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Greta Thunberg Phenomenon and Contemporary Behavior of Capitalism

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Abstract

Slavoj Žižek, in his book *Living in the End Times* states that 'global capitalism is approaching an apocalyptic zero point' (2011), and among the four horsemen bringing that catastrophe, the first would be the 'global environmental crisis'. This paper aims to analyze the contemporary behavior of capitalism while considering Greta Thunberg's Phenomenon. This study, which is based on secondary data related to the Greta Thunberg Phenomenon along with development discourses, theories, and ideologies, is guided by qualitative research methodology and an inductive research approach. Critical Discourse Analyzing (CDA) method is used to analyze data. The study reveals that the sustainable development discourse and associated environmental movements have merely brought hope for a utopia, which could only mask the ugliness of capitalism instead of bringing it to an end. The ideologies such as capitalism, socialism, and sustainable development are built within the subject of the ideology of modernity. While accepting the ideology of modernity, finding solutions to the problems created by itself is meaningless. Greta's struggle has turned into a profit-making drama, providing a momentary fantasy for those who are tired of capitalism. Such struggles, instead of genuine efforts to change the capitalist system, are a part and parcel of its perpetuation, which, on the other hand, is 'ideological cynicism'.

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Introduction

Greta Thunberg- the teen celebrity climate activist from Sweden- is referred to as the voice of the planet and has become the leading edge of a youth movement against climate change through her iconic climate strikes. She has shamed climate change negotiators, blamed those who are in power for their inaction, and called for a system change against the growth of capitalism (Thunberg, 2019b). She is said to have ignited the spark of fire within the Western capitalist world by launching a global climate movement, thus attracting people globally, including school children, the youth, environmentalists, scientists, and political leaders, to create a positive voice for a better green world (Wallace-Wells, 2019).

Over the years, many attempts have been made to explain 'the rise and fall of capitalism' in a theoretical way (Amin, 2010; Kotz, 2009), yet, regardless of many theoretical explanations given, Marxist scholar Zizek's insight into the collapse of capitalism will especially be considered in this paper. Zizek analyses the end of capitalism at the hands of 'four horsemen': the global environmental crisis, imbalances in the economic system, biological revolution, and the rise of social divisions and cracks (Zizek, 2011), thus identifies eco-environmental crises to be one of the elements that bring capitalism to its end. This paper aims to critically and theoretically analyze the role of Greta Thunberg's international crusade to end climate change, bring a system change – the end of capitalism, and bring about environmentally friendly human development (Zizek, 2011).

The profit-oriented global capitalist neo-liberal economic system, which was developed under the modernity project, has heavily contributed to global environmental issues and climate change. Greta Thunberg's struggle is the main counterpart that seeks and shows that the struggle for eco-friendly and sustainable development is against over-consumptions- a globalized neoliberal economic system that is causing climate change. But, as analyzed in this article, Greta's struggle for environmental protection and active climate change practically activates against her own ideas, which are intended in her

main discourse. So, the article goes on to say that whatever the purpose of Greta's struggle, it has now become part of neo-liberal capitalism itself. So here is a detailed explanation of how this struggle has now become just a sweet drama. Those who join that struggle, instead of fighting the real problem, seek to suppress the real problem and further perpetuate the pernicious capitalism that it claims to oppose. This article critically and theoretically analyses this situation through the ideology concept of 'Ideological Cynicism' that has been developed Zizek (Gao, 2016). This analysis, based on available secondary data, is guided by the critical discourse analyzing (CDA) method.

Review Of The Literature

The theoretical framework of this study includes a number of discourses/theories, which were primarily used to bridge the knowledge gap and develop the main arguments of the knowledge constructed.

Evolution of Capitalism and Environmental Catastrophes

The capitalist ideology emerged as the Nation-State in Western Europe in the early sixteenth century by gradually replacing feudalism, which can simply be defined as a 'profit-oriented economic system' that promotes a private free trade economic market rather than a state cooperative economy (Schumpeter 2010). After the industrial revolution, the feudal socioeconomic module of Europe, considered to be a dark and backward module though it was less damaging to the natural ecosystems (Marx 1867-2018), declined for the reason that it could not theoretically and practically fit with the new world, and on the other hand, unbearable socioeconomic pressure generated within Europe led to the eruption of the feudal system making way for a capitalist structure.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a process called the Renaissance took place in Europe. The philosophical background for this was provided by the ideology of 'modernity,' and modern development discourses are gradually built on that. Modernity is an ideology characterized by a focus on knowledge, individualism, industrialization, and technological development that emerges from scientific thought, as well as the rejection of certain traditional feudal values. The ideology of classical economics - the second epoch of capitalism fused with liberalism and modernism- was theoretically developed by a

number of scholars such as Adam Smith, Jean-Baptiste Say, David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus, Max Webber, Talcott Parsons, and John Stuart Mill (Smith, 2015 -1776) this newly evolved school of thought aimed at developing a structure in which people could maximize their individual financial advantages. Thus, the leading thinkers of classical political economy had principally focused on the idea of the economic efficacy of global free trade markets, which resulted in the growth of the earliest capitalist economy (Kumara 2016). On the surface, this classical capitalist approach combined with liberalism and modernism may appear to be a rational and optimistic approach to building a better socioeconomic state for all, yet, in reality, it led to 'Euro-centred idealism,' which produced a large crowd of lumpen proletariats who were immensely exploited by a small capitalist class (Marx 1867-2018). During this period, a large amount of natural resources available in Europe and its colonial states was utilized for industrialization, resulting in the greatest natural resource extermination in human history (Das 2011).

The simultaneous growth of production and human population increased the competition within capitalist countries for power and resources, and it/directly shaped World Wars I II (WW I & II). These wars brought forth the weakest and darkest sides of capitalism and marked the turning point of the evolution of capitalist discourse by shifting the autonomy of capitalism from Europe to the United States. According to Beams:

"The future development of world economy on the capitalistic basis means a ceaseless struggle for new and ever new fields of capitalist exploitation, which must be obtained from one and the same source, the earth. The economic rivalry under the banner of militarism is accompanied by robbery and destruction, which violate the elementary principles of human economy. World production revolts not only against the confusion produced by national and state divisions but also against the capitalist economic organization, which has now turned into barbarous disorganization and chaos. The war of 1914 is the most colossal breakdown in history of an economic system destroyed by its own inherent contradictions" (Beams, 2015:01).

Wars generally, including two world wars, have alarmingly challenged the capitalist economic structure while leading to global economic, political, social and environmental annihilation and degradation. The resultant great economic depression occurred after WW I in the 1930s guided many intellectuals to reconsider the issues of capitalist policy of laissez-faire drawing on Marxist criticisms (Ferguson 2008) and most of the theoretical and practical issues of capitalism were realized in this economic depression, yet, its fair share on eco-environmental concerns was ignored. "Wars between capitalist states are as a rule the result of their rivalry for world markets, as every state is not only concerned in consolidating its own market but also in conquering new markets. Further, these wars arise out of the never-ending armaments race of militarism. Therefore, Wars are inherent in capitalism; they will only cease when the capitalist economy is abolished" (Ferguson 2008:31).

After the WW II, rationale for 'liberalization' was challenged and major capitalist countries adopted principals of socialism, such as 'welfare state' to recover from theoretical and practical weaknesses of capitalism (Thane 2016), for instance, the Keynesian economic concept (1936) proposes to replace capitalist economic structure with liberal capitalism based on ideals of socialism to form a new capitalist module regardless the fact that the principles of the Keynesian economic theory itself depends on capitalism (Keynes 1936-2018). This module could rejuvenate the dwindling economy during WW II and the core capitalist states used it during 1945 - 1970s to achieve their development targets rapidly, thus, this era is called the golden age of capitalism (Wincott 2013) though the Keynesian economic module was indifferent toward eco-environmental concerns within unlimited development.

The internal glitches within capitalism in/directly led to world wars and by the end of the WW II, imperialism collapsed, too. While most colonies gained independence from the empires as new states, the majority of them adopted the modernist and capitalist model as the development strategy. In particular, wealthy countries with authoritarian powers besides their development policymakers seemed to push these countries towards a capitalist-modernization dream: "Modernization is a total transformation of a traditional society into the types of technology and associated social organization that characterize the advanced politically stable nations of the Western World"

(Moore 1963:89). For example, Rostow has theoretically explained 'how poor and developing countries must achieve modernity in five stages to achieve development in the same way done by capitalist developed countries (Walt 1960-1990). Consistent with this capitalist and modernist world domination, the colonies that gained independence began pursuing their development goals through industrialization, urbanization, and mega-development projects by following the capitalist colonial rule. The capitalist socioeconomic backgrounds imposed on these states were accompanied by a rise in population and overconsumption (Kumara 2016). In this context, extreme deforestation and environmental degradation, especially in countries like India and Brazil, is clearly visible after the 1960s (Barraclough & Solon 2013).

By the 1970s, the global capitalist system had faced dire crisis and the Keynesian economic model failed to prevent the collapse of capitalism. This situation is analysed in the 'crisis theory', which makes clear that the period of prosperity in capitalist development is only a temporary phase followed by a downfall when the tendency for rate of profit falls (Marx & Engels 1885-1959). In this context, the theoretical validity of modernism based on capitalism was also destabilized, thereby, making the Third World countries that followed the same economic module of capitalist developed countries face grave socioeconomic and political crises (Kliman 2015). According to Eagleton, "high modernity was born at a stroke with mass commodity culture. The subject of late capitalism is neither simply the self-regulating synthetic agent posited by classical humanist ideology, nor merely a decentred network of desire, but a contrary amalgam of the two" (Eagleton 1988:392).

Neoliberal Globalized Capitalism and Environmental Pollution Boom

Neoliberalism- 'the modified form of classical liberal economic thought that tends to favor free-market capitalism' (Alfredo and Johnston 2005)- emerged where the Keynesian economic model failed to sustain the capitalist economy. According to neoliberals, neoliberal capitalism is legitimately and ideologically aimed at better and free world development and social welfare.

"Neoliberal theory claims that a largely unregulated capitalist system (a "free-market economy") not only embodies the ideal of free

individual choice but also achieves optimum economic performance with respect to efficiency, economic growth, technical progress, and distributional justice. The state is assigned a very limited economic role: defining property rights, enforcing contracts, and regulating the money supply. State intervention to correct market failures is viewed with suspicion on the grounds that such intervention is likely to create more problems than it solves" (Kotz 2002: 65).

The question arises here is whether neoliberalism- the dominant ideology pervading the political-economic practices and policies of developed and developing countries- actually operates within its ideals. The basic principles of neoliberalism are to end the regulatory welfare functions left in capitalist states, to privatize public affairs and assets, to slash social welfare programs and reduce taxes on business, to ensure freedom of movement in the international sphere and to give individual investors the freedom to move their property across national borders (Alfredo and Johnston 2005; Kotz 2002). If described briefly, neoliberal economics appears to remove all barriers to capitalist authoritarianism to obtain maximum profits within the shortest possible time (Von Werlhof 2008). Therefore, it is unbelievable if this structure was predicted to bring about development and a better quality of life for all humankind.

Moreover, it is assumed that there is 'a possibility for causation or even a correlation between globalization and neoliberalism' (Vilde, 2015) and scholars have argued that neoliberalism is the main driver of globalization and that globalization itself can be seen as both the effect of, and the move towards, global neoliberalism (Litonjua, 2008; Vilde 2015). Based on the criticisms of Marxist intellectuals on neoliberal globalization, it is clear that this has ruined local and small-scale economic activities of developing countries by leading communities towards overconsumption and encouraging them to achieve so-called capitalist dreams and fantasies, thereby to draw capital from peripheral poor and developing countries to wealthy nations while maintaining postcolonialism through economic globalization (Brooks 2001; During, 2000; Rogers, 1995).

Globalization from the last few decades has overlaid the neoliberal economic structure on developing states. This process has largely been assisted by multinational corporations in which the mother plants are situated and regulated by the political authority and agendas of developed and powerful states. During the early period of liberal capitalism, colonialism politically suppressed the peripheral regions and by this means led to economic exploitation. At present, neoliberal capitalism enabled by globalization and multinational corporations, is thawing the political power of these peripheral countries and continues to maintain economic dominance within these states (Nölke 2014).

Neoliberal global capitalism has taken over the world economy since the 1970s and shoved the world towards consumerism, which later led to deterioration of ecological resources in peripheral developing countries and overall environmental degradation (Russell 2018). High level of eco-environmental degradation based on industrialization, agricultural industry, and deforestation is associated with an overgrowing world population and overconsumption of natural resources headed by neoliberal global capitalism (McCarthy and Scott 2004).

Wealthy capitalist countries with neoliberal global economies, for example, the United States of America, United Kingdom, and Germany, and Asian capitalist countries such as China and India, have largely contributed to the world's worst environmental pollution in the last few decades (Faber 2018). For instance, China and the United States of America are rivals in their struggle to be world economic leaders, and they have the biggest share in the planet's air pollution (World Economic Forum 2019). The endpoint of such environmental pollution to maximize profits has always been questioned. The bottom line of Malthusian theory of population growth is that sustainability requires balance and this idea is further elaborated by post-Malthusians that the rapidly increasing human population and overutilization of natural resources by human beings have exceeded the carrying capacity of the planet (Shaofeng 2004). The current situation has ideologically led to the downfall of neoliberal global capitalism after several decades of its emergence around the 1980s.

Sustainable development discourse, climate change, and Greta Thunberg phenomenon

From the outset of neoliberal capitalist thought, global ecological and environmental issues were raised against its inner core, laying capitalist core states and thinkers needing an alternative approach to cover the ideological gaps in the neoliberal capitalist structure. Thus, the environmental discourse has increasingly gained importance in framing development theories, policies and models, especially under sustainable development (Kumara 2016).

The sustainable development discourse: 'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland 1987) was introduced by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 as an alternative development approach and this discourse is associated with 'Eco-managerialism', which deeply concerns for ecological management and economic development (Fischer & Hajer 1999). The concept of 'sustainable development' is principally used as a common development approach to raising global conservation strategies and aims to address environmental vulnerability and limitless, unrestrained economic development (Adams 2009), which has been ignored extensively in mainstream development theories and models.

On the other hand, the sustainable development discourse is identified as an inadequate approach owing to its inability to precisely explain how it will achieve its goal of development combined with environmental conservation within the contemporary capitalist and superimposed capitalist system. Especially the sustainable development discourse has practically failed to answer the situations in developing countries since these countries have the most vulnerable environments due to rapidly increasing human population, widespread poverty, and superimposed neoliberal global economic structure. A significant philosophical explanation given on such failure is that capitalist ideals did not genuinely support the sustainable discourse to achieve its goals, though it is based on neoliberal capitalist roots. In contrast, if viewed politically, the 'northern hemisphere' developed states have not truly and fairly supported the developing world to achieve sustainable development goals

(colonial periphery) (Adams 2009; Zizek 2008). According to Allen and Edwards (1995), sustainable development has become a trendy approach rather than a practical tool since it does not operate as an incorporative approach for all regions globally. Hence, the concept of sustainable development has become dilution.

Even after thirty-three years since the emergence of the sustainable development discourse, the world environment continues to degrade persistently, and global forest resources and wildlife are steadily disappearing, with a forest resource degrading rate of 14 million hectares per year (Mowforth & Munt 2015). Regardless of the emission history of the developed world for centuries, many developed states still contribute significantly to the emission of greenhouse gases, resulting in global warming and continuing to accelerate environmental degeneration and degradation. The United States of America, which was identified as the most dominant world political power, refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, which remained unsuccessful in the present sustainable target for reducing greenhouse gas emission levels. As well, other developed nations consented to international agreements for achieving sustainable development goals but are unwilling to perform their obligations honestly (Mowforth & Munt 2015).

The Rio+20 conference on sustainable development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012 emphasized the importance of political interference for an effective and live sustainable development process. This was the biggest UN conference that put a major step forward in achieving a sustainable future (United Nations 2013). However, the Rio +20 failed owing to many political issues; for example, the United States and many politically powerful European countries were reluctant to come forward to support building momentum for a historic agreement and ignored their part of obligation for environmental sustainability as well as minimizing existing economic crises, poverty, unemployment, and economic insecurity. On the other hand, developing nations with the highest population growth continue their development strategies, overlooking sustainable development ideologies and silently accepting accelerated environmental degeneration and degradation in the world (Bollyky 2012; Walsh 2012).

Thus, with the rise of neoliberal capitalism, all the countries of the world had contributed more or less to environmental degradation and at the same time, the capitalist core set out on a policy of sustainable development and acted in a dishonest manner to cover up the ugliness of neoliberal capitalism and related critical eco-environmental issues such as climate change. Although climate change is a natural phenomenon, uncontrollable human activity has caused unprecedented climate change that brings adverse environmental impacts on all animals, including humans. In this background, Greta Thunberg has started her struggle against climate change.

Methodology

'Qualitative Methodology and 'Inductive Research Approach'

In order to understand socio-cultural, economic, and political phenomena, qualitative research methodology is considered more useful than quantitative methodology since this methodology focuses on comparing social experiences, practices, norms and philosophies rather than collecting and analysing numeric data. Thus, collecting data through a qualitative methodology cope with 'words' not with 'numbers'; i.e. this approach aims to answer 'what', 'how' and 'why' social phenomena (Bryman, 2012). Thus, qualitative methodology is adopted since the key research components are to understand, describe and interpret social theories and structures.

Considering the fact that qualitative methodology and inductive research approach are profoundly correlated (Bryman, 2012), inductive research approach was applied in this research. Following that, first, data was extracted from secondary sources and then findings were linked with relevant theories, discourses, and concepts (Bryman, 2012; Thomas, 2012) adhering to Critical discourse analysis (CDA) method.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and theoretical framework of the research

Provided that discourse is a 'flow of knowledge through time and space' associated closely with power relations (Wood & Kroger, 2000; Hall, 2001), this paper analyses Greta Thunberg's crusade and speeches in multiple stages, namely data understanding, categorizing, coding under themes by linking it

with theories/discourses and narratively describing it (Description/ Interpretation/ Explanation) (Fairhurst and Mary 2012). Discourse is shaped by power relations associated with ideologies (Tenorio 2011). Discourse, theoretically, is developed by society in order to support the expansion of institutionalized patterns of knowledge, political/socioeconomic power relations and identity (Van Dijk 2013), thus, discourse analysing in this paper has taken the notion of 'socioeconomic power' and 'political dominance' into consideration.

Schiffin et al (2001) mentioned that the study of discourse mainly focuses on the language used and anything 'beyond the sentence' (Schiffin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2008). Theoretically, a discourse is created by society that supports the build-up of specific knowledge, social relations and also social identity. When analysing discourse, the notion of 'social power' and 'dominance' should be considered. Social power is based on position, status, gender, education, political connection, class etc. According to Van Dijk (1990, 2000), social power can directly lead to social dominance. Moreover, social power and social dominance can usually be seen as organized and institutionalized. According to Robert Kaplan (1990), a socio-cultural statement (the text or discourse) displays a multidimensional structure and layers. As Kaplan's explains; "it is just like a sheet of thick plywood consisting of many thin sheets lying at different angles to each other. The basics of a text (spoken or written) consists of several discourses" (Kaplan 1990 cited Dellinger, 1995, p. 01). Therefore, discourse analysis is most helpful in examining and understanding social phenomena and the changes that occur in social phenomena in relation to factors of time and space.

Knowledge that we normally accept as 'truth' or 'real' is acquired through written and oral language. Although we initially feel that there is a connection between reality and language constructs, it is not true (Silverman, 2004). Reality is a constructed thing by people who have dominant power (Foucault, 1980; Escobar, 1984). constructed knowledge can be deconstructed and/or transformed into other shapes. Communication or debate of written or spoken knowledge is considered as a discourse. Builds, breaks down, takes on different shapes of the discourse is happening over time and changing power agendas and there are hidden motives behind the knowledge built up by a

discourse. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) technic is helpful to identify and analyse the different type of ideologies, hidden agendas, behind the discourse through various determinants. Greta Thunberg's struggle is tied to the sustainable development discourse. The gap between the language constructed open discussion of the above straggle and hidden texts behind the constructed truth can be analysed through Critical discourse analysis.

As Fairclough (2011) has stated, social practices are based on elements such as social activities, relations, objects, instruments, time and space, social subjects with norms, beliefs, values, knowledge etc. Therefore, in the process of CDA, the role of power dominance and its relations in discourses are further examined with relation to social practices and geopolitical connections. Hence, CDA does not deal with 'facts' and it is open to multiple readings of discourses. CDA displays how society and discourse depend on each other (Fairclough, 2011)

According to Fairclough (1992), there are three inter-related dimensions of CDA analysis such as the object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts), the processes in the production that explain its reception by human subjects (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) and the socio-historical conditions which govern these processes (Fairclough, 1992). These three inter-related dimensions of CDA need different kinds of analysis such as text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation).

To precisely understand and analyse the background behind the text on Greta Thunberg's struggle, development discourses were considered here for the reason that mainstream development theories, models and ideologies are directly linked with environmental discourse and climate change since every development activity has an environmental cost (Cannon & Detlef 2010).

Results And Discussion

The Greta Thunberg's Struggle: The Swedish teenaged environmental activist Greta Thunberg has currently gained international recognition for her movement against climate change. She poses a great challenge to the neoliberal and powerful capitalist states and their political leaders. It is

remarkable that a large number of people have joined her struggle, many of whom represent the neoliberal capitalist state. When Greta Thunberg was 8 years old, she heard about climate change, where she was unusually depressed. She refused to talk and eat and consequently lost 10 kilograms in two months. She was eventually diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and selective mutism (Thunberg 2018a). She seriously considered human influence on climate change, which caused her to become depressed and reject school. Greta urged her parents to lead an eco-friendly lifestyle, and, when they did not, they were warned that they 'would steal her future' (Chiorando 2009). By 2018, Thunberg decided not to go to school and started her famous strike named 'school strike for climate' to force to the Swedish government to reduce carbon emissions in accordance with the Paris Agreement (Gessen 2018) and was later joined by a large student body (Thunberg 2018b). Greta's strike was widely publicized by both mass media and social media and attracted immense public attention making her an internationally recognized climate activist. When her struggle created a fascinating environmental movement around the world, she became a news creator (Tait 2019) and the face of the international climate change movement. Greta's school boycott became popular in the media, and she encouraged schoolchildren around the world to participate in these student strikes. In December 2018, more than 20,000 students in at least 270 cities went on strike, a trend that has become popular among school children in Western capitalist countries (Carrington 2018).

In 2018, December, Greta Thunberg had the opportunity to deliver a speech at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24) and at United Nations Climate Action Summit in September, 2019. Her emotional speech there was promoted by the media more than they did to the other speeches conducted at the same conferences (Gajanan 2019).

Greta Thunberg speech 01

United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24) (December 3, 2018)

My name is Greta Thunberg. I am 15 years old. I am from Sweden. I speak on behalf of Climate Justice Now. Many people say that Sweden is just a small country and it doesn't matter what we do. But I've learned you are never too small to make a difference. And if a few

children can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school, then imagine what we could all do together if we really wanted to. But to do that, we have to speak clearly, no matter how uncomfortable that may be. You only speak of green eternal economic growth because you are too scared of being unpopular. You only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess, even when the only sensible thing to do is pull the emergency brake. You are not mature enough to tell it like is. Even that burden you leave to us children. But I don't care about being popular. I care about climate justice and the living planet

What are the hidden discourses under this public speech? Greta's ideas challenge the liberal capitalist discourse, the modernist discourse, the environmental possibilism discourse and the globalized neoliberal capitalists' discourse that emerged in Europe after the collapse of the main feudal socioeconomic system. As a child, she complains to adults (history). Her claim is based on the environmental conservation and sustainable development discourse. Over the past few centuries, growing capitalist-led development malpractice and other related discourses have led to an increase in world population and the promotion of overconsumption, that was a main reason to climate change and environmental degradation that Greta's raises. But we must question whether the situation would have been better if liberal capitalist ideology had not developed from 14th century Europe. As We argue here that the socioeconomic benefits, human freedom and easy life achieved by world human society through capitalist competitive economic development can be identified as forward step of human civilization than previous feudal social system. She and her fans simply forget the achievements of human society through capitalist development process. When she told, *I care about climate justice and the living planet*, we can agree and happy, but what is the behind the text. This goal cannot be achieved by maintaining the world's huge human population and their rational needs. The community that glorifies this expression, on the one hand, enjoys Grata's sweet words and at the same time enjoys all the achievements that obtained by capitalist development process.

Our civilization is being sacrificed for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue making enormous amounts of money.

Our biosphere is being sacrificed so that rich people in countries like mine can live in luxury. It is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few (COP24-December 3, 2018).

Within the Greta's above text, we can identify environmental conservation discourse and Marxist ideology as key theoretical background which used to criticise unequal development system of the capitalism (Faber, 2018). Further, her text has combines with dependency theory introduced by post-Marxists which has focused to analyse the core peripheral dependency patterns and issues of unquail development. So as a main ideological protest which highlight behind text, she has criticized 'various form of profit-oriented capitalist structures associated with modernism discourse' (Schroeder, 2016; Larrain, 2013; Marx & Engels, 1885-1959; Marx, 1867-2018). Thus, some Marxists try to interpret Grata's struggle as a discourse against capitalism which focus to ideological shift (Giuliani, 2020). Popular European Singer Yungblud has described Greta Thunberg as 'the Karl Marx of our generation'.

But according to our analysis, a discourse she builds has many ideological inconsistencies. After the 1970s, environmentalism discourse and sustainable development ideology developed in a neo-liberal capitalist context, not outside. Greta's ideas have socialized and glorified by the capitalist-modernist project by itself. Yungblud, who glorifies Greta's struggle, has a net worth of about \$ 191 million, which he derives from the globalized neo-liberal capitalist structure. One of the important things is thinkers who represent capitalist, Marxist as well as post Marxist opinions have developed their ideologies based on subject to the 'Modernity' and the 'Enlightenment Project' which is the attempt the human development through science as well as to achieve mastery over it through the use of a social technology. Philosophically above all discourses are is link with Hegelian dialectical ideology (Giddens, 1971).

The problem is while we agree with ideology of modernity, we oppose its consequences. For an simple example, Just see this popular statement of the Greta '*I demand everyone drive electric cars now*'. The car is a symbol of modernity. We are not ready to remove it. We think the problem can be solved by adding 'good electric car battery' instead of 'bad fuel' as fuel burning has a greenhouse effect. But what Grata and her followers forget is that cobalt must

be obtained in large quantities through the mining industry to process of producing electric car batteries, which also results in non-combustible environmental degradation. On the other hand, iron and other raw materials needed to produce cars have are also reason huge environmental degradation. While accepting ideology of 'Modernity' and the 'Enlightenment Project', attempting to correct the outcome of it is bound to turn into only a thrilling drama.

Greta Thunberg speech 02: United Nations Climate Action Summit (September 23, 2019)

"My message is that we'll be watching you. This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you! You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words and yet I am one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!"

In here Greta blames the elders and the world capitalist power block in directly. But what is the reality outside that constructed text? The abnormal boom of the world's population is a one of the major causes of these environmental and human issues. Greta and the young community that supports her belong to such an increased population. After the 15th century, population boom and human lifespan increased due to the advancement of science (subjected to modernity). It is difficult to maintain this large human population without science and technology based economic development. The reality is that the extraordinary population of developing countries also depends on the global capitalist economy. See the following ideas of the Francis Fukuyama which he explained based on Covid-19 situation "Our attention is turning rapidly from the pandemic itself to the economic damage that's caused by the pandemic. And it remains the case that if you don't have a relatively open global economic order, everybody's going to get much poorer than they are now, and you're not going to have resources to feed people. I'm just going to take the example of food most countries do not produce enough food to feed their own population, so if you don't have international trade,

people are going to start starving to death. It's that kind of reality that's going to force people to recognize that a certain part of globalization is absolutely necessary for maintaining the kind of life that they are hoping to live" (Li, 2020).

As Greta says; *I am one of the lucky ones* she's. This is because she belongs to a Swedish, a capitalist core. The truth is that her luck depends on the other children's misfortune. Marxists point out that the unequal distribution of world wealth, opportunity and resources is the cause of global issues and ideologically Greta's constructed above text is in line with that view (*People are suffering. People are dying*). But the impact on the environment will be even greater if the truly unequally distributed resources and wealth are shared equally by all the peoples of the world. It is a 'good wish' for all to have good houses, vehicles (better life according to ideology of modernity) for all human beings. But when it does, the environmental crisis will increase a hundredfold. And if global neo-liberal capitalism causes unequal distribution of wealth and resources, what is the alternative? It is ridiculous to see the failed socialist system as an alternative.

For more than 30 years, the science has been crystal clear. (United Nations Climate Action Summit (September 23, 2019)- (Gajanan, 2019:01).

I would like to refer to page 108, chapter 2 in the latest IPCC report. There you will find all our "opinions" summarized, because there you find a remaining carbon dioxide budget. Right there it says that if we are to have a sixty seven percent chance of limiting the global temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees, we had on January 1st 2018, 420 gigatons of carbon dioxide left in our CO2 budget (Thunberg 2019b:01).

Greta presents here available 'scientific knowledge' of climate change. scientific knowledge developed as a part of the process of 'Modernity' and the 'Enlightenment Project' and what Greta (or Greta's script writers) forget is same process have been developed global capitalist structure which led to environmental degradation. On the other hand, change is the nature of the

climate. There is no consensus in modern science as to how much human can contribute to it. For example, as Ivar Giaever, a leading Nobel laureate in physics, explained; climate change is pseudoscience. Those emotional ideas of climate change contemporary have become a political and religious ideology, not a discourse that agrees with scientific facts. As we analyse here, Greta's above emotional explanation is a perfect example to prove Ivar Giaever idea.

I ask you once again: -Is there another Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change? Is there a secret Paris agreement that we don't know about? (Thunberg 2019b:01).

It is important to notice one of the main points highlighted at behind the words of this speech: she exposes and questions the persistent falsehood of so-called 'sustainable development discourse'. It is true that the dialogue on sustainable development and the conventions built for it have failed. But Greta's struggle also lies in the failed sustainable development discourse. It is a philosophical inconsistency to try to solve climate and environmental problems within the sustainable discourse that modernity project accepts. As Rowlatt has explained 'the climate and ecological crisis cannot be solved within today's political and economic systems' (Rowlatt, 2020).

In our analysis, it is revealed that depending on certain traits of Greta Thunberg such as her age, the uniqueness of her mental state, and her origins in a liberal capitalist core, she has become a mere tool in the hands of journalists and tycoons of a capitalist society in which they have discovered a good market opportunity for Greta's speech and activities and they are selling her pain of environmental degradation as a product in the capitalist market. It has always been ignored that behind this teenaged girl there is a group of influential figures such as politicians and business people. Thus, Greta Thunberg's rise to fame is in fact a political project prudently planned and sponsored by figures like George Soros, large lobbyists and wealthy businessmen. It is observed that the large majority who are protesting are unaware of the fact that they are being 'used as pawns in the globalist's game.' (United World International 2019).

Moreover, the real force behind Greta's fame is not her own actions, but a carefully considered, planned and expensive PR campaign. At the age of 15, she started to make a name for herself when she sat down in protest at the Swedish Parliament holding the poster "Skolstrejk for Klimatet" (United World International 2019).

"A famous PR manager, Ingmar Rentzhog, passed by (allegedly by accident!) and began to distribute Greta's photo on social networks, eventually setting up an online platform for eco-activists called 'We Don't Have Time.'" (United World International 2019).

Thereupon, not only has she gained unbelievable fame on the Internet, but also, Greta, alongside Rentzhog, has become one of the directors of the company – 'We Don't Have Time', which has since drawn at least five hundred investors and over a million euros. Even today various media outlets continue to make money in/directly by marketing Greta's struggle (Oroschakoff 2019). Hence, it is clear that even the forces that are piling up against liberal capitalism have become its own components to sustain liberal global capitalism.

Presently, Thunberg has become a phenomenon and an attractive 'living brand' through the ingenuity of her activities such as meeting with the Pope, addressing the European Union and the United Nations, giving a Ted talk, receiving the cover of Time magazine and gaining the attention of global leaders as well as being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (Bertelli 2019). Consequently, she has become a popular 'trade item', which can be used to intimidate the public and to address their irrational fears through a voice of a child, thereby, to maximize profit off her popularity (United World International 2019).

In modern times, capitalism has undergone constant restructurings and alterations from laissez-faire capitalism to more structured systems such as Keynesianism and welfare-state, however, according to Zizek, presently we are living in the last phase of capitalism. Neoliberal global capitalism is dying and is being eaten by itself (Zizek, 2011). Zizek's view is that the 'worldwide ecological crisis' is one of the signs of end of global capitalism. Harvey (2010)

argues that every major crisis since the beginning of capitalism has become worse than it was in the past but capitalism has a unique quality of adjustability, resilience and ability to withstand after such a crisis from new invention. That is why capitalism has always been able to stand up for another round when it falls (Harvey, 2010). Such growth can always be seen as a process causing more and more environmental degradation and its destiny is to take it to the very last moment of the collapse of neoliberal global capitalism by itself. In view of the fact that the majority of the people who rallied around Greta's struggle represent the capitalist state, here arises the question: Does Greta's struggle reflect the collapse of neoliberal capitalism in its essence?

In view of Greta Thunberg's struggle, the purpose of the struggle or her environmental concerns are not taken into account in this analysis, yet, how her struggle is absorbed by society is considered the most important. 'Marketing anything and everything' is the fundamental yet unseen principle of neoliberal capitalism and also it is a utopian theoretical framework of the reorganization in international capitalism. Thus, neoliberal capitalism can absorb even the forces that oppose it and use it for commercial purposes (Harvey 2007). In particular, this is what has happened to Greta's struggle today. It has simply become a movie script, and Greta plays the role of its lead character. The majority seem to enjoy the movie while still benefiting from neoliberal capitalism. The film makers sell it to make profit. The spectators who walk out of the cinema escape from the 'fantasy world' and return to their ordinary life that they continue to dwell in neoliberal capitalist social system. For instance, Greta Thunberg's prestigious eco-crossing of the Atlantic Ocean to attend the New York City Climate Summit in 2019 by a fastest sailing boat instead of an airplane is a very dramatic event, which ensured the producers of this drama a huge profit.

"Teen environmental activist Greta Thunberg set sail for Madrid, Spain, from Hampton, Virginia, on November 13th. She's making the journey across the frigid Atlantic Ocean with a family of popular YouTube creators. Their voyage can be tracked in real time online" (Calma 2019).

A drama like this which is played under the rubric of sustainable development provides fantasy pleasure to the toiling masses of neoliberal capitalism. It has become exactly like in an American superhero movie in commercial cinema with 'a heroin who appears to save the world'. Instead of hitting the nail on its head and addressing the critical issues directly, this whole drama has been limited to a fantasy. As Bauman describes in the theory of 'liquid modernity', all that is 'solid' are 'liquidised' in the contemporary modern era (Bauman 2013). Therefore, ideologies built against the neoliberal capitalist paradigm, such as Greta's struggles, are liquidised to a melodrama in factors such as 'instability, temporality, insecurity and persistent change' (Bauman 2013).

Greta Thunberg Phenomenon as 'ideological cynicism'

Sloterdijk (1987) defines cynicism to be enlightened false consciousness, which is a modernized, and unhappy consciousness on which enlightenment has strived both positively and negatively. Further, he argues that cynicism has learned its lessons in enlightenment, but it has failed to put those learned lessons into practice. This idea has link with Bauman's idea about the 'paradox in modern western democratic society' (Gao, 2016). According to Bauman's explanation, people widely believe that modernity has brought democracy and freedom, but people distrust their own power to bring about political, social or economic change for betterment (Bauman, 1999); for example, everyone believes in sustainable development and environmental protection to protect the planet, but they do not believe in their power to make this happen with presumption that it can be done by someone other than themselves. To illustrate this with another example, it is like watching a superhero movie like Batman or Lady Bug in theatre: Creating something better is up to someone other than us. The audience cheers for something better by eating sweets since they have assigned the task to a hero, who is someone else other than themselves, however, in reality, such heroes are unusual.

Explaining this situation further, Zizek has developed the concept of 'ideological cynicism'. As he explains, people behave and act in a way that they are unaware of the things happening around them, even if they know that modern capitalist market activism is unreasonable and unfair.

Social movements based on sustainable development discourse, such as Greta's struggle, can also be analysed using Zizek's idea of 'ideological cynicism' (Zizek 1989). If the neoliberal global capitalism is the 'ugly reality' the 'sustainable development discourse' can be considered the 'beautiful fantasy', which is opposed to 'actual reality' and structuring it at the same time. Thus, fantasy keeps masking and defending 'actual reality' and this is, in particular, a classic example of ideological cynicism which can be commonly observed in the ending period of so-called modernism. Consequently, opposition to capitalism, such as Greta's climate movement, creates and sustains forces of the system rather than uprooting the cause itself, and in this situation, it makes Greta Thunberg a 'guardian of capitalism'. Despite the fact they are well aware that this is happening, but pretending that they do not know it, people continue the same drama under the influence of ideological cynicism. This idealistic cynicism has become a socio-political driving force.

In view of the analysis of research question of this paper, it is clear that human-centric movements originated within the capitalist core itself which accept mordantly as reality, like Greta Thunberg's struggle, do not support redirecting the prevalent capitalist structure towards an eco-friendly human development. On the contrary, they suppress the struggle by creating an illusion of a utopian fantasy built up on the rubric of sustainable development and thereby suppress the original struggle which is aimed at addressing the actual issues of neoliberal global capitalism. Accordingly, such social movements do not indicate the arrival of one of the horsemen, particularly, global ecological crisis, as Zizek (2011) explained, and would not lead to annihilation of global capitalism. As it is observed, Zizek's analysis would become a reality and that the end of capitalism would come in the future but not from human struggles originated in the core of capitalism, but from natural environmental crises and pandemics like COVID-19.

Conclusion

It is widely agreed that Zizek's analysis of capitalism coming to an end at the hands of 'four horsemen of coming apocalypse: the worldwide ecological crisis; imbalances within the economic system; the biogenetic revolution; and exploding social divisions and ruptures' Zizek (2011) is an acceptable prediction.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a process called the Renaissance took place in Europe. The philosophical background for this was provided by the ideology of 'modernity' and modern development discourses are built on that. The two main political and economic development discourses, capitalist and socialist ideologies, are based on modernity. The capitalist economic model is now the world's leading, dominance and most realistic model. Capitalism which develops as various forms on ideology of modernity led to world population booms and overconsumption. It caused the ecological balance to be upset. Since the 1980s, environmentalism and the Sustainable Development Dialogue have emerged as solutions to environmental crises. But the sustainable development discourse also takes place within modernity and not outside it (postmodernism represents the crisis of modernity and is not something outside of modernity). In this regard, while accepting the ideology of modernity, trying to address the environmental crises that have developed as a part of the in the modernization project is a tragic failure. That is why the Sustainable development discourse has become a failed project thirty years after its inception

Theoretically, Greta Thunberg's struggle is developed on sustainable development discourse and she and her followers also accept the modernity project. Her movement continues to inspire many people from different nations, especially the youth from wealthy core states. Owing to the unique nature of capitalism to adsorb itself into its opposing forces, Greta's struggle, which was started against to results to the capitalism, has later has become its own part while be a 'profit-making drama' by producing and trading 'fantasy dreams' to address fears of the public in capitalist world. Being a classic example to 'ideological cynicism' presented by Zizek, this struggle proves its inability to address the real issues in the system which based subject to modernity. Our conclusion is that the environmental crises created by part of the modernity projects cannot be solved by human struggles until rejecting subject of modernity as a reality. But natural disasters and crises will destroy modernity project in the future while breakdown capitalism structure.

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