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KCHR WEBINAR

# DELEUZE, GUATTARI AND MARX

EXPLORING DIALECTICS AND DIFFERENCE AS TWO PHILOSOPHICAL  
PROCEDURES TOWARDS THE ARRAIGNMENT OF CAPITALISM

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**Dr. George Varghese K.**

President, Deleuze and Guattari Studies in India Collective

**FRIDAY | 06 SEPTEMBER 2024 | 3:00 PM (IST)**

**Venue: Online**

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# ABSTRACT

A correlation or inter-calibration of Marx's dialectical materialism and the Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy of difference is rife with several conceptual obstacles. The difficulty starts with the fact that both Deleuze and Guattari never took an anti-Marxist stance, unlike many other poststructuralists and postmodernists. They also claimed to be Marxists in between. Moreover, Deleuze's last project was on Marx, a book titled 'The Grandeur of Marx' which unfortunately could not be completed owing to his death. The profound affinity with Marx is evident in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) in which Deleuze and Guattari attempt a synthesis of Freud and Marx. The pivotal categories in this book are desire, machine and production, which maintain a kindred spirit with Marx and his critique of capitalism. Their schemata of history, divided into primitive, despotic, and capitalist phases, also shows affinity with Marx's model of historical materialism divided into different phases.

But Deleuze's philosophy of difference diverges totally from the Marxist analysis, the latter being articulated very seminally on Hegelian dialectics. Perhaps the most important common point that connects Deleuze and Marx is this connection with the idealist dialectics of Hegel. Both were critical of Hegel in their own ways. But in Marx's case this is problematic. However hard he tried to create distance from the idealist dialectics of Hegel through a synthesis with the classical political economy of Smith and Ricardo, the Hegelian ballast was too weighty to be escaped. Being a hallmark of 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanticism and historicism, Hegelian dialectics tethered Marxism to the 19<sup>th</sup> century episteme. Hence Foucault's famous comment that Marx is a fish that could only survive in the 19<sup>th</sup> century epistemological waters and breathe nowhere else.

On the other hand, Deleuze was a sworn anti-Hegelian to the point of 'detesting' him in every manner. Joining hands with Nietzsche, the other great anti-Hegelian, Deleuze shaped his philosophy of difference borrowing also from Spinoza, Bergson, Duns Scotus, and Kant, all of whom Marx would have dismissed as dogmatic ideologues. Differential philosophy blossomed into a highly creative and critical system armed with a battery of concepts like multiplicity, assemblage, deterritorialization, the virtual, anti-production, nomadology, faciality, refrain, and so on, which are directly interrogative of the famous Marxist and Hegelian concepts like class, ideology, consciousness, contradiction, negation, alienation, reason, and so on. Of course, it would be stupid to uphold the one system against the other in the spirit of 'opposition' or 'negation', since there are many points of interconnection and complementarity, especially once posited at the heart of capitalism, which was their common enemy. There are many philosophers like Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt or Mauricio Lazzarato who have attempted to build a bridge between Marx and Deleuze.



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## Dr. George Varghese K.

Dr. George Varghese K was former faculty at the Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities (MCPH) of the Manipal Academy of Higher Education. He is presently the President of the Deleuze and Guattari Studies in India Collective (DGSIC). His research mainly centers around the anthropology of gold, Vishwakarma community, and the Syrian Christians of Kerala, on which he has published papers, as well as a book in Malayalam, titled *Swarna Keralam* (2006). He has also published papers on Marxism, interdisciplinarity, and the philosophy of social and human sciences. His other major research interest is continental philosophy, especially that of Deleuze and Guattari. He has co-edited the special issue of *Deleuze Studies*, titled 'Deleuze in India' (2018), with Paul Patton. He has also edited the book, *Deleuze, Guattari, and India: Exploring a Post-Postcolonial Multiplicity* (Routledge, 2022) with Ian Buchanan and Manoj N Y. He is presently editing two volumes on Deleuze and Guattari, with special emphasis on India.

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