And while both Lukács and Haider demonstrate that

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<sup>610</sup> Fukuyama, *Identity*, 128.

<sup>611</sup> Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 51.

<sup>612</sup> Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (New York: The Crossing Press feminist series, 2007), 112.

<sup>613</sup> hooks, *Talking Back*, 10.

<sup>614</sup> Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 114.

authentic social change is achievable, this is merely conceived of as a *possibility*. The notion of universal emancipation often seems like an impossibility and gives rise to what Haider calls a “melancholic sensibility.” A breakdown of the reified structure of consciousness is required along with effective, organized action is necessary.

While I have outlined many additional topics of research above, it is nonetheless important to highlight how anxiety may function beyond Heidegger’s strictly ontological account in *Being and Time*. What is crucial to emphasize from my findings is that anxiety may manifest in a way that opens up consciousness of social being, which incite revolutionary action for social change. And although anxiety is not a common pathway for revolutionaries (unlike anger, for example), more consideration should be placed onto anxiety’s emancipatory potential. This is especially important to highlight amidst the current coronavirus pandemic, which has arguably increased the magnitude of anxiety that the subject experiences under existing reified conditions. If this is the case, we may be at a very crucial point in history, as such anxiousness may generate increased awareness of how the “they” conceals an understanding of how neoliberal capitalism affects social being. The question remains, however, as to where this consciousness may be directed and if fruitful social change can emerge under current global circumstances.

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