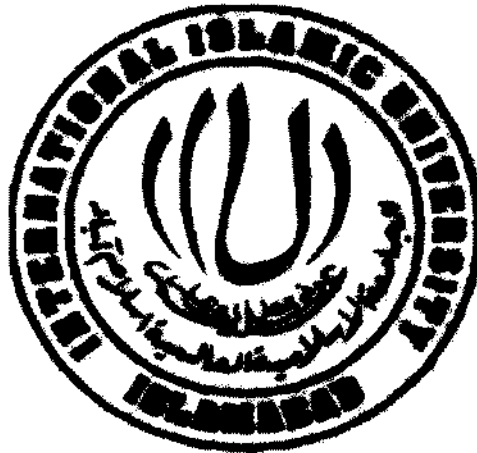




**IDEOLOGICAL FANTASY: A CRITICAL STUDY OF
DELILLO'S *COSMPOLIS* AND ANDERSON'S *FEED***



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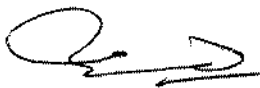
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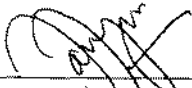
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis “Ideological Fantasy: A Critical Study of DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* and Anderson’s *Feed*” submitted in the partial fulfillment of MS degree is my own and is carried out under the supervision of Dr. Saiyma Aslam. I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree at this or any other education institutions. To the best of my knowledge and belief, I hereby declare that this research contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference has been made in the text.

Signature

Abida Younas

DEDICATION

“Let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the Deluder delude you” (Al-Quran, Surah Luqman 33).

The present research is dedicated to all those who have the potential of discerning the verity behind the facade world, to those who have the inner eyes of perceiving the gospel truth of the present world and finally to those who are not led by desires rather by their wits.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to carry out an investigation of the role of cynical reason and of the ideological fantasy fabricated by it in the contemporary global age of corporate control. Its purpose is to sensitize common masses about the unquenchable nature of their desires that is exploited by their cynical reason to generate conspicuous consumption. This research employs the critical framework provided by Peter Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987) and Žižek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008), Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality, Klein's concept of branding and Stavrakakis's notion of desire. Along with this, the theories of numerous other theorists are also employed who talked about the related issues such as Lacan, Featherstone, Berger, Bauman, Clarke and Turnock. Additionally, the primary sources of data collection are DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) and Anderson's *Feed* (2012). The undertaken study focuses on illusion, desires, cynicism, fantasy, hyperreality and all of those elements that render consumerism a social reality. A close examination of both texts reveals that culture industry, specifically mass media, is a powerful entity which turns consumerism into a social reality, and at the same time wrest the masses of their rational faculty. The analysis also highlights the consequences of consumerism.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With the rise of technological advancement and multi-national corporations, consumer culture penetrates into every sphere of the contemporary society. Our society has become increasingly focused on the possession of the material goods as a means to feel good about ourselves. Consumerism affects the individual in a number of ways. Consumerism alters the psyche of the individual through erosion of his/her true self. The true self signifies the autonomous and self-directed self of an individual. However, this true self of an individual is no more self-directed self as it is assailed by the market trends in the contemporary eon. The capitalist market with its diverse trends replace true self and identity with false self and fluid identity. The fluid identity of an individual keeps on changing with every new trend of the consumer world. These new trends commodify the rational capability of human beings and make them uncritical which usher them to adopt the latest market trends. The unstable identity of individuals thus leads them to adopt the role of consumers and thereby directs them to the myriad alleys of malls and stores. So in search of the autonomous self, consumers fall prey to the nameless illusions and the indefinable desires.

The technological progression of the postmodern world instigates the desires of the masses through culture industry, specifically media. Media obscures the boundary line between real and unreal. The powerful images of media vindicate unreal as more real and

thus leads to the death of the real by constituting the hyperreal phenomenon. In the hyperreal world, the images on TV screens set the trends of reality for us and the current reality seems to be unreal until it is shaped according to life on screens. The inhabitants of the postmodern consumer world thus start consuming the images of TV. By constituting the hyperreal world, media paves the way for consumerism successfully and turns this activity into social reality. It is because living among images, the consumption of images seems no more an exceptional activity. The corporate industry and media generate a popular culture rampant with cool images which is crushing the mental capabilities of the inhabitants of the postmodern corporate world. Hyperreality thus does not only blur the distinction between real and unreal rather it also fuses the boundary between needs and wants of human beings. The puissant images of media generate desire among the masses for possessing the material artifacts whether they need them or not. People on their end start accumulating needless material goods. The corporate industry produces products excessively and provides the pool of consumer goods from which consumers can pick and choose according to their economic range and desires. The capitalist market turns this world into the hyper marketed world by giving us an easy access to products. In the hyper marketed world, material artifacts become the mean of communication. It is because our practice of possessing and ingesting material goods communicates our stature in society.

The continuous surging of advertisement on media generates the images of products so excessively that people are induced to consume those images. Advertisement is one of the main powerful tools of the capitalist world through which it cripples the sensibility of people and disseminates its market. It would not be wrong to say that advertisements enslave the reasoning capability of masses for the promotion of the capitalist market. It is because advertising slogans tag so many benefits with the products and promise to fulfill the desires of the masses. However once those products are bought and consumed, they never grant any

benefits that were promised with the advertisements as the ultimate satisfaction of desires is deferred till the next product is advertised.

Advertisements never satiate the desires rather they instigate and foster the unquenchable desires of the masses. These insatiable desires of the masses overshadow the criticality and transmute reason into cynical reason. In the case of cynical reason, human beings are well aware of certain situation yet they continue with the practices considering that the expected benefits far outweigh the costs involved. This is because desires formulate the ideological fantasy for their consumers. The ideological fantasy of a person creates an illusion of perfect world whereby consumers believe that consumption can fulfill their desire to attain perfect imagined-self. It would not be wrong to say that the present corporate age is an era of enlightened false consciousness where by a person is very much conscious of the societal fact and ideological fantasy, nevertheless he keeps on unceasing activity of consumption.

The consumers of the postmodern corporate world are well aware of the insatiable nature of the desires yet they carry out the activity of consumption. However, the irony is that their desires never satisfy them rather they leave them dissatisfied and they constantly seek for new and more fashionable things. The capitalist market also produces an entire range of updated products and convinces us with the help of advertisements that buying of one object would not be enough rather it should be replaced with something more stylish and updated. Consumers consume depending upon their purchasing power, but the more they consume the more they get dissatisfied. Yet the consumers are unable to renounce their activity of consumption. It is because in the postmodern corporate world, the activity of consumption is intimately tied to the creation and production of branded new self. The brand new self refers to the socially contented and updated self. The postmodern individuals need to have this updated and fashionable self as it authorizes them as the residents of the modern and updated

society and gives them status in the postmodern corporate world. As a result this activity of consumption is a never ending activity and it takes breath after every instant and offers a new life and a new look from time to time.

The present study is carried out with the aim to see the nature of ideology of consumerism and the way it operates in society. This research focuses on the unappeasable nature of desires, the role of cynical reason and its fantasy in the corporate world. The study critically explores that how our own desires, cynical reason, fantasy and our yearning for uniqueness instigate us for an endless purchase which ultimately works in the escalation of the capitalist market. These elements together seem to nourish each other and eventually strengthen the capitalist market. The capitalist market is now booming to the much higher position as compared to its past. This study probes into the postmodern fiction about consumer identities of the corporate world. This research critically explores the writings of American fiction writers, DeLillo and Anderson to enquire that how and why the capitalist market surges up to the eminent position in the contemporary age, what are the reasons behind its expeditious growth and how it has managed to make the masses obsequious to the corporate world and its capitalist market.

1.1 Background of the Study

The present postmodern capitalist society is a consumer society. When we call our society as a consumer society, it means that all the members of our society are consumers. Unlike our predecessor "producer society", Bauman claims that our postmodern society is a consumer one (Bauman 24). This society prescribes the role of consumer to its members who are merely assessed by their ability to play this role.

Consumerism in simple words can be defined as our fondness for the material goods and possessions. During post-World War II era, people began to move towards the urban areas in the hope of finding better jobs opportunities and facilities. This urban shift caused the people to lose their association with their cultural backgrounds. As a result, they broke with their ancestry, cultural traditions and customs. These adaptations in urban life style imparted people with "emptiness" of self. Cushman opines that "post-World War II self yearns to acquire and consume as an unconscious way of compensating for what has been lost: it is empty" (600). So these empty people sought to compensate for their emptiness through the consumption of goods.

People have adopted consumeristic attitude. They consume almost everything that comes in their way in order to hide the futility of their life. People now yearn for the material artifacts. Consumption in this age is unnecessary and needless proprietorship of goods. These days everything from material objects to food and dresses even our identity is shaped by the multinational corporations. Instead of having homemade food, we crave for the food of KFC and McDonald. People prefer to wear the branded dresses instead of simple tailor-made dresses. This attitude ultimately leads them towards branded identity. The corporate sector now defines our position in community.

Consumerism in the postmodern era manufactures our individuality. The consumer society offers plenty of material objects to human beings and eventually these consumer goods have replaced and carry high worth than human life. In the corporate sector, material possessions describe our personae. Human beings have turned out to be objects, by living in the midst of consumer goods. In contemporary era, consumerism associates the personal exhilaration with material objects. In this age of anxiety where people remain perplexed about so many things, consumption offers an ecstasy; the activity of consumption delivers the

promise of fulfillment of desires. It gives an assurance of self-satisfied and self-contained life.

The strong invasion of consumer goods has colonized almost the whole world specifically America. At the end of World War II, Americans had started spending money on the material items. The scarcity of consumer goods in the end of World War II led to high consumer culture. So by the end of the World War, consumers' spending became high. Consumerism increasingly percolated into all areas of the contemporary society. The widespread consumerism probes into the literary world too and has become a subject matter of the contemporary fiction. Consumerism constitutes the essential context for understanding the contemporary literature and society. According to Marxist stance, literature does not exist in space rather "it is a product of the socioeconomic and hence ideological conditions of the time and place in which it was written, whether or not the author intended it so" (Tyson 66). Thus literature of the contemporary age depicts contemporary society with its over-powering consumerism.

Nevertheless literature is the product of the socioeconomic and ideological environment, yet we cannot blame literature as an embodiment of the ideology of consumerism. Postmodern fiction registers and records the ideology of consumerism of the contemporary world. However, one cannot say that it interpellates individuals towards consumption. Postmodern fiction portrays the social and ideological reality truthfully. However our cynical reason keeps us blind towards the reality.

The term 'ideological fantasy' is principal to Žižek's work. He puts forward the re-interpretation of ideology in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008). It is not a "false consciousness" for him, rather it is an illusionary delineation of reality. He calls this reality as ideologically mystified reality. Žižek elucidates that in this era the perception of reality is

volatile and that is why when one observes the reality it gets dissolved into something else: "the moment we see it as it really is, this being dissolves itself into nothingness or, more precisely, it changes into another kind of reality" (25). He states that people might perceive that their reality constructs an ideological chimera, which he calls as an "ideological fantasy", yet people pursue it. He opines that cynical reason is one of the means which keeps us ignorant towards those authoritative power structures which help in fabricating the ideological fantasy.

Peter Sloterdijk also presents the same stance. In *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987), he says that cynical reason is not naïve, but it is the victim of "enlightened false consciousness" as he states: "Cynicism is enlightened false consciousness" (5). He contends that the subject having cynical reason is pretty much conscious of the societal fact and the ideological veil (behind which the truth resides), but nonetheless he still insists upon the mask. Sloterdijk thus ends up his argument by asserting that in this postmodern world one is well aware of the falsification, one knows well the particular interest hidden behind an ideological universality, but still one does not relinquish it.

For both Žižek and Sloterdijk this society is thus a post-ideological society. It is because in today's society, ideology is not only delusion that masks the reality but an unconscious fantasy that structures our reality. By unconscious fantasy, Žižek means the desire which continues to blaze and keeps on organizing our reality. On the other hand, our cynical reason keeps us blind towards the authority which instigates our desire and creates a fantasy world. Žižek intricates his concept by saying that ideology is a "fantasy structuring" which supports our reality as he says: "it is a fantasy construction which serves as a support for our reality itself: an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations, and thereby mask some insupportable, real, impossible kernel" (45). So in this way fantasy

performs a double function. In the first case, it screens the reality and hides it "by providing a schema of desire" (59) and secondly it shapes and thereby directs our desires.

Žižek asserts that our ideological fantasy gives us the sense of contented self and satisfaction that is why we retain the mask of that fantasy. The only way to break the fancy is to defy the reality of our desire which is revealed in the dreams as illustrated by: "the only way to break the power of our ideological dream is to confront the real of our own desire which announces itself in this dream" (Žižek 48). Dream actually demonstrates inner desires because in dreams "we approached the fantasy-framework which determines our activity" (48). Sloterdijk also presents the same standpoint that retaining the ideological mask is necessary as it hides our unhappiness as he describes: "it covers up a mass of offensive unhappiness and the need to cry" (Sloterdijk 6).

Therefore for the expansion of market economy, postmodern capitalist society promotes consumerism in different ways. For the promulgation of their economy, capitalist market turns this world into marketplace which despite being full of consumer goods, is empty and hollow from inside. Capitalist market entices people to be its customers by hook or by crook. Advertisement and media are the tools which work for the proliferation of capitalist market. Advertising discourse and media work hard to convince people for so many unnecessary needs. Through the persistent bombardment of advertisements, advertising industry creates even those desires and needs that the public was previously unaware of.

Yannis Stavrakakis declares desire as an essential element for consumerism. Desires are not fixed entities and it can easily be stimulated through advertisements. However the irony is that there is nothing in this world that can satisfy desires. The advertising industry promises the fulfillment of instincts and urges of human beings but ironically the ultimate satisfaction of desires is always postponed till the next product is advertised. Barber rightly

says that consumer society is ruled by an impulse. He opines that we are internally divided between our want and desire. (Barber 296).

In the contemporary postmodern corporate world, desire and consumerism form the relationship between human and material artifacts. The postmodern society is a consumer society and postmodern fiction reflects this reality. Any discussion about consumerism is incomplete without considering the compelling force of it, that is, desire. Consumerism and desire constitute the essential context of postmodern literature.

In the present study the researcher has done a close content analysis of DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) and Anderson's *Feed* (2012). In both the selected texts researcher has explored that how Postmodern American Fiction contributes in portraying the social and ideological fantasy. In both oeuvre, focus is on the corporatism and consumerism that is presented in both of the novels and the fantasy caused by the corporate world by using different strategies. The researcher has focused on characters' cynical reason specifically the character of Eric Packer in *Cosmopolis* (2003) and Titus in *Feed* (2012) which caused ideological fantasy for them and which the characters followed by considering it as a social reality. Besides cynical reason the researcher focuses on ideological fantasy that is considered as a social reality by the characters of both the novels.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The self-identities of the corporate world are associated with consumer ideal in the postmodern era. In this age of late capitalism, the postmodern man has become a mere consumerist or one-dimensional man. The postmodern corporate world assigns to its dwellers

the role of consumption. It is because of this the residents of the corporate world keep on consumption without considering it as useless activity.

Consumers' desires cover their rationality and they do not think rationally over the matter of persistent consumerism. Desires overshadow the criticality of consumers and turn it into cynicism which fabricate fantasy world for them where they feel they can fulfill their desires thereby. In order to deal with the expanse of the matter, the present study aims at analyzing Stavrakakis's notion of desires, Sloterdijk's idea of cynical reason, Žižek's notion of ideological fantasy and illusion, Baudrillard's phenomenon of hyperreality and Klein's concept of Branding in the corporate world as well as numerous other theorists on the related areas such as Lacan, Trentmann, Featherstone, Bauman, Berger and Turnock etc. while focusing specifically on the above mentioned elements, the study aims to analyze the corporate world and the ways whereby ideology of consumerism is operated in it with special reference to Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) and M.T.Anderson's *Feed* (2012).

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are given below.

- How does the ideology of consumerism become a social reality with special reference to DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* and Anderson's *Feed*?
- How does cynical reason cause an ideological fantasy?
- How does the phenomenon of consumerism ruin the psychical and physical wellbeing of its own consumers?

1.4 Methodology

The present study is based on the qualitative form of research and employs the technique of content analysis of the two selected texts. The format of MLA citation is employed in the present study. All the available literature is meticulously reviewed and theoretical/critical framework has been formulated in chapter two, which is implemented later on the selected texts. Žižek's notion of ideological fantasy in *The Sublime object of Ideology* (2008) and Peter Sloterdijk's concept of cynical reason in *The Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987) serves the basis of the present study. It also focuses on the illusion, ideological mask, hyperreality, hyper marketed world, branding and fantasy structure due to which the activity of consumerism act as a reality. M.T.Anderson's *Feed* (2012) and DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) along with Žižek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008) and Sloterdijk's *The Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987) are the primary sources of data collection. Along with these works and critics, many other critics, including Stavrakakis, Kirk Boyle, Baudrillard, Naomi Klein, Berger, Bauman, Turnock, Garcia and many others who talk about desire, hyperreality, hyper marketed world, cynical reason, illusion, branding and fantasy are reviewed and incorporated. Apart from these books, journals articles, reviews and commentaries of postmodern fiction are also examined as supporting sources.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The present research seeks an investigation of the human mind's volatility with regard to its being moved or persuaded by the consumer goods. So the rationale for undertaking the

present study is to unveil the menacing reality of the corporate world. The aim of this study is to give an insight into the capitalist world and it is hoped that this study would develop the critical understanding of the consumers regarding the corporate world that might enable them to cope with the consumer world in a better way.

In the present research, the researcher has taken two American novels by different writers. The reason for selecting *Cosmopolis* (2003) and *Feed* (2012) is that in both of these novels the dystopian corporate world has been created by Don DeLillo and M.T.Anderson respectively. In both these novels writers draw the attention of readers towards the critical scenario of the present day society. Both writers raised their voice on the core issue of American society and fairly represent consumerism with all its virtues and ills.

1.6 Delimitation of the Present Study

The present study needs delimitation in order to carry out this research pertinently and to avert it from being too wide. The source of this study is mentioned previously. The analysis is carried out to focus only those elements which are directly related to consumerism, cynical reason, ideological fantasy and illusion of the corporate sector such as media, hyperreality and branding etc. It is worth mentioning here that the researcher only focuses on the conspicuous consumption which is not warranted by genuine needs and which merely traps the consumers in an incessant chain of mindless and needless consumption ignoring their resources or the impact on their psychical and physical wellbeing and wholeness. The research questions are devised specifically to avoid the confusion, so that researcher can only explore the answers of those questions.

1.7 Significance of the Present Study

The research under review is beneficial in terms of socio-economic perspective. This study reveals the insatiable nature of consumerism and the destructive effects of it. The researcher digs into the postmodern fiction to see that how the ideology of consumerism is registered in the literary works. The importance of this study is to perceive the ideology of consumerism in the corporate world. This study is useful as it awakens the masses about the fantasy that is created by their own cynical reason and tells them that it is their own reasoning which provokes them for consumerism.

1.9 Tentative Chapterizations

This thesis comprises of five chapters.

Chapter 1 is an Introduction. This chapter aims to provide a brief overview of the topic area, the statement of the problem, the research questions which form the basis of the analysis, methodology used in the present study and the organization of the thesis.

Chapter 2 is the review of all available Literature. It provides a detailed theoretical framework upon which the analysis is built. It gives a detailed overview about the shift from reason to cynical reason, origin of consumerism, ideology of consumerism, popular culture, global branding and ideological fantasy. All of these elements are later on investigated in the analysis.

Chapter 3 entitled “Consumerism as a Social Reality” investigates all those elements which contribute in making consumerism as a social reality. It explores the nature of the saturated media world, the hyper real world, the hyper marketed world and the world of consumer goods in the selected novels.

Chapter 4 “Cynical Reason and its Ideological Fantasy” deals with the function of cynical reason and its fabricated ideological fantasy in both novels. It focuses on how both these elements contribute in the promulgation of capitalist market. In this chapter, both novels *Cosmopolis* (2003) and *Feed* (2012), are critically analyzed with the aim to find an ideology of consumerism.

Chapter 5 provides the findings and conclusions of the study. It also talks about recommendations for the further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

'Literature Review' provides a detailed critical survey of the available literature on this topic area. After meticulously reviewing all the available literature, it provides a detailed critical framework upon which the analysis is built. This chapter charts the transition from reason to cynical reason and provides an overview of the origin of consumerism, the ideology of consumerism, popular culture, global branding, cynical reason and ideological fantasy. All of these elements are later on explored and examined in the analysis.

2.1 From Enlightenment (Reason) to Postmodernism (Cynical Reason)

"Reason is natural revelation" (695), claims John Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1999). This proclamation of Locke gives an account of enlightenment project that stretched from mid seventeenth century through the eighteenth century. This age was marked by a revolution in science, politics and philosophy. The aim of Enlightenment proposal was to position human beings as masters. It aimed to banish myths and fantasy through reason and knowledge and to consider rationality as the sole and primary source of legitimacy and authority. Its purpose was to reform society through human reason and to object to all those ideas that were grounded in traditions and faith.

Enlightenment was preceded by the Modern era. In "Liberatory Postmodernism and the Reenchantment of Consumption" (1995), Firat and Venkatesh argue that Modernism's social/ historical construction is grounded in the principle of Enlightenment. Modernism is also signified by "the rule of reason and the establishment of rational order; the emergence of cognitive subject; the rise of Science and an emphasis on material progress through the application of scientific technologies" (240). However, Modernism failed in establishing rationally and technologically enlightened society. It failed because "the material progress it promised has turned out to be illusory, and conditions of poverty, human misery, and violence still mark our lives" (240). The advancement that was promised by material progress and the scientific technology was limited and masses remained ignorant of the ways in which they were rather being affected adversely. People became more dependent on technology as it got expanded. Unfortunately, it was also not accessible at all levels. Furthermore individuals felt that the social fabric that once held them together had dissolved and left them in scattered condition having fragmented identity. In the meantime, these individuals began to define themselves by doing random activities just to hide their fragmented identity. They desired for uniqueness to cover up their scattered personality. For that purpose, people endeavored for a diverse life style in order to have a unique individuality. Thus people became obsessed with different life styles and became addicted to consumerism. This attitude of people led to the emergence of consumer society.

Consumerism has strengthened due to the postmodernism's technological advancement. The expansion of technology with growing consumerism during the 1960s led to the surfacing of the postmodern era. The technological advancement in the postmodern era promised the newness and the attainment of desires through the activity of consumption. So postmodernism embraces the phenomena of consumerism and technology wholeheartedly as it guarantees the novelty in almost every aspect of life. Thomas Jay Oord attached popular

culture with postmodernism. He deemed that "popular culture post modernism" is preoccupied with newness, innovation and recency. The concept of novelty is commodified by the postmodern consumer culture. Thus the postmodern society is a consumer society in which one can transform so easily into one's new self and "consumption offers the means of effecting that transformation" (qtd. in Todd 49).

Cushman argues that this is an age of "empty self" (qtd. in Elliot 289) in which people repress their alienation by purchasing different lifestyles. In the postmodern capitalist world, consumers construct their self by purchasing different products for making their "possible selves" (qtd. in Elliot 287). For Baudrillard, the consumers' consumption shows their inner desire. He says that our activity of consumption illustrates our "psychological production of self" (qtd. in Todd 48). However postmodern consumer is never contented or satisfied because the products that he/she consumes are mere "sham objects" (qtd. in Todd 48), which do not have a real power of bestowing happiness to its possessors. Therefore the unhappy and empty consumers start consuming more products in the hope of finding the satisfaction and accomplishment of desires (Todd 48).

This attitude of people gives rise to the consumer culture. Consumer culture proffers the self-assurance by means of conspicuous consumption. The activity of consumption bestows the postmodern dwellers with "hope, possibility, freedom and self-esteem" (Botterill 3). By tagging the activity of consumption with the above mentioned attributes, consumer culture guarantees the indulgence of people in it. The following section traces the origin of consumer culture and presents the ways through which it becomes the means of asserting one's self.

2.2 Origin of Consumer Culture

There is generally wide disagreement found among different critics after tracing out the history of consumerism or consumer culture. Different critics have diverse viewpoints regarding the genesis of consumerism. McCracken claims that consumer culture got initiated in eighteenth century in England with the rise of Industrialization (qtd. in Raj 60). One of the historians, Rosalind Williams proclaims that the culture of consumption started in France in the nineteenth century with the development of stores and wall marts. It was a time when French bakers “and advertisers transformed Paris into a pilot plant of mass consumption” (qtd. in Raj 60). In *The Making of the Consumer: Knowledge, Power and Identity in the Modern World* (2006), Frank Trentmann comments on the emergence of consumer society. He claims that the “consumer societies emerge when humans have advanced from basic needs, like food and shelter, to material wants” (54).

Don Slater sums up the above thoughts in words that consumer culture commences with the incursion “of consumer goods into the everyday lives of people across social strata” (qtd. In Raj 61). He claims that consumer culture gets “ignit[ion] through a new sense of fashion and taste” (qtd. In Raj 61). Slater is also of the view that consumer culture flourishes rapidly with “the development of infrastructures, organizations, and practices that took advantage of the new markets, namely, the rise of shopping, advertising, and marketing” (qtd. in Raj 61)

The contemporary world is “permeated by consumerism” (Stearns vii). Consumerism demonstrates a society in which the main goal of people’s lives is to purchase goods. These people do not acquire goods out of need rather they want to assert their identity by possessing new items. Consumption is fueled by the assurance of novelty in human life and new sense of

mode, style and taste. However with the passage of time this culture becomes a norm which gives advantage to the new markets and advertisers (qtd. in Raj 61). Advertisement shows that “wants and needs were infinitely stretchable” (Stearns 18). Grant McCracken remarks that the advertisements create the fondness for style and incite the masses’ demand for goods that ultimately benefit the multinational corporations.

In *Consumer Society and The Postmodern City* (2003), David B. Clarke argues that postmodern society engages its members as consumers (22). In *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor* (2005), Bauman asserts that members of postmodern society are judged by their ability to play the role of consumers. Bauman identifies the “consumer game” (Bauman 37) in the postmodern world in which consumer goods are to bring satisfaction for an instant only and consumers should not “hold their attention nor focus their desire on any object for long” (Bauman 24).

In *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (2007), Mike Featherstone describes three main perspectives of consumerism. First, consumer culture enhances the development of capitalist market. It is the fact that capitalist market needs consumers to keep the economy at high level. In “The New Means of Consumption” (n.d), George Ritzer deems that “without ever increasing consumerism, capitalism as we have come to know it would collapse or at least be transformed dramatically” (1). The second perceptive of Featherstone is the sociological view of consumerism in which people consume different products or goods to “create social bonds or distinctions” (13). Todd rightly claims that “consumerism is not only an economic system it is the way our society functions” (50). Consumption of different goods develops a sense of who we are and our activity of consumption helps us in gaining our place and status in the strata of the postmodern consumer society. The more you consume, the higher will be your status. The act of consumption encourages sign-exchange value as primary means of relating to the world around us. The same stance is presented by Clarke in

Consumer Society and The Postmodern City (2003). He asserts that “consumption is *not* use value, the relation to needs, but *symbolic exchange* value, the value of social prestation, of rivalry and, at the limit, of class discrimination” (27). So consumption has nothing to do with satisfying our needs rather our activity of consumption relates us to the society around us. Third perspective of Featherstone is that consumption is a mean of emotional pleasure and the so called fulfillment of desires (13). In contemporary world, the activity of consumption has been associated with the contentment of buying the desirable products. In “The Consumerist ‘Politics of *Jouissance*’ and the Fantasy of Advertising” (2007), Stavrakakis claims that consumerism shows the pleasure of “desiring and buying” (243). He says that consumerism is founded on the false desires. Capitalist market uses several Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA’s) in order to stimulate our false wants and needs.

Moreover in *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structure* (1998), Baudrillard identifies consumer world as a “magical, miraculous and fantastic world” (17) in which the consumers falsely consider themselves as “affluent, fulfilled, happy and liberated” (15). Baudrillard has a view that in the postmodern capitalist world, people are no longer surrounded by human beings. It is because our daily bargaining are now not so much with our fellow human beings as with that of conspicuous objects. Baudrillard states:

Just as the wolf-child became a wolf by living among wolves, so we too are slowly becoming functional. We live by object time: by this I mean that we live at the pace of objects, live to the rhythm of their ceaseless succession. Today, it is we who watch them as they are born, grow to maturity and die, whereas in all previous civilizations it was timeless objects, instruments or monuments which outlived the generations of human beings. (25)

Consumers of this age are merely puppets in the hands of capitalist market. By constantly bombarding them with fashionable, modern and user friendly goods through cultural industry, capitalist market is successful in the destruction of cognition and reducing individuals to have “one dimensional thought and behavior” (Marcuse xii).

One-dimensional man does not know its true needs because its needs are not its own—they are administered, superimposed, and heteronomous; it is not able to resist domination, nor to act autonomously, for it identifies with public behavior and imitates and submits to the powers that be. Lacking the power of authentic self-activity, one-dimensional man submits to increasingly total domination. (Marcuse 27-28)

The capitalist market seduces its consumers. Bauman says that in consumer society, consumers ardently want to be seduced. They live from one attraction to another, from one temptation to another, and each new enticement brings stronger sensation than the previous one (Bauman 38).

In *Dialectics of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (2002), Horkheimer and Adorno state that consumers in the postmodern world are divided into statistical figures and they are quantified and arranged according to their income (97). This division helps the capitalist market to produce goods according to the style and range of its customers. Consumers in this world are quantified by the capitalist market because it tells them “which goods and in which quantities they choose to purchase from the market within the constraints of their budget” (Lehdonvirta 3). This shows that the survival of capitalism nevertheless depends upon consumers and their activity of consumption.

The capitalist economy thus encourages personal insecurities because it helps to expand the capitalist market. Moreover, self-doubt is in capitalism's best interest because it motivates an individual to buy consumer goods. For that reason capitalists promote their ideology of consumerism in universal way. Ideology could be regarded as belief, owned by an individual or group but it is induced in the masses through ideological state apparatus (ISA's). The role of ideology is lucrative for the capitalist market as it helps in expanding their market. The rapid growth of consumerism shows that capitalist market is successful in universalizing its ideology of consumerism.

2.3 Ideology of Consumerism

Ideology means "the scientific study of human ideas" (Eagleton 63) but it signifies "system of ideas" (Eagleton 63) too. In *Ideology: An Introduction* (2007), Eagleton defines ideology as a "body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class" (2). Marx and Engels, in *German Ideology* (1998) gave a new meaning to this term by attaching strong political implications. Ideology is expounded by an ideologist whose success lies in universalizing and legitimizing his ideas on people (Eagleton 5). Ideology has been shaping people's behavior and beliefs since centuries. However with the passage of time, the ways of shaping people's attitude has been changed. Different schools of thought have emerged with the progression of time, which hold different theoretical views.

Ideology is defined in different ways by different critics. According to the spatial and temporal context, different critics have diverse standpoints about ideology. The first school of thought comprises Karl Marx (1818-1883), Engels (1820-1895), Louis Althusser (1918-1990), Lukács (1885-1971), Mannheim (1893-1947) Gramsci (1891-1937) and Goldmann (1913-1970). For these critics ideology is an illusion, false consciousness and hegemony,

together it serves the interest of ruling class to impose their agenda. Ideology, for them, is a system of ideas that overshadow the consciousness of people and people in their naïve state follow this shadow and consider it as universal and legitimate. For Marx and Engels, ideology works like “camera obscura” (42) that inverts the social reality or, in other words, obscures the social reality as well as the consciousness of human beings.

In *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (1971), Lukács identifies the alteration of consciousness with the process of reification and alienation. He argues that laborers or proletariat¹ in the capitalist society are not recognized as human beings rather they work as a commodity. This is because in capitalist society, laborer works for specific time period and in return gets money. Laborer sells his labor power, his use-value, in the hands of capitalist in order to survive or to get the sustenance. The capitalist system nevertheless rests on the sale of laborer’s use-value.

Lukács states that the commodified worker loses his connection with his human qualities and builds a relationship with concrete objects. Even the relation of men with each other can be categorized as “things and the relation of things with each other” (Lukács 14). Laborer’s consciousness at this stage becomes reified because they work for the sustenance mechanically. A stage comes when they start working nonstop for company or organization and works like automatons. They do not consider themselves as human beings rather as machines. In the same way these reified individuals work day and night for the capitalists and their reified consciousness creates false consciousness for them linking their existence with persistent work for the capitalist market. This serves the interests of the bourgeois class.

In the mid 60’s the second group that is Frankfurt School of thought appeared which gave another direction and new meaning to ideology. For Frankfurt School critics that include

¹ Although the terms Proletariat and labor were used by Lukács in his theory, but they can be used to symbolize the consumer class in the postmodern era. This is because the trend of consumerism was adopted by the middle class initially.

Marcuse (1898-1979), Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Habermas (1929-till age) and Adorno (1903-1969), ideology is a “totalitarian system which has managed and processed all social conflicts out of existence” (qtd. in Eagleton 127). This means that it serves to hegemonize the world by suppressing the entire contradictory phenomena. This group is notable because they view culture as an industry which fostered ideology by different means. The means of culture industry first assault the reasoning capabilities of human beings.

In *Dialect of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (2002), Adorno and Horkheimer convey that reason is intrinsically “manipulative, riding roughshod over the sensuous particularities of nature and body” (qtd. in Eagleton 127). The same notion is discussed by Adorno’s colleague Marcuse in his *One Dimensional Man* (1964). Critics of Frankfurt school argue that economic power and capitalist society is taking a hold on human mind through culture industry. Culture industry captivates the reasoning capabilities to promote ideology of consumerism. As a result human mind is unable to resist and welcomes all of its aspects. They also talk about technological power and industrialization that have reduced the human soul into material entity.

The intervention of technology in the dissemination of ideology of consumerism begets third school of thought. The third group consists of postmodern critics like Fredric Jameson (1934-till date), Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007), Ernest Mandel (1923-1995), Felix Guattari (1930-1992), Slavoj Žižek (1949-till date) Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995), and Peter Sloterdijk (1947-till date). These postmodern critics declare present day society as post-ideological society as these days we continuously shift from one ideology to another. It is because these days everyone rushes to pursue their desires for the attainment of newness. This attitude of people incorporates cynical reason in them. The cynical reason justifies every action of postmodern dwellers which they do for self-satisfaction.

Jean Baudrillard is among the first one who puts forward his notion of Hyperreality and modifies the theory of second school of thought. He has the same standpoint and presents that media and technological advancement produce a novel phenomenon that is known as hyperreality. He asserts that media and technology has eroded the line between real and unreal. In today's hyperreal world, the distinction between image and real gets blurred and image seems to be more real, leading to the death of the real. He says that traditionally media acted as mirror which was used to "reflect or represent reality" (qtd. in Kellner 68). However media is now used to constitute a new phenomenon which he termed as hyperreal in which "the real is subordinate to representation thus leading ultimately to a dissolving of the real" (qtd. in Kellner 68).

Baudrillard argues that media engages masses by producing their interest, taste and fantasies. It is because of this reason "masses absorb all media content, neutralize, ... demand and obtain more spectacle and entertainment, thus further eroding the boundary between media and the real" (qtd. in Kellner 69). Masses keep on consuming all those images as real phenomenon. For that reason, consumerism also gains to be a real social phenomenon.

In the postmodern techno-world, advertisements play an essential role in promoting the ideology of consumerism and in manipulating the human reasoning. It is one of the major apparatuses of culture industry as it gives an image which helps in the dissemination of capitalist market. In postmodern consumer world, desires are channelized in a particular direction through advertising. Stavrakakis deems that advertising is a "brainwashing activity" (233) which stimulates the "false desires, deepens our enslavement to consumerism and capitalist exploitation" (233). He argues that consumerism is founded on the deformation of natural needs and on the formation and propagation of artificial desires, and this can be done by the discourse of advertising.

Galbrith says that advertisers position their products as vital for life. On the other hand, consumers blindly accept those products without even thinking that whether those products will be useful for them or not (qtd. in Baudrillard 73-74). In *Ads, Fads and Consumer Culture* (2011), Berger deems that ads and commercials brainwash the humanity and persuade them for buying those particular products that appear continuously on TV (3). Berger claims that “advertising conditions us – as individuals and as member of society – in the same way that Pavlov was able to train dogs” (9).

Therefore the discourse of advertisement successfully imposes ideology of consumerism in contemporary world. Advertisement associates popular culture with the notion of uniqueness as mentioned previously. It converses that by consuming popular culture one can get distinctiveness in the society. Advertisements make the activity of consumption a universal phenomenon. The activity of consumption in contemporary framework is like any other usual activity of life. It takes breath after every instant and offers a new life and a new look from time to time.

2.4 Popular Culture and Global Branding

Popular culture is extremely disputed matter. Postmodern critics often consider it as an empty space which is filled by diverse people at different time periods for various purposes. Popular culture can be regarded as the site where people strive hard in order to give meaning to their life. The term popular implies that something that is “well-liked by many people; ... culture actually made by the people for themselves” (qtd. in Storey 5) as Raymond William suggests. This definition of popular makes obvious the concept of popular culture. So to sum up

popular culture can be interpreted as a culture which is raised by people and which is accepted and favored by many people (Storey 5-6)

Klein builds a bond of popular culture with brands. She deems that popular culture is actually the images of brands that are created by Brand Corporation. Boden also associated popular culture with brand as it “construct[s] and present[s] a fashioned body” (Boden 289). In *Brands: Meaning and Value in Media Culture* (2006), Arvidsson describes brand “as a kind of ubiquitous managerial devices by means of which everyday life is managed, or perhaps better, programmed, so that it evolves in ways that can potentially generate the right kind of attention (and hence, brand value)” (7). Brand is now pervasive in global culture. It is a mean of communication which communicates the societal position of subject in the context of contemporary globe.

Branding corporations promise their consumers that brand will provide them a mental happiness by assuring attainment of “unmet desires and needs” (Cayla and Arnould 89). It can transform their life because successful brands make a relationship with their consumers. Brands create a symbiotic relationship with customers in which brands expect from customers “to add more or less personal dimension to the brand, to accommodate it in their life world, to produce something – a feeling, a personal relation, an experience – with it” (68). Whereas consumers assume that using branded products might bestow them with a brand new self as stated by Wilson that branded products are used to “build a brand-new you – a branded YOU” (1).

John Robert claims that “today’s youth are used to sponso[r]” (qtd. in Klein 65) the popular culture. The quest of self in youth culture is shaped by market trends of the corporate world. In the corporate world, young consumers always remain a central concern for the capitalist market. The TV commercials and advertisements create “transcendent image”

(Klein 68) of products which persuade the youth to buy and consume. The hunt for new self turns youth into the "marketable commodit[y]" (Klein 80). Childers asserts that it is widely accepted assumption that the younger generation of United States becomes more "cynical, negative pessimistic, and jaded" (127) because of their desire to attain self-autonomy by consuming the images of popular culture.

Popular culture and Global branding of the present era influence the people and their way of life. Childers argues that "people make sense of the world around them through the popular culture they consume" (120). The popular culture provides the means for attaining the new self through consumerism. The concept of new self in the postmodern consumer culture has enslaved the reasoning power of people. People affected the transformation by altogether ignoring that their activities of consumption in reality never transform them. It is because the newness promised by postmodern consumer culture fades away as soon as they have bought the desired products. Nevertheless they are unable to renounce their activity of consumption because they keep on fantasizing that it might help them to fulfill their desires.

People of the corporate world merely deceive themselves. They know their act of consumption will end in a void, yet they carry on with their activity of consumption. It is because their reason is eclipsed by their longings and cravings. This attitude of postmodern inhabitants leads them to the level of cynicism. Cynical reason means that human beings know the truth about certain situation but still they act in a way as if they do not know and carry on with their practices. A cynic is well aware of the inconsistency between his knowing and doing yet he does not shun it rather he willingly carries on with certain practices as he has already perceived benefits in them.

The sublime status of reason has been undermined by the critics of postmodernism. Postmodern critics deny the transcendental position of reason. Reason is over shadowed by

the desires and urges of human beings. People only want the gratification of their desires by any means. In postmodern era desires are associated with the lack. Lack is produced in the life of every human being after entering into symbolic stage². The child's ultimate union with his mother in the imaginary phase is shattered with his entering into symbolic phase which produces a lack or loss in the life of human being. This sense of loss and lack experienced there haunts him throughout his life. The inhabitants of postmodern era fill their lack by consuming different products.

Lacan claims that lack creates desire in the subject and he refers to that lost object³ (separation from mother) as "object petit a" (qtd. in Tyson 28). He argues that the sense of loss haunts the subject throughout his life and he tries to substitute his loss and lack through different activities. In postmodern capitalist world, subject fulfills the lack through the activity of consumption. However the irony is that their activity of consumption never fills their lack.

The same cynical reason works best in the promulgation of consumer culture. The present study seeks the role of cynical reason and ideological fantasy in the corporate world. The researcher tries to explore the working of cynical reason and fantasy in the propagation of the capitalist market. The following section of this chapter discusses the cynical reason and its ideological fantasy – given by Peter Sloterdijk and Slavoj Žižek respectively.

² Lacan identifies three stages of human life i.e. mirror stage, symbolic stage and the real. Lacan redefines Freud by using the notion of post structuralism and regards human identity as decentered. In the beginning, child perceives himself as fragmented but soon he starts to see himself in the reaction of his mother which gives him the sense of completeness. Lacan deconstructs the sense of wholeness at imaginary phase and detaches the delusion of self-mastery. However, with the acquisition of language and with the breaking of this illusion, a child enters into the symbolic stage, where he learns the rules and regulations of life. At this stage, child comes to know that mother does not belong to him rather mother belongs to father and at the same time his illusion of self-mastery is also get over. This separation from his mother and the breaking of illusion creates a gap in the life of human being.

Lacan's concept of real refers to the ideal self which is not attainable.

³ Lost object actually refers to the union with mother that he lost after entering into the symbolic stage.

2.5 Cynical Reason and its Created Ideological Fantasy

Postmodern era is an era of “enlightened false consciousness” (Sloterdijk 5). Unlike the age of Enlightenment in which human actions were guided by the faculty of reasoning, in postmodern era people are led by their drives. Reason in contemporary society is overshadowed by personal desires and drives which turn the faculty of reason into cynical reason.

In postmodern consumer world, postmodern subject is neither a victim of false consciousness nor of any form of ideology. Rather reason in postmodern epoch is overshadowed by desires which keep the people willingly in false consciousness that is, where people are aware of the fact that whatever they are being led to follow is fake or wrong. None the less they do not renounce falsehood and continue to follow it. The inhabitants of postmodern consumer world know that their activity of consumption is futile and will never give them a due satisfaction, yet they continue to do so to attain a place and status in the society.

Žižek claims that in the postmodern age even our activity is directed by our own urges and desires which fabricates delusion and formulates our reality. Our actions are steered by our illusion which also directs our social reality as: “their social reality itself, their activity, is guided by an illusion, by a fetishistic inversion” (30). He further deems that: “What they overlook, what they misrecognize, is not the reality but the illusion which is structuring their reality, their real social activity. They know very well how things really are, but still they are doing it as if they did not know” (30). Consequently this illusion causes an ideological fantasy which thereby shapes our social reality and we follow it blindly.

Sloterdijk too has the same views, he opines that a cynic suffers from an awareness of inconsistency between his practices and the values that he rejects, yet he does not acknowledge this and remains obsessed with his actions. This attitude of cynic meets with Sloterdijk's definition of cynicism as he stated in *The Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987): "that modernized, unhappy consciousness, on which enlightenment has labored both successfully and in vain. It has learned its lessons in enlightenment, but it has not, and probably was not able to, put them into practice. Well-off and miserable at the same time, this consciousness no longer feels affected by any critique of ideology; its falseness is already reflexively buffered" (5).

Sloterdijk argues that by questioning all traditional values and notions, postmodern subjects create an environment of distrust for their own selves. Sloterdijk states that this inclination of cynics leads them to the position where they know the truth about certain situations but continue to go on as before. Therefore it can be said that in the postmodern consumer world, cynics play a vital role in the machination of capitalist system. It is because cynics are well aware of the fact that their activity of consumption will neither benefit them, nor give them ultimate contentment. Nonetheless their cynical reason crafts an ideological fantasy for them and cynics wish to remain in their fantasy and insist to keep on their ideological mask.

Žižek has the same opinion that ideology in this era is neither simply "false consciousness" as it is thought to be, nor it is an illusionary representation of reality. Reality itself is rather conceived as an ideological: "ideological is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participant as to its essence- that is the social effectivity, the very reproduction of which implies that the individuals do not know what they are doing" (16). He further argues that people might recognize that their reality is not an actual reality and it is structured on ideological illusion which he terms as an "ideological

fantasy", yet they follow it. Therefore he says that our reason which he terms as "cynical reason" is one of the ways which keeps us blind to the structuring power of ideological fantasy: "even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, we are still doing them" (30).

Žižek illustrates ideology in three forms: "ideology in itself" which means a series of ideas, "ideology for itself" involves the ideological state apparatuses (ISA's), and the third form "ideology in and for itself" (Garcia 3), where it enters into social practices and seems as a natural process. Žižek was interested in third form of ideology because it is the moment where ideology seems to fade away. It is at this point that capitalist market makes its way in on the premise that consumerism will ensure us a place in society.

Žižek relates the concept of 'in and for itself' to the consciousness of late-capitalist era. Late capitalist era generally refers to the era from 1945 onwards. However postmodern critics regard contemporary era as an eon of late capitalism because of its technological advancement. The subjects of contemporary age know that their actions are motivated by utilitarian purpose and their relationships with each other are strictly guided by their hedonist drive. Therefore, for Žižek, ideology no longer depends upon the traditional notion where human beings do not know that they are acting in the benefit of certain groups. They know but they do not shun their practices because, by its very essence, subject is void. As stated above, the union with mother got smashed with the subject's entrance into symbolic phase which eventually creates a gap and emptiness in the subject's personality. Ultimately there is always a lack in subject's life and throughout his life, he fills that void with random activities.

According to Žižek, ideology is composed of "phantasmatic organization" (qtd. in Garcia 4) which creates ideological fantasy. Elliott says "the function of ideology is to provide men and women with a fantasised/phantasmatic scenic sequence of the possibility of

its own social condition” (qtd. in Garcia 5). It is because of this reason that ideology can evasively rationalize human faculty of reasoning and disguise the reality. In Žižek’s view point, ideology provides an idealized vision of society which in reality never exists.

Žižek also claims that ideology is not only an illusion that hides the true state of things; rather it also encompasses the fantasy which actually arranges and organizes our social reality. That is why for Žižek, the function of fantasy is complex because it does not only “materialize desire in hallucinatory ways, but it also contributes to organize the subject’s regime of desires” (qtd. in Garcia 6). Ideology arises out from the lack, the point where desires are created in subject.

Žižek links ideology with the element of unconscious. Being an inhabitant of postmodern consumer world, Subject’s unconscious creates a fantasy that his lack would be fulfilled with the consumption of different goods. Subject’s activity of consumption creates a surplus *jouissance* (intense enjoyment) which actually ratifies the so called satisfaction that subject gets with the consumption of goods.

Žižek maintains that *jouissance* is the real support for ideology. Without *jouissance*, ideology will be at risk. The surplus *jouissance* retains a subject’s cynical reason which creates a fantasy world for us. Our “(unconscious) fantasy structure[s] our social reality” (Žižek 30) and we prefer to live in our own “ideological fantasy” (Žižek 30). Žižek draws the homology between surplus value and surplus enjoyment. He argues that the way surplus value sets the capitalist system into motion, surplus *jouissance* “provides the object cause of desire” (Boyle 8), called an *object ‘petit a’* by Lacan. ‘*Object petit a*’ stands for an object cause of desire not for an object of desire. It is because the object of desire is only the material object but an object cause of desire is more than a material object as it is the point where desire resides and is produced. Žižek states that an object cause of desire “signifies the

promise of enjoyment in the real, of an experience of full *jouissance*, total fulfillment and satisfaction" (Boyle 9). However the irony is that in the postmodern consumer world, products seem to be our object cause of desire but they never deliver the enjoyment in the real or full *jouissance*.

Žižek argues that capitalist system interpellates the subject at individual level through cultural industry and turns him into consumers. Frank Smecker also has the same opinion about capitalism. He says in one of his interviews that capitalism:

Sinisterly dons the visage that it completes this lack, tessellating the social field with false images of wholeness, despite never really doing so; so we continue to play the game precisely because we desire something we'll never have but which capitalism nonetheless vows to offer us: wholeness. So capitalist ideology tells us to enjoy, to enjoy it all; but because no single *thing*, no object, no commodity can ever fully satisfy our desires and make us complete, capitalism, as a system, therefore relies on this inbuilt inadequacy precisely in order for it to continue to function (danieltutt.com).

Žižek claims that fantasy is an important element for capitalist system because it arouses desires in human beings. Nonetheless its ultimate aim is never to satisfy those desires. Rather fantasy teaches us how to desire, the ultimate satisfaction of those desires is always postponed from "discourse to discourse, from fantasy to fantasy, from product to product" (Stavrakakis 241). In consumer society, with every new product, new fantasies are attached and advertised. The inability to produce satisfaction does not kill desire, but conversely, as Anderson states, this "sets off a cyclical quest" (qtd. in Stavrakakis 241). It is this incessant displacement that forms the essence of consumer culture.

Capitalist system hits our fantasy through advertisement and incites our desire. Fantasy promises us the ultimate elimination of our lack by offering us an *objet petit a* and experience of full *jouissance*. Žižek claims that advertising discourses focus on that “fantasmatic space” (qtd. In stavrakakis 240) which generates our desire. That is why Stavrakakis calls capitalist system as a “virtual utopia” (241), because, through the discourse of advertisements, it excites our desire and convinces us that buying of those specific products would create harmony in our life.

Žižek designates capitalism as “hysteria” (qtd. in Boyle 11) in which the cycle of satisfaction and dissatisfaction continues with ferocious speed. “The hysteric consumer” (qtd. in Boyle 11) roams into endless aisles of wall marts, shopping centers and stores etc. Thus Žižek is of the view that the postmodern consumer world is not about false consciousness because its inhabitants are very much aware of the unfulfilled nature of their own desire and yet they continue with their activity of consumption. So for Žižek, ideology does not reside in knowing a certain situation rather it gets nourishment through doing and repeating certain practices. Thus for the postmodern world “the ideology *par excellence* is cynicism” (qtd. in Garcia 4). It is because the inhabitants of postmodern world willingly carries on with certain practices e.g. consumption.

In today’s postmodern world, our cynical reason and its created ideological fantasy works best in the propagation of consumerism. Cynical reason of postmodern subject keeps on fantasizing his desires and consumer world feeds those desires incessantly. In this way, postmodern subject itself helps in the flourishing of consumer culture.

Žižek also talks about art and its relationship with society. He attempts to locate fantasy in the work of art. He claims that literature can be read in the background of fantasy. He deems that though fantasy is a “primordial lie, a screen masking --- impossibility” (58) but true art can “reveal the radical falsity of this fantasy” (58). Though fantasy is very

difficult to interpret in literature as “we do not know where to situate it due to the fact that it just sits there, complete in its nature as a fantasy, whose only reality is a discourse and which expects nothing of your powers, asking you, rather, to square accounts with your own desires” (Žižek 58). It is because this nature of fantasy cannot be analyzed. Žižek opines that an interpretation of fantasy involves exploration of those specific elements “in which an art work structures desire” (59). The study of fantasy in the context of literature is necessary to expose the true spirit of particular age to which literature belongs.

In the present research, the researcher tries to locate the corporate world’s fantasy in DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* and Anderson’s *Feed*. Though fantasy performed a crucial role in the corporate world but how writers articulate it in their works of literature is rather a tactful matter. DeLillo and Anderson both weave the element of fantasy metaphorically. DeLillo uses the symbol of Yen to create a fantasy for his protagonist whereas Anderson uses feed as an emblem for fantasy. Both writers beautifully create the fantasy world for their protagonists. Along with the symbol, both writers also link the technological advancement with the creation of fantasy.

Along with fantasy, the present research explores the complex connection of desire with cynical reason and fantasy. The present study focuses on the hyperreal world and rampant consumerism. It brings into light the role of desires, cynical reason and ideological fantasy in the expansion of the capitalist market and in turning humanity into marketable entity.

CHAPTER 3

CONSUMERISM AS A SOCIAL REALITY

'Consumerism as a Social Reality' looks at those elements which contribute in making consumerism a social verity. It delves into the nature of the saturated media, the hyperreal world, the hyper marketed world and the world of consumer goods in the selected oeuvre. Bearing in mind the problem statement of the present study, researcher's aim is to highlight and to see how these four elements are interlinked with each other in making the phenomenon of consumption a societal verity.

With the emergence of Modern age in the twentieth century, consumer culture rose to prominence in America. Consumerism constitutes the core aspect of American life. With the new advancement in technology and culture industry, people in this age are granted with painless access to new products that seem apparently necessary for their everyday lives. American society is arranged in a way that persuades individuals to buy, use, discard and then buy some more. In "Buying into the Future" (2001), Delia Cabe says that "Americans buy stuff. Lots of it. For no reason, or good reason. Because it's on sale, new and improved, the latest things, better tasting than ever" (11). Cabe even claims that "Americans are practically born to shop. Although our drives to spend, spend, spend has not been traced to a gene, consumption is the American way" (11).

The astounding and indefinite expansion of consumerism gives subject matter to the American writers. American authors speak about consumerism in their writings. As author is also a product of society, so he portrays society the way he or she perceives. Different authors represent the surprising expansion of consumerism in diverse ways. Here, in this chapter, the researcher analyzes two different American novels *Cosmopolis* (2003) by DeLillo and *Feed* (2012) by Anderson. The researcher explores how both of these writers portray the ideology of consumerism. Furthermore, the researcher also investigates how the ideology of consumerism becomes a social reality in the first place.

M.T. Anderson narrates a tale of the Corporate America. He creates a futuristic and dystopian account of society that seems both credible and painful simultaneously. His novel is a sheer satire on excessive consumerism and our dependence on technology that creates dark and at the same time believable, frightening and terrifying vision of the future corporate world.

M. T. Anderson presents a futuristic apocalyptic society in which human brains are controlled by a device called feed. He shows that feed is implanted in the brains which connect them with flow of information from the corporate world. The users of feed are continuously barraged by advertisements about entertainment and other kinds of consumer items as described: "our feeds were burbling all sort of things about where to stay and what to eat" (14). Anderson shows that schools are "run by the corporation" (119) and they are merely concerned with consumerism and "how to use our feed" (120). Therefore in Anderson's dystopian society, schools are concerned with teaching of shopping. Consequently literacy rate is sharply declining due to the conquest of corporation. Instead of making consumers as "critical, interpretive" (McLaren and Sandlin xiii) and educating them in a way so that they can contribute in altering the globe in a favorable way, the postmodern corporate world, make them dumb and irrational.

With the conquest of corporations we become the dwellers of ultra-modern society. The inhabitants of the corporate society are rapidly losing their cognitive abilities because “when you have the feed all your life, you’re brought up to not think about things” (Anderson 123). It is ultimately the feed which is controlled by the corporate industry and which controls its users. In *Feed* (2012), a group of teens has implantation of feed in their brains. Readers are shown that these teens performed activities of life well in the presence of feed, but the moment their feeds were hacked, they even lost their ability to move. This shows that technology even takes possession and control of their limbic system as well.

In the middle of this apocalyptic society, Anderson weaves a love story of Titus and Violet to reveal the two opposing attitudes in the corporate society. On one hand he shows Titus and his friends who are comfortable with feed whereas, on the other hand, people like Violet and her father criticize the use of feed. Titus falls in love with Violet and begins to spend more time with her. At the end he learns to see the world the way Violet sees. Soon he also starts questioning the feedtech and no longer believes in feednet. This book provides an apathetic and lethargic picture of plausible future – a future where technology will be everything and corporations will own everything, even schools.

DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* (2003) deals with rampant consumerism, power, money and depressing effect of technology on the postmodern world. It tells a tale of twenty eight years old Packer, a billionaire, who makes up his mind to cross through Manhattan Street to get haircut. He drives in his stretch limo which is highly spacious and seems a luxurious tech-office. His limo has computer and television screens through which he observes the outer world. Packer’s voyage is disturbed by diverse incidents of the day. He is obstructed by traffic jam which is caused by the president’s visit in town, anti-capitalist revolution and a funereal of Sufi star. On the way, he also has several sexual encounters with his wife and

with other women. As the day passed, Packer loses large amount of money by betting against the rise of yen.

Cosmopolis (2003) narrates the story of the global media which is run by multinational corporations. Packer loses his entire economic portfolio by gambling against the rise of yen because he hopes that dollar will escalate soon due to which yen will sink and lose its value. He aims to be rich by gambling but his hope sinks him down. Though Packer has all the luxuries of life but he remains perturbed. He also knows that his gambling is ruining his life yet he cannot give it up. Why he was unable to give up gambling remains the question which will be explained in the later part of this research.

In both the novels, it is noticed that information and knowledge in the postmodern corporate society is equipped with technology and media. There is a flow of information in both the novels as described: "patterns, ratios, indexes, whole maps of information" (DeLillo 14). In the same way Anderson in *Feed* (2012), says that information "came down on us like water. It came down on us like frickin' spring rains" (Anderson 80). These evidences from the text show the flow of information in the postindustrial society. However Anderson clearly demonstrates that all the information is related with consumer items as: "And the feed was pouring in on us now, all of it, all of the feednet, and we could feel all of our favorites, and there were our files, and our m-chatlines (Anderson 80). Likewise DeLillo links this information with technological advancement. DeLillo even claims that technology in this era is "melting into the texture of everyday life" (DeLillo 104).

Lyotard has the same view point about knowledge and information. Lyotard gives a very different concept of knowledge in his report *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1984). According to him, in the postmodern age, no new knowledge is created, rather the old knowledge is again and again repackaged and authenticated. The one who has

the ability and resources to repackage the knowledge is the one who will have power and domination. As in this era, technology and multinational companies hold everything, so knowledge is also in the possession of technology and corporations. In the present time the corporations control the knowledge as described above that in *Feed* (2012), schools are under the command of Multinational corporations.

It is seen that in both the novels characters assert themselves through consumption. They try to maximize their satisfaction level through purchase of commodities. However it is seen that each purchase increases the insatiate desires of consumers. Consumerism though opens the way for transitory self in which one can change one's self fleetly, but at the same time it also waxes discontentment among the masses. In the latter half of the twentieth century, multinational and transnational corporations have conquered the world and have threatened our culture. By living in the midst of commodities consumerism never seems to be an aberration rather consumption seems to be an essential activity of life. The media especially advertising agencies are the major contributors in making consumerism a social reality and promoting the consumer culture around the globe.

The prodigious expansion of technology and media has replaced our real world with the Hyperreal world. The corporations assemble goods all around us and turn this world into the hyper marketed world and the world of goods. These are the factors which make activity of consumerism a social reality. The above stated elements are discussed one by one in the later part of this chapter.

3.1 The Saturated Media World

In the present day society, consumerism is an 'ism' that gets success despite of all the oppositional forces. Consumerism is victorious because it gets proliferation through media.

Media helps in the promulgation of consumer culture by placing commercials on TV screens. In the corporate world advertisement is ubiquitous and it is carried by: "newspaper or magazines or television or radio or billboards or by some other medium" (Bashir and Malik 1). By placing advertisements everywhere, multinational companies pave the way for consumerism.

Bauman opines that by the installation of advertisements everywhere, the corporate world entices the masses towards the incessant purchase of goods. He draws an analogy between untested recipes and products that are advertised. He proclaims that untested recipes remain appealing until they are tested out. Likewise products that are advertised continue to be irresistible until they are consumed. However in the corporate world after consuming those particular products, consumers remain unfulfilled (Bauman 72).

The overpowering nature of consumerism gives subject matter to the postmodern author. In both the novels, DeLillo and Anderson disseminate the same idea. In both texts, writers talk about the rampant consumerism. DeLillo himself admitted in one of his interview given to BBC that "a writer must think about writing against the power of the state, the corporation, the endless process of rampant consumerism and waste that's *Cosmopolis*" (bbc.co.uk). Anderson also says that while writing *Feed*, he "was already dreaming in advertisements" (Anderson np).

In Anderson's *Feed* (2012), one can see advertisements after every few sections. The continuous surging of advertisements after every sections show the persistent interaction of corporations in our life. Similarly in DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003), writer shows the spectacle of advertisement everywhere even in Packer's limousine, advertisements are shown as in: "the array of visual display units" (DeLillo 13).

The inhabitants of the postmodern world cannot repudiate the domination of advertisements in their life. Advertisements are able to exploit the masses by attaching the images of “romance, exotica, desire, beauty, fulfillment, communality, scientific progress and the good life to mundane consumer goods” (Featherstone 14). Advertisements nevertheless shape the preferences by attaching striking images with goods. The messages of commercials too reinforce the activity of consumption. In *Feed* (2012), Anderson states the same view in a restaurant’s advertisement as: “Hostess M’s American Family Restaurants. Where time seems to stop while you chew” (26). DeLillo too shows advertisement as a strong and powerful entity as Packer while watching advertisements on TV appears to “absorb th[e] material in a couple of long still seconds, ignoring the speech sounds that issued from lacquered heads” (13). These statements of text affirm the persuasive nature of advertisements that are impossible to defy because of their irresistible nature.

Therefore, advertising is a cogent entity that shapes people’s behavior and attitude. Media even has the power of exploiting the reality by giving “license to distort facts” (Gregory 31) and advertisement is one of the main apparatuses that is used by media for this purpose. Anderson discusses the same idea in his novel. He proclaims that in present scenario feed shapes our preferences as it: “knows everything you want and hope for, sometimes before you even know what those things are. It can tell you how to get them, and help you make buying decisions that are hard” (Anderson 58). Likewise in *Cosmopolis* (2003), Packer, in the midst of corporate goods, remains bewildered about “what he wanted” (DeLillo 7).

Baudrillard claims that “advertisement technically don’t lie” because it constructs the “mythology around the products” (qtd. in Stavrakakis 238). It incites the desire of the masses which direct them towards consumption. Baudrillard has the same view point that in consumer societies the products that are bought and consumed are not objects in essence rather “our fantasies which come to be signified in the image and consumed in it”

(Baudrillard 33). He deems that "advertisement is a prophetic language" (qtd. in Stavrakakis 238) because it sponsors hope of giving better persona and individuality. The efficacious nature of advertisements is exposed in both the texts. In *Feed* (2012), when Violet pays no heed on the ads of feed, feed tries to persuade her for consumption by showing her so-called updated products as: "Oh, I know! You're almost a woman, and you want things that are totally big violet! That's where I can help! (Anderson 165). Whereas in *Cosmopolis* (2003), Packer is also shown as too much engrossed in the "soulful and glowing" (DeLillo 24) advertisements on the screens. He admits the fact that "the roll and flip of data on screens" (24) has too much importance for him. He also claims that all the information and data that appears on and off on screens "defined every breath of the planet's living billions" (DeLillo 24).

The bombardment of advertisements and uncertainties of contemporary era prompt to the consumer culture. One can overcome one's uncertainties by consuming advertisements. The residents of the uncertain world relieve their precariousness by devouring the commercials. The dwellers of the unpredictable world lessen their fickleness by purchasing the so called desirable products. It is because it alleviates their anxiety and gives them a sense of freedom and newness. The whole ideology of consumerism convinces us that we are entering into a new age where individuals' desires will be taken into account. It is an age which "separates the painful, heroic age production from the euphoric age of consumption" (Baudrillard 82). The same notion is conversed by Anderson and DeLillo in their texts as well. Titus in *Feed* (2012), says that "we have entered a new age, we are a new people. It is now the age of oneiric culture, the culture of dreams" (Anderson 159). Packer also has the same view point as "people will not die. Isn't this the creed of the new culture?" (DeLillo 104). These evidences show that by consuming material objects we can enter into a new age

where by consumption promises modishness in the name of emancipation. It also shows that our conspicuous consumption will be helpful in attaining our dreams.

In this way advertising machinery continues to dominate the reasoning faculty of human beings and consequently creates a society which is devoid of criticality. Gregory argues that in the name of autonomy, the natives of the corporate world create three fiends for themselves: "a culture of consumption, conformity and uncritical thinking" (9). Such thinking is visible in DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003). He discerns the changes that happened in society with the emergence of "cyber-capital" (DeLillo 79). He shows that our over-indulgence in cyber-capital makes us uncritical and consequently we cannot see things reasonably as described: "people stopped thinking" (79). However it has also been observed that some people of the society are not comfortable with consumer culture so they raise their voice against them. In DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) anti-corporate rage is seen among people who were chanting against this system as "a specter is haunting the world-the specter of capitalism" (DeLillo 96). A protestor "hit[s] them [Packer and his friends] in the face with pies" (DeLillo 142). The same notion is discussed by Klein in terms of protesting against the corporate world. She says that corporate society is always the foremost target for pieing. She quotes many examples of the real world people that have connection with the corporate sector and all of them are once hit with pies for example "Microsoft CEO Bill Gates, ... world trade organization director Renato Ruggiero" (Klein 326). One of the Biotic Baking Brigade's agents says for all the corporate organization owners that "to their lies, we respond with pies" (qtd. In Klein 326). Violet too discloses the same truth of the corporate market to Titus that with feed "none of us did good, and I felt stupid, and we felt stupid --- this is so dumb" (Anderson 120). The above lines reveal that the corporate culture has crippled our capacity of thinking and has created a society that is void of criticality.

The residents of the contemporary world indulge in consumption so deeply that at time it seems that consumption might have a power to solve out their life's difficulties. We know that our relentless purchase of goods comprises of "unfulfilled promises" (Gregory 2) as it never bestows us with the promise and happiness that is tagged with advertisement. Yet "we do not learn from our empty purchases" (Gregory 2). He argues that we keep on consuming the products and every time and with each single purchase we devise justification to convince ourselves that why our last purchase remained unfulfilled.

It is seen that Anderson's characters roam aimlessly from one hotel to another and from one mall to another. They buy different stuffs. However the irony is that they buy those things which were not needed actually. In *Feed* (2012), the characters buy things whether they needed them or not. As Titus said "I wanted to buy something but I didn't know what they were" (Anderson 41). They don't know what to buy yet they buy things without any reason and the moment they have bought any, they start disliking it. Quendy bought shoes but "the minute she walked out of the store she didn't like them any more" (Anderson 41). Titus' friend Marty also ordered a shirt that he did not like and later admitted that "it was so null it was like ordering nothing" (Anderson 41). Likewise Packer remains perplexed as he does not know what to buy because he first wanted to buy chapel and then painting of that chapel or anything as described: "for a painting? For anything?" (28). He himself confesses that he does not know "what does it mean to spend money?" (28). He spends money because "it [feels] intensely satisfying. It helped [him] be a person" (29).

The above lines of texts illustrate the agenda of capitalist market in which people want to possess certain things yet after obtaining those objects, their desire for possessing those objects "remain as restless as it was before the purchase" (Boyle 9). It would thus not be wrong to say that advertisement enslaves the reasoning faculty for the propagation of consumption. It is because advertising slogans promise so many benefits with the products.

However once those products are bought, they never grant all of the benefits that are attached with them during their advertisements.

Advertisement thus gives birth to insatiable people, "who have been conditioned to continually lust for more things" (Berger 43). The craving for material possessions thus leads us to the position where "the more we have the more we want" (Berger 43). This attitude reduces our society into a marketable entity. The persistent barrage of advertisements cripples our sensibility and leaves us in a dreadful position where we seek redemption by consuming the commercial goods.

Advertisements now pervade into our culture. It makes the masses subjugated by their willing consent. Arthur Asa Berger claims that "advertising now permeates American culture and has affected in profound ways, everything from our food preferences and our body shapes to our politics" (29). This concept is articulated in the writings of DeLillo and Anderson. It has been observed that characters of both novels live comfortably in the presence of advertisements and for them "There's no difference between a song and an advertisement jingle anymore (Anderson 111). This line shows that for them advertisement imparts tranquilizing effect the way song does. Packer is also shown as enjoying the "advertise[ment] displays on the sides of buses" (DeLillo 89). Consumption now heavily relies on the images that are seen by people on mass media particularly on TV.

The propagation and hasty flow of images thus create a novel experience in the contemporary world named as Hyperreality. Hyperreality is principal phenomenon of these days. Media generates such powerful images which appear to be "more real than reality" (Bauman 84). The images on TV screens set the norms of reality for us and the life shown on TV screens seems to be more palatable than the lived reality. Christopher Lasch argues that

“modern life is [so] thoroughly mediated by electronic images” (qtd. in Bauman 84) that we feel hapless without responding to them.

3.2 The Hyperreal world

In the Hyperreal world, the preferred life is the one which appears on screens. The puissant world of images substantiates unreal as more real. The lived reality seems to be unreal till it gets molded according to the life on screens. The world of TV authenticates our desire of achieving a new self by acquiring certain peculiar commodities. It shows us that by the attainment of specific products “you too can become a person on screens” (Turnock 158).

Both the novels portray hyperreal world where distinction between real and images become distorted to the extent that people are unable to draw a line between real and unreal. In both novels, it is seen that characters are living in the world of images. They prefer to live in the hyperreal world because the world of TV makes more sense for them as Packer says in *Cosmopolis* (2003) that “it made more sense on TV” (DeLillo 89). Similarly in *Feed* (2012), Titus also reports the same idea by saying that “our feeds were going fugue with all the banners. The hotels were jumping on each other” (Anderson 18).

Featherstone asserts that the images on TV threaten our real world. In postmodern consumer world, people’s lives are shaped by the simulated images of television. Simulation occupies a significant place in the contemporary world and it helps in the promotion of the capitalist market. Simulation even blurs a distinction between needs and wants. It produces images of products so excessively that people consider it their responsibility to consume those images. Baudrillard claims that keeping “TV object” (qtd. in Kellner 67) at home is a

proof that we are the inhabitants of the consumer society. He asserts that the world of media particularly television is becoming the center of our life. It has entered into every realm of social life. The simulated images of TV constitute the hyperreal world and obliterate the reality to the extent that people cannot distinguish between real and unreal as Titus says that "the natural world is so adaptable --- so adaptable, you wonder what's natural" (Anderson 201). The over powering nature of simulated images perishes the social reality and people believe images as real.

In both the novels, characters' lives are shaped by the images on TV. Packer in *Cosmopolis* (2003), rarely makes contact with real world. He observes everything through "surveillance camera" (DeLillo 15). His ideas are shaped by what he sees and consumes those images. When his chief of finance Melman tells him that she "like[s] face-to-face. And [she] do[es]n't need to look at all those screens" (40), he still disagrees with her because he believes in the data on screens and "he understood how much it meant to him" (24). Similarly, in *Feed* (2012), Titus and his friends consume the images of feed as when feed shows the images of some "cool stuff" (41) to Quendy and Loga, they directly say that "we should go in and buy some cool stuff to go out in. That seemed good to us" (41). By living among images, consumers keep on devouring all the images and for them consuming those images are natural and usual phenomenon. Both protagonists Packer and Titus know that they are not living in natural world because Titus himself admitted at one point that there is no more difference between natural world and artificial or image world as these days the world of images seems more real and natural. Packer has the same stand point when he says that "there's a common surface, an affinity between market movements and the natural world" (DeLillo 86). These lines illustrate that people are aware of the fact that they are not living in natural world and they could see an affinity between market and natural environment.

Readers can see that global media and advanced technology has colonized the American world. Kinski in *Cosmopolis* (2003), says that "the force of cyber-capital --- will send people into the gutter to wretch and die" (DeLillo 90). Moreover, DeLillo also informs that the growth of capital world is inextricably linked with technology as he says that "the interaction between technology and capital. The inseparability" (23).

Yet the characters of both the novels prefer the technological world of TV believing that it keeps them updated and gives them an easy access to the outer modern world as at one point Titus describes the nature of feed in words like: "it was all da da da, this big --- the advantage, encyclopedias at their fingertips, closer than their fingertips, etc --- you can look things up automatic" (Anderson 57). Similarly Packer in *Cosmopolis* (2003), reports that "technology is crucial to civilization --- because it helps us make our fate" (DeLillo 95). It would not be wrong to say that natural world is under the spell of technology and it has been taken over by the corporations.

In *Cosmopolis* (2003), DeLillo also manifests the excessive reliance of human beings on technology. It is seen that Eric Packer believes on data analysis on the screens so much that he never contacted with the real world as mentioned above. All the time he uses to observe the data on computer screens in his office and even in his limousine. He watches "a medleys of data on every screen, all the flowing symbols and alpine charts, the polychrome numbers pulsing" (13). This line illustrates Packer is highly dependent upon the data of screens due to which he ultimately loses his subjectivity as well. He trusts and depends on what he sees on computer screens as described: "they watched, trusting what they saw" on TV and Computer screens. Anderson also conveys the dependence of humanity on technology. He claims that traditionally "computers were all outside the body. They carried them around outside of them --- like if you carried your lungs in a briefcase and opened it to breathe" (57). However now chips are fitted inside human brains as "chip in my head" (42).

The same thought is also conveyed by DeLillo as “microchips so small and powerful. Humans and computers merge” (105). It has shown that when feed are hacked than users of feed “missed the feed” (Anderson 57) because feed is now an important part of their life and without feed they “start[ed] to get scared” (53) and they feel “nothing else” (50) as Titus reveals his feelings that without feed he feels as he “was in a little room. My body – I was in a bed, on top of my arm, which was asleep, but I didn’t know where. I couldn’t find the Lunar GPS to tell me” (Anderson 53). These lines show the reliance of human being on technology. It is evident from the above lines that technological advancement grabs the rational capability of human beings and paralyzes their whole rational system. Technology and multinational corporations own everything and rule over human beings as in *Feed*, Violet says that

Of course everyone is like da da da, *evil corportions*, oh they’re so bad, we all say that, and we all know they control everything. I mean it’s not great, because who knows what evil shit they’re up to. Everyone feels bad about that (58).

Consumerism and Hyperreality go hand in hand with each other. According to Featherstone, the technology and media give rise to the culture of cool images which is demolishing the intellect of human beings. The phenomenon of consumerism and hyper reality both work in the proliferation of capitalism.

By living among images, people of the postmodern consumer world keep on consuming those images as a real and actual phenomenon. Media gives rise to the hyper real world in which consuming products that are shown in images, seem no more an exceptional activity rather those products seem to define our life. So along with hyperreal world, media is also responsible for the emergence of hyper marketed world. In hyper marketed world, our conspicuous consumption becomes the means of communication.

3.3 The hyper marketed world

TV commercials, programs and movies, all the images that are around us play with our desires. The “subliminal message[s]” (Anderson np) of advertisements prompt us for perpetual shop. We are entrapped into a corporate system of communication in which our activity of consumption defines our position. Consumption as communication implies that our activity of consumption communicates our status in society. Corrigan argues that our practice of imbibing goods “tell[s] others who and what we are” (qtd. in Miles, Anderson and Meethan 3). Usher asserts that identity now can be created through conspicuous consumption. In corporate era, each individual is having a fluid identity which goes on changing throughout with consumption of diverse goods. Bourdieu is of the view that “consumption is a set of socio-cultural practices” (qtd. in Usher 38) which exhibit our standing in community.

These days identity is linked with the activity of consumerism. This line substantiates that consumption establishes the social stratification within society. Consumption nonetheless is a mode of expressing our societal position and stratum as Baudrillard states that consumerism is “mode of being” (qtd. in Kellner 19). Packer’s stretched limousine and his eighty-nine storey “the tallest residential tower in the world” (DeLillo 8) defines his position in the society. Similarly, in *Feed* (2012), characters who can afford feed in their life are regarded as modern, fashionable and rich people of society, for example the family of Titus and his friends’ family. Whereas Violet and his father, who could not afford or barely afford the feed in life are considered a poor class as described: “my father’s family didn’t have money to buy feeds for my dad and my uncle ... with the mouths of the heads calling your name” (Anderson 234). When Titus asked Violet that “why didn’t your dad come to the moon?” (113). Violet replied that “he wanted to come, but it would have been, like, a month

of his salary" (113). Moreover, Violet informed Titus that her father "saved up for a year to send me. Then I went" (113). Titus was shocked after learning that Violet's father was able to send her on moon after saving for a year as described "he saved up for a year for you to go to the moon?" (114). The above lines demonstrate the social stratification in the corporate society. The disparity between those who have feed and those who do not have it, is evident through the character of Violet and Titus.

In *Television and Consumer Culture: Britain and the Transformation of Modernity* (2007), Turnock claims that "consumer culture is directly related to the issue of life styles and class membership" (143). In the corporate world, we construct and modify our life styles whenever we like to do so and advertisement is one of the means of modifying life styles. Paco Underhill argues that "shopping is a transforming experience" (qtd. in Berger 43) through which a person transforms himself to become a new and an improved personality. Life styles, in consumer culture, are expressive of identity. Every consumer plays its active role in the consumer world. Each person is too much caught up in the competition of manufacturing life styles and to generate a status and rank in a society.

Turnock also deems that consumers articulate their identities through their activity of consumption. He asserts that TV generates those programs that propose life style for consumers according to their taste. Bourdieu states that "taste, lifestyle and culture capital are not only markers of class distinction, but they are also weapons of class conflict" (qtd. in Turnock 159). Turnock ends up his argument by saying that in this world every entity ranging from material goods to humanity is marketised.

The above notion has been discussed by Anderson and DeLillo both. Anderson demonstrates that the over powering corporation of this world penetrates into the very kernel of the society and even into the human being. Anderson shows that market now is so

powerful entity that it creates identity for human being. He states at one point in his novel where he stated the speech of president as: "the American people, the people of this great nation ... were made by these corporate watch organizations" (95). He says that in contemporary era, market "divides everyone up into a few personality types" (Anderson 107). Market knows that "who you are, and to make you conform to one of their types for easy marketing" (Anderson 107). The same idea is discussed by DeLillo in *Cosmopolis* (2003), when Kinski warns Packer: "The market culture is total. It breeds these men and women" (DeLillo 90). Packer also asserts that "these people are a fantasy generated by the market. They don't exist outside the market. There is nowhere they can go to be on the outside. There is no outside" (DeLillo 90). The above stated evidences from both texts show that market does the study of consumers in order to convince them for continual purchases. Perner claims that market research is needed to ensure that market products meet the requirements of consumers. The above lines also illustrate that the hyper marketed world metamorphoses the sublime status of human beings and turns them into marketable entity.

As stated above, in consumer culture, our life styles confer a message to others about our social position. In contemporary community, commodity plays a vital role in composing the life style. It is because commodity carries a particular meaning in the world of consumers. Traditionally from Marxist notion: "commodity is a mysterious entity full of theological caprices, a particular object satisfying a particular need, but at the same time the promise of something more" (qtd. in Stavrakakis 240). While in the corporate world, commodity holds the significance of symbolic value which means that ownership of peculiar goods and wearing of certain branded clothes indicate a particular status in our society as the users of feed like Titus and his friends are considered as updated and fashionable people of the society. Likewise Packer's limousine and tower define his high status in society. Therefore in

the corporate world, conspicuous objects are used as the “markers of identity” (Miles, Anderson and Meethan 3)

Consumer culture is the festival of commodity. Material possessions are considered an essential part of the consumer world. An object is observed in the relation of “cultural and economic value” (Turnock 161) rather than having only use value. In Turnock’s account “buying of one object is not enough, it has to be discarded, replaced or superseded by something that works better, or looks better, or has more modish, class-based cultural capital” (Turnock 161). As a result material artifacts indicate our identity which can be acquired by purchasing different commodities. These commodities turn human beings into functional objects.

3.4 The Brave New World of Consumer Goods

In contemporary eon, individuals have arranged their societies and their lives around the system of objects. Baudrillard defines the system of object as the “production, arrangement and use of objects” (qtd. in Kellner 9). He describes this world as “a brave new world of consumer goods” (qtd. in Kellner 8) in which objects govern our social lives. The material possessions in contemporary domain reflect “new, modern world which represents a transition from a tradition” (qtd. in Kellner 10). The new world of consumer goods is free of the entire conventional standards as it gives a sense of autonomy to human beings by the attainment of personal choices.

The above stated notion is discussed by DeLillo and Anderson both. DeLillo states that in contemporary period, people need to have more cash in order to play the role of

consumers. Packer says that the concept of property is changed in this era as "property is no longer about power, personality and command. It's not about vulgar display or tasteful display. Because it no longer has weight or shape. The only thing that matters is the price you pay" (78). This shows that growth of the capitalist market depends upon our spending. In the same way, Titus also considers buying of different products like "coke" (171), "pants" (157) and "upcar" (128) as a part of him as described: "I could feel them in circulation all around me like blood in my veins" (304). This shows the strong urge of people for buying different products.

Bauman opines that in the world of consumers there is always a competition among objects. It is because this is an "object oriented" (Anderson 150) world which eventually gives rise to consumer culture or an era of late-capitalism, as stated by Anderson that "in object-oriented programming, discrete software objects interfaced more freely, in a system of corporate service provision that mirrored the emergent structure of late capitalism" (Anderson 150). This is the reason that in the corporate society each material entity must be replaced by the new and improved gadget. Every forthcoming object seems to possess an entire globe in itself as Titus utters that "once you start looking at all this stuff, all of these sites, you realize this obscure stuff isn't obscure at all. Each thing is like a whole world" (Anderson 112). Bauman states that in the corporate world "possibilities are infinite, and the volume of seductive goals on offer can never be exhausted" (Bauman 72). Packer too was unable to understand anything after seeing the flickering nature of the corporate world. It is because in the abundance of material objects he becomes confused regarding what to buy or on which thing should he spend his money: "money for paintings. Money for anything" (DeLillo 29). These persistent offers open the possibilities for consumers to acquire new self through consumption of goods.

In corporate domain people play the game of “get as much as you can” (Berger 31). Berger deems that in the present scenario the fortunate is one who has ample of material artifacts. Individuals thence need to have more objects in order to get success. Therefore this situation instigates them for the consumption of products and then to display those objects as a means of verifying themselves as successful individuals. In both novels, it is seen that Packer and Titus, both are considered prosperous as they have ample material goods. Packer himself confesses that he used to go and see his plane everyday just “to look at it. It’s mine” (104). Whereas in *Feed* (2012), Titus reports that when he “looked around, [he] wanted so much, that all of the prices were coming into [his] brain” (45). These lines give the evidence that material possession defines the success.

It is true that human beings are naturally covetous and they want more stuff every time. Corporation nevertheless provides them a pool of consumer goods from which they can pick and get easily whatever they want. However after getting those objects, consumers remain unfulfilled as Packer stays somnolent: “He tried to read his way into sleep but only grew more wakeful” (5). It is because though he has a lot of material possessions yet the insatiable nature of him keeps him unfulfilled. In the same way Titus also has all the luxuries of life but feels himself broadcasted and helpless: “Suddenly, I could feel myself broadcasting. I was broadcasting across the scatterfeed, going helplessly” (48).

Frank Trentmann states that consumer society arises out when people start to accumulate material artifacts other than basic necessities (54). Anderson and DeLillo both show this phenomenon in their writings. They show that their characters confuse their impulsive needs with their wants. As a result, they buy stuff irrespective of their needs. In *Feed* (2012), the characters buy things whether they need it or not. Likewise Packer too remains perplexed about his wants. It makes clear the policy of the corporate market in which

people remain restless even after obtaining their desirable objects as those objects hold a charismatic power.

Baudrillard is of the view that these days every artifact has two functions. First every artifact is used for practical purpose through “which a subject satiates a need” (Baudrillard 50) and consume the use value of objects. Secondly, everyone wants to possess material things because these material artifacts are having “abstract mastery whereby the subject seeks to assert himself” (Baudrillard 8). It means that objects are not consumed for the satiation of needs rather they define the position of human beings. Apart from the practical usage, these objects hold a peculiarity in themselves. They stand for the symbolic value or symbolic significance and carry a surplus transcendental value which is supposed to give ostensible satisfaction to the possessors. Packer never mentions the practical purpose of his residential building rather he reports that “the tower gave him strength and depth” (DeLillo 9). In the same way, Titus reports that feed implantation in his brain keeps him updated about new trends as: “The feed spoke to me real quiet about new trends, about pants I should know” (Anderson 157). Moreover, he also tells us that with feed “you can be super smart without ever working” (57). These lines indicate that people in the corporate world are more concerned about the symbolic significance of objects rather than use value. Baudrillard also calls these objects as an “object of a passion” (Baudrillard 91). It is because these artifacts give human beings a place in society as Baudrillard maintains that material entities bring forth feigned mental contentment. He further claims that material artifacts are “my property and my passion” (Baudrillard 91).

Baudrillard considered symbolic value and money as the most basic controlling system in consumer society. Money and value for Baudrillard is a “speculative, a floating signifier with no real signified” (Jafari and Mirbabazade 69). Žižek also presents the same stance. He opines that “value in itself does not exist; there are just individual things which,

among other properties, have value" (Žižek 29). It shows that in the corporate sector material things in themselves do not possess any value, it is actually individuals who give them value or symbolic significance. The same idea is revealed by DeLillo in *Cosmopolis* (2003). He shows the insignificance of material possessions. In his novel he indicates the triviality of the use value of material artifacts. The luxurious home and limousine of Packer exhibits the pettiness of use value. The same fact is pointed out by Kinski to Eric Packer as:

What did you buy for your one hundred and four million dollars? Not dozen of rooms, incomparable views, private elevators. Not the rotating bedroom and computerized bed. Not the swimming pool or the shark. Was it air rights? The regulating sensors and software? Not the mirrors that tell you how to feel when you look at yourself in the morning. You paid the money for itself. One hundred and four million. This is what you bought. And it's worth it. The number justifies itself (DeLillo 78).

Anderson also communicates the same notion in his novel. In *Feed* (2012), Violet reveals the irrelevance of use value of material possessions. She tells Titus that people in the corporate world buy "Wow! Thing!" (106) because such sort of stuff promises them that it will look "kind of cool" (106). Violet shows that market also advertises their products as cool: "Bebrekker & Karl were bannered us big" (109). Violet exposes the power of advertisement and tells to Titus that "we were bannered with all this crazy high-tech fun stuff they sold there" (108).

These evidences from the texts reveal that in the corporate world people do not buy things out of needs or in other words because of the use value of material stuff rather they buy and accumulate things because it gives them social standing and cool appearance. It has been perceived that media too reinforce the sign value of goods instead of use value. It might

be because people in this world desire those objects which carry symbolic value instead of use-value.

Moreover, Baudrillard deems that in this material world human beings are “no longer surrounded by other human beings as they were in the past but by objects” (qtd. in Kellner 12). It has been noticed in both selected novels that characters have less interaction with one another and more interaction with market or with material possessions as Titus says in *Feed* (2012) that he wants prices be a part of him (Anderson 45). This line shows that people of today’s world are surrounded by prices rather than by people. In *Cosmopolis* (2003), Packer also “walked through the apartment, forty-eight rooms” (7) when he feels “hesitant and depressed” (7) and he “talked to his dogs” (DeLillo 7). It shows that by living amidst the corporate world and material possessions people lose the contact with other human beings. Baudrillard ends up his contend by saying that material artifacts constitute the entire ecology of the corporate world as described: “we are surrounded today by the remarkable conspicuousness of consumption and affluence, established by the multiplication of objects, services and material goods, all of which constitutes a sort of fundamental mutation in the ecology of the human species” (qtd. in Kellner 12).

Since human beings are surrounded by so many objects, so we ultimately become objects and start to behave like objects. By living among plethora of material artifacts, people in the corporate world are not able even to talk reasonably. This idea is visible in both novels. Packer is unable to have a meaningful conversation with people and even with his own wife. All of his interaction is linked with the discussion of material objects as: “What are we going to talk about? ... We want a heliport on the roof. I’ve acquired air rights but still need to get a zoning variance ... it seemed the food, to make her draw back. Green tea and toast untouched before her ... when are we going to have sex again?” (DeLillo 17-18). This conversation of Packer with his wife Shifrin shows that he was unable to talk effectively. Titus too is unable

to convey his thought because of feed. He could not even understand some words. Whenever he and his friends listen to some unknown words, they start looking for their feed dictionary, as when Violet uses the word suppuration, "the rest of us were still looking up 'suppuration' on the feed English-to-English wordbook" (Anderson 33). Anderson also shows that there is no meaningful conversation among characters. Language of these characters is full of vernaculars such as "whoa", "brag", "null", "spit". The sentences are also full of 'da da da' and 'like' which makes no sense to the readers, as described: "he was upgrading to homicidal and going all, da da da professional care unit, da da da dangerous and costly da da infection da da da etc" (69). These lines show the outcome of the technological advanced corporate society.

Throughout the text it has been perceived that as the society gets technologically more advanced, it brings down the status of human beings. It commodifies the rationality of human beings and subsequently make them helpless in this system. Benno demonstrate the same thought in *Cosmopolis* (2003) as: "I thought all these other people. I thought how did they get to be who they are. It's banks and car parks. It's airline tickets in their computers. It's restaurants filled with people talking. It's people singing the merchant copy. ... I'm helpless in their system that makes no sense to me. You wanted me to be a helpless robot soldier but all I could be was helpless" (DeLillo 195). Whereas Anderson says that in the corporate world "people were flying very businesslike" (106) and still they are helpless in this system as feed is "tied in everywhere --- the limbic system, the motor cortex --- the hippocampus" (181). Feedtech can deactivate feed anytime and because of this people's whole system stopped working as violet tells us that "my hands felt really useless --- they can't just turn it off? They turned it off before" (Anderson 181). These lines clearly illustrate that in the corporate system people are made subservient so that they can assist in the escalation of the capitalist market as DeLillo asserts that people "invigorate and perpetuate the system" and

“this is why they exist” (90). These lines illustrate that people are made helpless in the corporate system and their existence is necessary for the escalation of capitalist market.

Baudrillard asserts that material things detaches humanity from their human traits. The culture industry is successful in destroying the reasoning power of human beings through its persuasive nature as Violet says that “because of feed, we are raising a nation of idiots. Ignorant, self-centered idiots” (Anderson 123). DeLillo also conveys the same idea and claims that the fault of human rationality is that “it pretends not to see the horror and death at the end of schemes it builds” (91). Baudrillard calls this process as reification in which human beings are dominated by conspicuous objects, which ultimately reduces the grand status of the humans to the level of objects.

Georg Simmel proclaims that in the corporate world, consumers get as alienated from the products they consume as workers get detached from the products they produce (30). Titus and his friends referred to the last year products as “stupid accessory” and “shit” (Anderson 70). In *Cosmopolis* (2003), Hasidim too entitled consumed money as “a form of money so obsolete” (64). Objects that we consume are not an innate component of our personal lives. Yet for the time being we own those objects as an integral part of our lives. This is because those objects hold cultural value and we exhibit them as a mode of expressing our culture.

In the postmodern corporate world, individuals have lost their subjectivity amongst the plentitude of objects as described in *Cosmopolis* (2003) that corporations bring “a wholeness, a sameness” (DeLillo 91) which shows that in capitalist system all individuals are same and there is no subjectivity. In the contemporary globe, material artifacts bear high worth than living beings. Anderson in his novel brings this fact into light and shows the dilapidations of Violet because of FeedTech Corporation. By living amongst the plethora of

artifacts, a body becomes a commodity that is devoured by market. In *Cosmopolis* (2003), Packer's body, because of his excessive consumption, is described as "the body smell was foul" (DeLillo 57). These evidences of the texts show that in consumer culture everything is reduced to commodity even human beings. In the corporate world, people do not talk with each other in terms of individuals rather they address each other in terms of commodities. The above stated notion can be demonstrated through Packer's dealings with his employee Shiner, who is his "chief of technology" and Packer even "did not look at Shiner any more. He hadn't looked in three years" (DeLillo 11). In the same way Packer looks at Jane Melman, "his chief of finance" (46) as a sex object, as described "he wanted to lick the sweat off the inside of her wrist. She was wrists and shinbones and unbalanced lips" (47). Anderson weaves the same idea too in his novels as in one of the advertisements he shows a girl without feed who was weeping and saying that "I am not girl number two! Please, judge spandex! I'm also number one! I'm not a product, but a person" (36). As the novel progresses, it has been seen that when Violet starts resisting feed, her existence in the corporate sector also becomes useless.

Through the character of Violet, Anderson might want to show the strong hold of the corporations in society. He shows that even human beings now are in the direct command of the corporations because when Violet starts resisting feed and does not buy anything for some days, FeedTech even stops helping her by saying "you were turned down" (Anderson 257). She was also told by the FeedTech that "FeedTech and other investors reviewed your purchase history, and we don't feel that you would be a reliable investment at this time" (Anderson 257). These lines show that in contemporary society, capitalist market is acting as a panopticon that watches our every activity of consumption. It means if we will not continue with the activity of consumption then our existence in contemporary society is endangered. In

the same way in *Cosmopolis* (2003), people who protest against the corporations are not shown as decent human beings:

There were close-ups on TV ... Chute and man were striped in anarchist red-and-black and his penis was exposed, likewise logotyped. They were knocking the car back and forth. Projectiles came popping from tear-gas launchers and cops free-lanced in the crowd, wearing masks with twin filtration chambers out of some lethal cartoon (DeLillo 89).

Violet's father also warns Titus that corporate world is destroying them, just as it had done irreparable damage to Violet. Violet's father informs that "we Americans are interested only in the consumption of our products. We have no interest in how they were produced, or what happens to them" (Anderson 300). Moreover, he also says by pointing to his daughter that "what happens to them once we discard them, once we threw them away" (Anderson 300). These lines reveal the bitter reality of the corporate world that in the corporate sector even human beings are treated as products.

Along with this, Anderson takes us into the futuristic corporate society where human beings will be produced through machinery as Titus described: "I was brought into the world in a room with no one there but seven machines" (Anderson 280). This line demonstrates that in corporate society human beings are produced as a product and then they are treated as an item of consumption that is produced by the capitalist market.

At the present time individuals secure status and prestige in society by exhibiting their material possessions. In the corporate system, the more you display your possessions, the higher will be your prestige. Traditionally commodities were consumed for the accomplishment of natural needs whereas now they are associated with bragging off the persona. Now the societies are run through the gratification of wants rather the satisfaction of needs.

The above mentioned factors are responsible for turning consumerism into societal verity. We all know that all the benefits linked with consumption are short lived. Consumerism can never bestow happiness to its consumers. It maintains dissatisfaction and always demands for more. This discontentment becomes the driving force for the expansion of the capitalist market. We, the dwellers of the corporate world, know that our activity of consumption can never give us real happiness, still we cannot abandon this practice. Now, what are the reason behind it and why we are unable to give up this activity are questions which will be answered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CYNICAL REASON AND ITS IDEOLOGICAL FANTASY

'Cynical Reason and its Ideological Fantasy' deals with the function of cynical reason and its fabricated fantasy in the selected works. This chapter centers on the notion of the insatiable nature of desires which overshadow criticality and invent a fantasy world for consumers. This chapter also focuses on the nature of branding and how this phenomenon of branding adds into the formation of false desires. Keeping in view the main topic in mind, the researcher underscores that these elements work together in a ceaseless cycle for the expansion of the capitalist market.

The present era can be regarded as cultural logic of late capitalism which signifies the third stage of capitalism. This era is primarily marked as an eon of corporation. In Contemporary era, the notion of consumerism has revised. Consumerism, at present, is not simply a process of investing on goods to fulfill needs by consuming objects. Instead consumerism is a process of perpetual purchase and steady dissatisfaction. Consumer culture maintains persistent disaffection which always yearns for more. In consumer culture, consumers' needs remain discontented, their desires always long for more. However the irony is even after so many purchases, consumer's longings continue to exacerbate. Buskirk and Rothe hence define consumerism as "the organized efforts of consumers seeking redress,

restitution and remedy for dissatisfaction they have accumulated in the acquisition of their standard of living" (62).

In the previous chapter, the researcher has discussed how the trend of consumerism in the postmodern age has become a social reality. In *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, Featherstone claims that consumerism suggests "individuality, self-expression, and a stylistics self-consciousness" (81). That is why it does not seem an aberration anymore. It has rather become part of a very normal day to day routine. In this chapter researcher tried to seek answer to the conundrum: if individuals know that consumerism at the end does not benefit them, why then they do not resist it? Researcher in this chapter analyzes that why humanity would not resist the corporations? What actually persuades people of the corporate world for persistent purchase?

In both the novels, writers have talked and showed extensive consumerism. Both writers also discussed the ill effect of consumerism but still the protagonists of both novels play their role in the activity of consumption rather than defying the corporations. In the *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987), Sloterdijk deems that in the contemporary era people are propelled by their cynical reason (xxxii). He claims that cynical reason of human beings creates an ideological fantasy for them and they follow their fantasy without taking into consideration the reality. He says that cynical reason keeps an individual blind to that power which creates and fabricates ideological fantasy.

We are living in the postmodern corporate world which is magnificent, splendid and full of consumer goods. By living among these material objects we "ourselves become functional object" (13) as Baudrillard notifies. We are attracted towards all these material objects because capitalist market "equate[s] the product with being cool, young, vital, sexy, or becoming an object of desire" (Schor 6). These so called cool and up to date material

objects create an ideological fantasy that if we will use these objects, we will look more modern and advanced as Anderson says that “if you just get this, and buy this, and order that, you’ll be cool, and you’ll be loved” (Anderson np).

This fantasy covers the reasoning power of human beings and stops them from critically questioning the capitalist market. The cynical reason persuades and leads people towards the activity of consumption. The fault of human rationality is that it does not shed the cynical reason despite knowing that it is full of hypocrisy. Sloterdijk and Žižek both present same viewpoints that we all know that this activity of consumption will never benefit us yet we could not give up the activity of consumerism. In *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008), Žižek also puts forward the same idea and claims that a cynic is well aware of “how things really are”, but still they act as “if they did not know” (30). Sloterdijk also presents the same stance in the *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987) and says that cynical subject is quite well aware of the social reality and knows that in his activity he is driven by his cynical reason, nonetheless he follows his fantasy.

Sloterdijk claims that in contemporary America, cynicism is the prevailing approach towards life (qtd. in Koelb 602). It is because now cynicism “is more like a morality itself put in the service of immortality” (Žižek 26). A cynic conceives “probity and integrity” (Žižek 26) behind particular interest but he willingly keeps himself in a state of unawareness. Benn asserts that a cynic is “to be intelligent and still perform one’s work” (qtd. in Sloterdijk 7). A cynic knows about enlightenment, traditions and authority yet he subverts all. It is because he “takes into account, the particular interest behind ideological universality, the distance between the ideological mask and the reality, but it still finds reason to retain the mask” (Žižek 26). By questioning authority, religion and traditions, cynics weaken their position in society. A Cynic also “suffers from a keen awareness of the discrepancy between his deeds and the values he rejects yet nevertheless acknowledges” (Louisa 149). In this condition of

apathy and mistrust, cynics only want to strengthen themselves and think about their own self as they are in the desperate need of self-assertion (Louisa 149). This attitude of cynicism helps in the promulgation of capitalist machinery. It is because it stops an individual's critical thinking about any situation.

Along with cynical reason, there are other three elements as well which work in the escalation of the capitalist market. The first element is desire which is unfulfilled by nature and it screens the reason and turns it into cynicism. The cynical reason of a subject creates chimerical world for him and the fanciful image of this world keeps a person engrossed in it and leads him blindly. For that purpose, corporations use several strategies and creation of brands is one of the successful strategy which keeps people involved in the corporate world. The working of these four elements: cynical reason, desire, ideological fantasy and brandings, is interlinked with each other and together help in the proliferation of capitalist market. It is because of these four factors that consumers fail to resist the corporations and continue with incessant purchase.

4.1 Desires in the Corporate World

Mike Featherstone identifies desire as the main driving force behind our activity of consumption. He asserts that it is "the dreams and desires which become celebrated in consumer cultur[e]" (Featherstone 13). It is because cyber space and technology create and shape our desires as Baudrillard proclaims that "technocratic corporations foster irrepressible desires" (ix) which get fulfillment and satiation through consumer culture. This phenomenon is very much apparent in both texts. In *Feed*, the feed of the characters create and shape their desires by constantly presenting them with different products and offers as described: "there

was bumff from like the casinos and mud slides and the gift shops and places where you could rent extra arms" (Anderson 18). In *Cosmopolis*, also the capitalist market produces the desirable products for its consumers as when packer walks across the avenue of "white limousines" (DeLillo 9), he sees that "the cars were identical at a glance. Some may have been a foot or two longer than others depending on details of the stretch work and the particular owner's requirements" (DeLillo 9-10). Along with the desirable dimension, the capitalist market also equipped the limousine with all the luxuries of life. These evidences from the texts illustrate that the capitalist market not only create and shape desires of the masses but also caters to their increased idiosyncrasies.

In Lacanian perspective, by entering into symbolic network, human beings start experiencing lack. For Lacan, desires reside at this spot. The lack of the postmodern individuals directs them towards myriad alley of stores and shopping malls for the search of their object of desire (*Cosmopolis* 17,14; *Feed* 20,41). Cushman states that loss produced at symbolic stage can be filled by "purchasing and ingesting products featured in advertisement" (qtd. in Elliot 289). This phenomenon is evident in *Feed* and in *Cosmopolis*, in which characters remain meandering and restive in the search for the object of desire in different malls. In *Feed*, Titus and his friends after buying some so called "cool stuff" and when they "walked around for a while [in malls], everything seemed kind of sad and boring" (Anderson 41) to them. Packer too remains in the search for the desirable object from one mall to another. These lines clearly illustrate that the loss and lack haunts the person as Titus, Quendy, Loga, Marty and Unit in *Feed* whereas Packer in *Cosmopolis* remain restless throughout as their desires never get fulfilled despite trying anything and everything (*Cosmopolis* 5,6; *Feed* 41).

In Lacanian view, individuals gets fragmented after entering into symbolic realm and this fragmented self of postmodern individuals leads them to adopt the role of consumers.

Cushman deems that postmodern consumers exhibit both rational and irrational attitude at the same time. It is because they consume whatever they want and then reject those products. This rational and irrational attitude is noticeable in the characters of both texts. It has been observed many times that Titus and his friends buy things but as soon as they bought those specific things, they rejected them by labeling the stuff as "null" and "boring" (Anderson 41). The same rational and irrational attitude is also seen in the behavior of Packer towards his treatment of yen. He knows that he is losing his capital as described "I miss a lot --- Hundreds of millions" (DeLillo 29) because of his gambling against the rise of yen, yet he keeps on his game of gambling because he expects that yen will sink and he will get a huge capital in return (DeLillo 84).

Stavrakakis claims that desire and lack go hand in hand throughout life. Žižek also has the same view point. He deems that now the subjects do not need to give up the *jouissance* to fulfill the obligations of symbolic order because the corporate world has altered this process by assigning different roles to its inhabitants. Žižek claims that "the duty of subject is to indulge in the multifarious desire. The duty is to enjoy" (qtd. in Boyle 10) by desiring and obtaining different objects. It is seen that Packer is driven by his desires of being richer as described: "cash machines have a charisma that still speaks to me" (DeLillo 60). It is because he knows the reality that the yen will not decline yet he is unable to denounce his expectations regarding yen because his desires actually stop him from denunciation and lead him blindly.

Stavrakakis asserts that desire is so much essential for consumerism. This assumption is admitted by different writers as well. Žižek states that the desires of human beings cause illusion of an ideal self for them. People's desire create a fantasy for them which is known as an "ideological fantasy" as Žižek proclaims. This fantasy masks the mental power of human beings and weakens their criticality and turns reason into cynical reason. As when Violet

father could not get good jobs despite being an excellent candidate, he realized that in order to make his daughter equipped for the corporate world, he would have to install feed in his daughter's mind "I realized that my daughter would need the feed. She had to live in the world" (Anderson 298). The life of Violet's parents is also shown as miserable and inadequate without feed as described: "my mom and dad both went through college without the feed. I guess it was really hard. They couldn't remember things the way everyone else could" (Anderson 235). These evidences from the texts prove that though Violet's father knows that feed is "the brain mole" (Anderson 234), yet he is ready to install it in the mind of his daughter because the criticality of Violet's father is numbed by the corporate world.

The cynical reason, on the other hand, keeps the person in the illusion of his desire. Desire emerges out of the lack which overshadows criticality and turns reason into cynical reason. The cynical reason of a person invents an ideological fantasy for human beings which gives the sense of contented self. The protagonists of both texts admit the fact that they are driven by their desires and urges. As in *Cosmopolis*, Packer himself admits that people are driven by their desires: "we create our own frenzy, our own mass convulsion, driven by thinking machines that we have no final authority over. The frenzy is barely noticeable most of the time. It's simply how we live" (85). This shows that he knows that people of the corporate world are driven by their desires and admits the fact that desires are part of their life. They motivate them without even their noticing the fact because desires become the way of their life.

Titus in *Feed* (2012), also admits the fact that the inhabitants of the postmodern corporate world are "the nation of dreams. We are seers. We are wizards. We speak in visions. Our letters are like flock of doves, released from under our hats. We have only to stretch out our hand and desire, and what we wish for settles like a kerchief in our palm" (159). These lines show that people of the corporate world are directed by their longings.

That is why they desire different things which corporate world provides them in a second. Unlike past, people of the corporate world are not led by their reason, rather reason is now in the control of the market system. It is because when feed of Titus and his friends are hacked, they feel their heads empty: "our heads felt real empty" (56). It shows that people in the corporate world are simply puppets in the hands of the capitalist market. Titus himself desires to buy things and says that he: "wanted to get . . . a pair of infrared knee bands, [he] could get better ones off the feed" (41). This line indicates that Titus is directed by his desire. His desires create a fantasy world for him where he can get whatever he wishes. So he prefers to remain in his fantasy world where his desires get so called fulfillment. Therefore it would not be erroneous to say that desire, fantasy and cynical reason of the inhabitants of the corporate world work in a cycle for the circulation and promulgation of consumer goods.

Žižek also has same view point and he associates desires with the maneuverings of capitalism. He deems that capitalism interpellates individuals "as consumers, as subjects of desire, soliciting in them ever new perverse and excessive desires" (qtd. in Boyle 14). He asserts that:

Drive inheres to capitalism at a more fundamental, systemic level: drive is that which propels the whole capitalist machinery; it is the impersonal compulsion to engage in the endless circular movement of expanded self-reproduction. We enter the mode of drive the moment the circulation of money as capital becomes an end in itself, for the expansion of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement. The circulation of capital has therefore no limits (qtd. in Boyle 14).

These lines indicate that capitalist market generates desires in human beings to propel its own market. Capitalists use some strategies⁴ in order to persuade people for consumption and to perpetuate its own market (*Cosmopolis* 53,70,78; *Feed* 14,18,58,103,128). In *Cosmopolis*, DeLillo refers to the “ATM” (DeLillo 54) machine that is situated everywhere so that people can transit money everywhere whereas in *Feed*, when parents of Titus tell him about his new upcar, feed unwrapped the list of cars for him and persuades him as he himself confesses that it “was like holy shit, by tomorrow I would be driving --- in my own goddamn car” (Anderson 128). These lines indicate that unlike past, now human beings are not directed by their logic rather they are moved by the market movements which instigate them for continual purchase and metamorphose their reason into cynicism.

4.2 The Cynical Reason in the Corporate World

In both the novels, writers portray the hyperreal world in which one cannot demarcate real from unreal. Hyperreality deceives the consciousness of humans by detaching them from the real world and opting for them the technologically advanced unreal society which is actually artificial and empty of meanings. Yet the characters of both the novels prefer to live in hyperreal world because the world of TV seems to be more plausible to them as Packer says in *Cosmopolis* (DeLillo 89). Secondly, the hyperreal world keeps them updated about new trends and prices as Titus reports that “our feed tried to help, and as we were walking around we were getting all the prices of things” (Anderson 41).

The hyperreal world of TV hits our desires. In both writings, writers show that the desires shroud the rationality of human beings. These days, human beings are not led by their

⁴ For details on these strategies, read pages 82-85 of the thesis.

intellect rather they are driven by their urges. Their urges dominate over the reason which lead them blindly and turn their rationality into cynical reason. In case of cynical reason, these people follow their instincts without considering it as irrational. It is because their cynical reason obscures the real atrocities of the world and shows to them the idealized version of this world which actually does not exist.

In *Cosmopolis* (2003), Packer does not think critically over the matter of rising yen rather he is driven by his cynical reason. Packer knows that his bet against the rise of yen will end on void yet he cannot stop himself. It is because he expects that his betting against the rise of yen “would yield potentially high returns” (84). Packer “borrow[s] yen” (84) because he thinks that at the end he will have a huge amount of capital. So his hope of accumulating capital and currency blinds him to the extent that he could not see his own destruction despite knowing that: “the strongest the yen became, the more money he needed to pay back the loan” (84).

Similarly, in *Feed* (2012), Titus is aware of the persuasive nature of feed. He knows very well that all his activity and actions are guided by the FeedTech corporations. He is aware of the fact that he is controlled by FeedTech as “the feed is tied in to everything. Your body control, your emotions, your memory. Everything” (180). Moreover, he is also informed by his girlfriend that without feed “I could lose my ability to move; I could lose my ability to think” (181). Yet he does not use his analytical power to resist the feed as feed weaken his mental capabilities. It is obvious from the way Quendy and Calista chat each other through feed as: “they were chatting each other and [Titus, Marty and Unit] couldn’t hear them, but they kept laughing and touching each other’s face” (Anderson 19). In the same way every time when they heard any unusual word, they would start looking for that word “on the feed English-to-English wordbook” (33). These evidences of texts illustrate that feed cripples their mental power and makes them depend on feed. Moreover one can discern

Titus' cynical reason in his attitude towards feed as he is unable to see the above mentioned negative aspect of feed. Rather he concentrates his thought on the so called positive aspect of feed as:

But the braggist thing about the feed, the thing that made it really big, is that it knows everything you want and hope for, sometimes before you even know what those things are. It can tell you how to get them, and help you make buying decisions that are hard (58).

These lines show that feed persuades us towards the buying and the consumption of products. It creates a fantasy for the people of the corporate world that feed will help them in gaining what so ever they desire.

Žižek presents the same stance too that cynical reason of a cynical subject keeps him blind to the structuring power as he says that "cynical distance is just one way – one of many ways – to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy"(30). For Žižek, ideology dwells in the subject's "doing" (qtd. in Garcia 4), means in subject's practices that is why he compares ideology with cynicism. He claims that ideology evasively rationalizes the reasoning of human beings. This is because though human beings know about certain situations perfectly but they keep on acting as if they are not aware of it.

Packer's wife informs him about his cynical attitude as she says that: "you know things. I think this is what you do --- I think you're dedicated to knowing. I think you acquire information and turn it into something stupendous and awful" (19). These lines illustrate that Packer knows the reality but he himself turns the information into something else. He is also warned by Kinski about his cynical attitude as described: "if you know something and don't act upon it, then you didn't know it in the first place" (DeLillo 85). Likewise, Titus' girlfriend Violet informs Titus that his feed covers his reasoning power as: "when you have the feed all our life, you're brought up to not think about things" (Anderson 123). This line

shows that implementation of feed in brain cripples the mental faculties and that is why such people cannot think critically.

Žižek further claims that in today's postmodern world our activity is guided by an illusion of our unconscious and that illusion is maintained by the cynical reason of a person. He asserts that illusion is vital for ideology because it does not only disguise the real situation rather it consists of the "(unconscious) fantasy structur[ing] our social reality" (Žižek 30). The illusion of person's mind stops him to see the actual social reality.

Packer says that "the situation has to change. The yen can't go any higher" (35), this might show his expectation about the situation. However, it can be said that he does not know the real situation as he sees his world and observes the situation through high tech, multiple screens. The readers are never given any clue that he has a direct contact with the real world. So he does not know the real world, rather he sees what technology shows to him and technology keeps him in the hyperreal world. The corporate world cannot grow without the aid of technology because technology assists in the promulgation of capitalism. DeLillo demonstrates that technology is one of the main factors in creating the illusion of the perfect world. As in *Cosmopolis* (2003), while analyzing data on screens, Packer claims that "we have meaning in the world. People eat and sleep in the shadow of what we do" (14). This line elucidates that Packer's technological surroundings keeps him in illusion that the world relies on him. The irony is that Packer knows that technology and capital cannot be separated (DeLillo 23) yet he could not resist his illusion regarding yen that is created by his unconsciousness and assisted by the hyperreal world.

It is perceived that Packer's activity is guided by the illusion of his desires. It is evident from his treatment of yen. As he is aware of the fact that yen will not decline yet the hope that dollar will reimburse, actually creates an illusion for him that his betting against the

rise of yen will make him richer. In the same way Packer's limo screens also create an illusion of entire perfect world inside limo as mentioned previously. The illusion of the entire world inside limo abandons Packer's contact with the real world.

Packer's wife, a poet and a "cultured" (72) woman, also warns him not to bet against the rise of yen as described "I don't think the yen can go any higher. But in the meantime you have to draw back. Pull back. I am advising you in this matter..." (54). He himself also says that his bet against the rise of yen is ruining his life "I am losing money by the ton today. Many millions. Betting against the yen" (29).

The characters in *Feed* (2012), are also guided by the illusion that is created for them by their desires. Readers can see that all of the characters buy things unnecessarily because they think that it would give them modernized and fashionable appearance. It is evident that while buying unnecessary things they are under the illusion of their desires. As once they have bought those specific products they "didn't like them anymore" (41).

Anderson also shows that some people themselves want to remain in the created fantasy of the capitalist market. They are driven by their cynical reason rather than analytical reasoning. Violet explains to Titus that capitalist market divides us in various personalities and makes us "conform to one of their types for easy marketing" (107). This shows that Violet has shed her illusion and she is trying to break the illusion of Titus so that he can live with social reality. However, till the end it is noted that Titus prefers to remain in an illusion that is created for him by the corporate sector. He even breaks up relationship with Violet but does not break away with his fantasy. In the same way when Violet tries to tell Titus about the nature of feed that with feed "everything [is] dying and there [is] less air and everything [is] getting toxic", Titus remains in disagreement with her and says that "I hated it when she

got like this" (Anderson 121). These evidences show that Titus himself does not want to shed his illusion.

Postmodern corporate world plays an important role in shaping the identity and thinking of human beings. Pascal says that "the interiority of our reasoning is determined by the external, non-sensical machine – automatism of the signifier, of the symbolic network in which the subject is caught" (qtd. in Žižek 34). This shows that subject's reasoning gets shaped by the society in which he lives. Žižek also argues about the objective status of belief. He deems that our beliefs are shaped by society. So unlike the past where reason had sublime status, today reason is shaped by the corporate society. In contemporary age, people are no more directed by their critical reasoning rather people are led by their cynical reason. The transcendental position of reason has shifted to the status of cynicism in the corporate society.

Likewise, almost all the traditional notions get altered in the corporate world. In contemporary period, people need to have more cash in order to play the role of a consumer. Packer says that the concept of property is changed in this era. It is no more the possession of land because it carries no worth rather it is how much you spend (DeLillo 78). This shows that growth of the capitalist market depends upon our spending. In the same way, Titus also considers buying of different products as a part of his own self (304). Violet also divulges to Titus that multinational corporations are "waiting to make you want things" (Anderson 107). This shows that these days corporations provoke us for the incessant purchases because it helps in the growth of capitalist market.

Moreover, Žižek claims that our belief system supports our fantasy as belief: "far from being an 'intimate', purely mental state, is always materialized in our effective social activity: belief supports the fantasy which regulates social reality" (33). This is because fantasy offers us a fanciful image of ourselves and makes us believe in that romanticized

vision of ourselves. This fantasy operates in society and arranges our social reality according to our thinking and belief.

Packer's belief about yen that "yen can't go any higher" (40) shaped his reality the way he wanted to see. It is because of this reason he cannot forsake his fantasy, though he is aware of the fact that it is devastating his life. Likewise Titus believes that with feed they can get all as "what we wish for, is ours" (159), prevents him not to shed his fantasy. The above evidences show that subject's cynical reason fabricates a fantasy world for him and subject in his presumed naïve state starts pursuing that fantasy.

4.3 Ideological Fantasy in the Corporate Sector

In *Feed* (2012) and in *Cosmopolis* (2003), it has been observed that the protagonists are driven by their cynical reason. In both novels, protagonists know the reality of the corporate world, yet they prefer fantasy created for them by their inner consciousness or, in other words, cynical reason. Both writers employ the technique of symbolism to fabricate an ideological fantasy for their protagonists. This fantasy helps in maintaining the illusion of the corporate world which shows people as fulfilled and satisfied. In *Cosmopolis* (2003), DeLillo uses the symbol of yen for generating an ideological fantasy for Packer whereas in *Feed* (2012), Anderson uses the symbol of feed which helps to keep Titus and his friends in their fantasy. It is seen that Packer and Titus follow their fantasy and destroy themselves at the end.

In *Cosmopolis* (2003), the symbol of Yen creates a fantasy of having high financial portfolio for Packer. It is noted that "Yen was climbing" by "trading up against the dollar" (84). Packer knows deeply that Yen will not sink yet he hopes that "the yen will sink a bit"

(35) and “the dollar will settle up” (53). It is because, Packer is driven by his expectation that “the yen is expected to fade” (35). It shows that he knows clearly that yen will not decline but he expects that the yen will not go any higher. His expectations keep him blind towards reality.

In *Feed* (2012), Anderson uses the symbol of feed to create a fantasy of fulfilled self for characters. The characters of *Feed* (2012), are constantly bombarded with advertisements because of the implantation of feed in their brains. Advertisements play a crucial role in creating the fantasy world for people. In *Feed* (2012), advertisements are the main source of creating an illusion for Titus and his friends and they follow that illusion till the end which brings their downfall. Stavrakakis says that advertisement create “social fantasy” (238) around the products. This fantasy paralyses the mental faculties and reasoning power of human beings. Moreover this fantasy motivates people of the corporate world and they willingly jump in to the pool of consumer goods which ultimately help in expanding the capitalist market. People are persuaded by fantasy and finally drive them towards consumption.

All characters in *Feed* (2012), are the inhabitants of the postmodern corporate world, they are aware of the nature of feed. They know that they are controlled by corporations for their own benefit as described by Violet:

Everything we think and feel is taken in by the corporations, mainly by data ones like feedlink and onFeed and American Feedware, and they make a special profile, one that's keyed just to you, and then they give it to their branch companies, or other companies buy them, and they can get to know what it is we need, so all you have to do is want something and there's a chance it will be yours (58).

These lines clearly illustrate that multinational corporations has already taken roots in contemporary society. It also shows that human beings are merely puppets in the hands of capitalist market. However the irony is that people know that they are being exploited by the capitalist market, still they do not resist it. It is because the implementation of feed in brains makes them hollow, at the same time it also makes them "supersmart without ever working" (Anderson 57).

Anderson and DeLillo also expose the game of fantasy in the corporate world. Both writers reveal some strategies of the capitalist market as well which on the one hand attract people to be the customers, and on the other hand work to maintain the fantasy of the corporate sector. Titus informs us about the fantasy game. He says that capitalist market creates a fantasy that whatever it has, it is "all yours, they said. all yours. Good night, sweetie. They're all yours. Take them. all yours. ... Once I was awake, I couldn't find, and the elf gloves, and the bow, and the lizard that was all mine (103). Cate Watson rightly says that in the corporate world, we cannot get all the desirable things and "that's exactly why we keep longing for it" (6). Similarly the continuous surging of different products on feed as: "our feeds were burbling all sorts of things about where to stay and what to eat. It sounded pretty fun, and at first there were lots of pictures of dancing and people" (Anderson 14), also fabricates fantasy of satiate self until they are consumed. Once those products are bought and consumed they are wiped out of our fantasy and new products take over. In this way we nourish capitalist market as we keep on fantasizing different products and carry on with the practice of endless purchases.

Anderson and DeLillo beware us about the tempting nature of the capitalist world which also plays an important role in maintaining the fantasy of human beings. Titus in *Feed* (2012), says that "everything in the banners looked goldly and sparkling" (18). In the same way, Packer in *Cosmopolis* (2003), says that: "Oh and this car, which I love. The glow of the

screens. I love the screens. The glow of cybercapital. So radiant and seductive. I understand none of it" (78). These lines show the glowing nature of the corporate world which persuades consumers for tenacious shopping. Baudrillard says that products of corporate world possess the quality of "manna, a gift from heaven" (32). It is because of this trait, consumers incessantly carry on with their activity of consumption.

Anderson and DeLillo reveal some other tactics of the capitalist market which assist the capitalists in expanding their market and in maintaining the fantasy that capitalists work for the benefit of humanity. In *Cosmopolis* (2003), it is noticed that the capitalist market offers bonus in the form of presents to its regular customer as a token of thanks. In that way it keeps on attracting consumers which in return strengthen the capitalist market. In *Cosmopolis* (2003), market gives a gift to Packer because the rate of his consumption was much high as described: "you can make this choice. You've done great for our investors in strong and choppy markets both. Most asset managers underperform the market. You've outperformed it, consistently, and you have never been influenced by the sweep of the crowd. This is one of your gifts" (53). These statements give clue that aside from the glowing nature of the capitalist market, capitalist market also uses some strategies which attract customers to strengthen their market. It also helps in sustaining the fantasy that market does care for its customers.

In "Toward a Throw-Away Culture: Consumerism, 'Style Obsolescence' and Cultural Theory in the 1950s and 1960s" (1987), Nigel Whitely claims that capitalist market adds "added value" (3) to make a product "more appealing and more desirable" (3), so that it can be purchased more. Packer reports us that the capitalist market designed his car according to his desire and fantasy and adds "a segment to lengthen the chassis by ten, eleven, twelve feet. Whatever desired dimension" (70). This added value works to create a fantasy for human beings and guarantee them that it would give them a more stylish appearance. However the

cynical reason of people stops their thinking so that they cannot know that “by giving a product a fashionable appearance, the designer was virtually guaranteeing it would look old fashioned in two or three years time” (Whiteley 3). So it can be said that the capitalist market hits the desire and fantastmatic spaces as described previously, by giving desirable dimension to the products. The same idea is articulated by Anderson as well when Violet tells Titus that FeedTech tracks down people of this world and “they make a special profile” (58) of every one of them so that companies can produce products according to the desire of people as described: “Everything we do gets thrown into a big calculation. Like they’re watching us right now. They can tell where you’re looking. They want to know what you want” (107).

Titus is aware of persuasive nature of the capitalist market and he admits that capitalist market opens up the list of cars when he talks about car with his father as described: “and it unwrapped in my head, a banner for a dealer, and links to other dealers, and a big line credit, and I was hugging them” (Anderson 128). This line is evident of the alluring and persuasive nature of capitalist world. Žižek rightly says that in corporate world, products behave “idealistically” (qtd. in Boyle 6). He claims that in the corporate world “cars themselves believe in their thaumaturgy for us” (qtd. in Boyle 6).

Titus and Packer both are aware that their activity of consumption is relentless and endless and it will never fulfill their desires, yet Packer begs the material possessions to “calm me, makes me whole” (DeLillo 29). Titus also reports the same idea in *Feed* (2012) that “I kept buying these things to be cool, but cool was always flying just ahead of me, and I could never exactly catch up to it. I felt like I’d been running toward it for a long time” (Anderson 289). The same idea is succinctly put forward by Malcolm Gladwell that in the corporate world “cool is an elusive term” (qtd. in Childers 145). He claims that cool is transient by nature as it keeps on fleeting so it is not manufacturable, but still most of the people in the corporate world want to be cool by buying different products.

Along with these strategies, both writers point out some more tactics used by the capitalist world to expand their market. Both writers talk about brands and the way brand is used by capitalist market as a corporate tool. In the present world, brand signifies extra ordinary happiness and thereby satisfaction of self. Branding can be regarded as an endless web which keeps on engulfing people. The branded products generate fantasy around them. They offer us an *object petit a*. This *object petit a* fulfilled the lack in the subject's life and promises them gratified soul. In contemporary framework (where subjects stay ungratified) "brand names become channels of desire, emblems of a world denied, embodiments of wishes unfulfilled" (Stavrakakis 240). Multinational corporations pay a lot of money by naming their products with famous brands as brands can be kept in the mind of masses (Klein 195). The Corporations do not only produce products but also marketize their brands. People in this world do not buy products rather they buy those promises that are associated with brands.

4.4 Branded Identity in the Global World

Baudrillard critique holds that social reality is produced via media and advertisements. Things carry symbolic signs which gets authentication through images. The Postmodern world can be regarded as the web of images in which subjects are caught deeply. Baudrillard states that human beings by living in the unreal reality are unable to discern reality from the events of images (67-68). Images have a powerful impact in the postmodern era.

Corporations now run their market by associating a brand image with their products. Largest transnational corporations try to hide the sinister reality behind the branded products. Corporations tend to do anything in order to prompt people for buying those brands. People of the corporate world buy these branded products at any cost as it would give them a sense

of fulfillment. The question however arises here that how branded products can manage to give feelings of recognition and hence shape our identity. Postmodern critics have tried to come up with some swift and unequivocal answers.

Albrecht Rothacher regards brands as “the soul of a product” (2). It is because brands assist consumers’ preferences. Chernatony and McDonald, on the other hand, define brands as something that is matched closely with the needs of buyers or consumers. In *Perspectives on Branding*, Miletsky and Smith interpret brands in two ways. In the first case, they designate brands as “an icon or mark (logo) that helps distinguish one product from another” (10). On the other hand, they elucidate brands as carriers of some intangible qualities. It is in fact the intangible qualities of brands which makes them successful.

Multinational corporations brand their products in order to differentiate their products from other corporations, so that they can compete in the global market (Davis 18). With the increasing branded products, an age has been started in which people actually start to live and consume brands. It is an age in which people have adopted the branded life styles. Branding however in the postmodern corporate world has taken a strong hold over the human mind.

In both novels, DeLillo and Anderson show branded world. The material possession of Packer and Titus define their position in their communities. Apart of material possessions, Packer even “drink[s] brandy” (DeLillo 13). He wore “Swiss watch” and eats in “kosher luncheonette” (DeLillo 64). Swiss watch is a branded watch of Switzerland and “Kosher luncheonette” is a restaurant of New York. These evidences show that these days a person can move an entire globe with himself. Now a subject from one corner can eat, drink and wear dresses of any part of the world. All of these basic necessities however now define the societal position of a person.

Anderson also paints branded world in his novel by showing aimless branded life of his characters. All of his character wear branded products of “Bebrekker & Karl” (Anderson

108) eat “cider doughnuts” (Anderson 152) and drink “coke” (Anderson 170). These characters consume these branded products to make their life meaningful. However the irony is that with the consumption of these branded products, their lives are becoming purposeless as described: “we are hovering in the air” (Anderson 211). These evidences show that branded products make human life miserable. It is revealed in both novels that people in this world live branded life by wandering hither and thither in the search of gratification.

The capitalist market strengthens their brands by attaching human desires with it. They projected the idea that supremacy or autonomy can be attained via consumption of branded products. In the present time, branded products have thus become a mean of cultivating one’s self. Now people use and wear branded products because this would define their repute in this branded world. These branded products ultimately alter the rational faculty of human beings into cynical reason which legitimizes the activity of consumption and use of branded products.

The symbolic significance of products is so much significant these days and advertisement is one of the mediums which attract customers towards branded products by showing its symbolic significance. Branded products incite the sense of new and strange among the masses. The feeling of newness and strangeness entice people to be its consumers. It is at this stage when they are blindly led by the multinational corporations. As Violet confesses that the stuff that is shown by feed: “it’s going crazy with everything we looked at today. It’s trying to work for me” (Anderson 116).

Anderson’s use of advertisement in text shows the above stated phenomenon. Anderson’s advertisements are displayed with symbolic significance. Readers are never exposed to use value of products. For example Violet’s feed tech advertises “FreshGorge Glottal Deodorant” (116) for her because by using this deodorant her friend will love her more as: “your boyf will thank you big time!” (116). Likewise Anderson, DeLillo too

communicates the same idea in his novel *Cosmopolis* (2003). Packer himself admits that he used to go to see his Jet off and on, not because of use value of his Jet rather he used to visit there just to see that he still have huge amount of capital in the form of Jet. In the same way Packer's tower is mentioned many times in the novel but readers could not find the use value of eighty nine stories apartment, rather they are exposed to see its feigned grandeur as described: "you live in a tower that soars to heaven" (DeLillo 103).

DeLillo even shows that people in this world make relations on the basis of capital. It has been shown to readers that Packer marries Elise Shifrin because she has an immense "banking fortune of Europe and the world" (DeLillo 15). As a reader it has been observed that Shifrin has scholarly habit of reading books and writing poetry but Packer calls her poetry as bogus: "her poetry was shit" (DeLillo 16). Packer himself confesses to Shifrin that he married her because of her enormous capital as described: "I married you for your money" (DeLillo 120). In *Feed* (2012), Anderson narrates the story of Violet's father who was a qualified candidate as: "I was an excellent candidate", yet he "did not get the job" (Anderson 298) because he could not afford feed. So Violet's father installed feed later in Violet's life in order to make her equipped for the corporate world. These statements show that in this world people maintain relationship on the basis of economic portfolio.

Klein, anti-corporate activist, talks about branding in her landmark work *No Logo* (2000). She opines that branding is "cool-hunting" (Klein 74) practice in which a person searches for new and cool styles within their community. Branded products in this perspective, seem to possess magical power which can bestow desires. In other words, it is the image which is attached with the brands. However the reality of these branded products is different than their image reality. In real world, branded products never fulfill desires rather merely generates more desires.

It can be deduced that brands are nothing but images which are extricated by the cool nimrods from their culture. These images are thus imbibed by the “image-obsessed world” (Klein 424) regardless of the obvious disparity between the image and the real things that are meant to signify. This peculiar characteristic defines postmodern society and its people as *Society of Spectacle* (Klein 78).

Along with the depiction of epidemic consumerism, Anderson and DeLillo both delineate the consequences of conspicuous consumption as well. Both writers show the impact of consumer culture on the residents of the postmodern world. Anderson and DeLillo both portray consumerism as an everlasting phenomenon which produces insatiable people who crave for more and more. This craving for more prompts consumers to adopt a cynical attitude due to which they keep on consuming everything even their own self. The corporate world engages people in the activity of consumption and eventually destroys them. Both writers use symbols to show the destruction of their protagonist.

4.5 Destructive Consequences of Consumerism

To show the destruction of their protagonists, both writers make their writings allegorical and incorporate the symbol of ‘hair’. Traditionally hair was always associated with wealth, royalty and class etc. (Arnold np). The symbol of hair is still used in contemporary era and it holds a symbolic significance in postmodern novel as well. In *Cosmopolis* (2003), Packer sets out on a mock journey for a haircut. His first utterances that “he wanted to get a haircut” (7) might be regarded as his first attempt towards self-destruction. Throughout the course of the day, he mislaid his complete monetary portfolio by gambling against the rise of yen and at the same time he loses half hair as well. The more he loses hair, the more it shows the destruction of Packer as DeLillo describes that after a half haircut “the body smell was foul”

(57). This line shows the destruction of Packer's life. In the same way after coming out of the barber shop with half haircut, he starts wandering aimlessly once again in his limo in a confused state. While roaming, he realized that his "one entire arm is twisted painfully. But [he] wouldn't feel right if [he] changed position. Someone said that the financing has collapsed. Happened in seconds apparently. Money all gone" (175). These lines are self-explanatory about the destructive condition of Packer. In the end, Packer himself confesses in front of Benno Levin that he "couldn't figure out the yen" and that "the yen eluded [him]" (190) which brings his downfall as Levin also tells him that "you brought everything down" (190).

Unlike DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003), the protagonist and other characters in *Feed* (2012) do not need haircut for themselves rather their hair start losing by its own. It is seen that along with hair, characters in *Feed* (2012), lose their skin as well because of their excessive consumption. Anderson links the loss of hair and skin with the activity of consumption. It means the more they consume, the more they lose their hair and skin as described: "we are hovering in the air ... our skin is falling off. We're losing it" (211). It is seen that characters in *Feed* (2012), are doing weird things in order to show themselves more fashionable and updated. Characters even cut their skin because for them it looked stylish and trendy as Quendy's "whole skin was cut up with these artificial lesions" (Anderson 201). Moreover when her friends say that "you're covered with cuts", she retorts these are not cuts rather it is "birching" (Anderson 202) which is a latest fashion. This line indicates that the inhabitants of corporate world raze their own selves willingly for the sake of fashion. In the end Titus' words show the destruction of humanity as: "our hair fell out and we were bald, and we had less and less skin" (288). This shows the devastation of humanity because of their uncontrollable and rampant consumerism.

The above analysis reveals that the corporate world provides everything one wants and demands from it. The characters of both novels get whatever they wanted but it has been noticed that they still remained agitated, dissatisfied and confused. Packer even tried "sedatives and hypnotics" (DeLillo 6) but still he "grew more wakeful" (DeLillo 5). He affirms that his every activity is "self haunt[ing]" (DeLillo 6) for him. Titus, on the other hand, feels himself "broadcast[ed]" (Anderson 48) with feed whereas without feed he remains "frightened" (Anderson 56) and keeps touching his head which felt like empty.

Apart from this, the language of both novels is also metaphorical. In both of the selected texts, the fragmented and deteriorated language informs us about the American society and its condition. DeLillo himself comments with the publication of his second novel *End Zone* that "I began to suspect that language was a subject as well as an instrument in my work" (qtd. in Duvall 151). Language always serves as the powerful instrument of every age. Authors give portrayal of society through language. Society always leaves its impact on the language. In addition, there are always some gaps and silences inscribed in literary form intentionally and unintentionally by the writer which exhibit the true meaning of the text. Macherey also supports this argument. He quotes Descartes that,

In order to ascertain their real opinions, I ought to take cognisance of what they practiced rather than of what they said, not only because, in the corruption of our manners, there are few disposed to speak exactly as they believe, but also because very many are not aware of what it is that they really believe, for as the act of mind by which a thing is believed is different from that by which we know we believe it, the one act is often found without the other (qtd in Macherey, 2004, p. 703).

Macherey says that the actual speech of the book is the certain silences that are embedded in literary form. Silence is actually the language of the book that speaks of factual and true meaning of the text. He is of the opinion that "the book is not self-sufficient; it is necessarily accompanied by a certain absence, without which it would not exist" (Macherey, 2004, p. 704). So a book is incomplete if one does not take into consideration the silence of the book. The present postmodern corporate world leaves its dreadful impact on the language used by the fiction writers.

In both texts, it has been observed that there is conversation among characters. However this communication among characters is devoid of meaning. It is because the moment they speak "the word itself was lost in blowing mist" (DeLillo 19). The communication is there in the novel but it is not arranged in a way to make sense. All we have in the novel is the fragmented communication as in *Feed* (2012), when Violet says something to Titus. Titus says that "she was like, Da da da? Da da! I was like, 'what'?" (Anderson 45). Same is the case with Marty's communication with Link that: "out of the fucking way! We're – oh, shit! – we're – oh --- Unit" (Anderson 91). In *Cosmopolis* (2003), the conversation between Ingram and Packer, when Ingram came for medical checkup is also exemplary of the fragmented language: "Let it express itself. What. Do nothing. Let it express itself ---" (DeLillo 45).

Along with this, both writers left some gaps and silences in their works where the real messages are embedded. However one cannot say that in the silences and gaps an exact or true meaning is implanted as the aim is to activate the critical reasoning of the readers to draw their own interpretations and critical judgments.

In *Cosmopolis* (2003), DeLillo tells us about many facts of the global corporate world but then leaves to the readers to discover the underlying meanings of those points. In the very beginning of the novel, it is shown that Packer remains restless and he could not even sleep.

DeLillo describes his condition by saying that it could not be described in words as: "it was a matter of silences, not words" (p. 5). DeLillo's silence left a silence for the reader. One might deduce the meaning that one remains restless in the corporate world because the corporate world incites our desires and desires never get fulfilled as it desires more and more. So it would not be false to say that gaps reveal desires of postmodern subjects in postmodern fiction. As mentioned above desires are unfulfilled entities and hence create the scenario of dissatisfaction and anxiety in postmodern subject.

In the same way, Anderson left thematic gap in his writings for the reader to perceive the true meaning of the text. In *Feed*, Anderson shows two types of people in his novel. On the one hand, there are people like Titus and his family and friends who can afford the luxuries of life and thus have feed implanted in their brains since childhood. Though at that time they were more expensive, they have implanted it to have an updated personality (p. 234). On the other hand, there are people like Violet and her father who succumb to social pressures and have feed implanted much later in life. The comparison of the approach to feed, to life, to dignity and autonomy of human personality expressed by the two groups create a critical gap, clear enough to reveal the immense loss a person experiences for depending on feed and total apathy generated in people who never have had to think since infancy. Thus the task of the reader is to identify and interpret those gaps and silences as they contain the accurate message inscribed by the author.

Through the use of such fragmented language and by leaving out the gaps and silences, DeLillo and Anderson show the absurdity of this world which is run by corporation. Both authors depict the chaotic and frenzied condition of society by capturing the corrosion of language. Both authors deliberately portray the so-called luxurious world which is full of things, yet hollow of meaning. DeLillo and Anderson both show that consumerism has made

our life hollow. Though in this global era we can buy whatever we want, yet our life is futile and devoid of any useful activity.

In the end it can be concluded that the present corporate world is saturated media world which is unreal. The real world is now replaced with the hyperreal world. The latter one signifies the illusionary reality which is deceptive and which has taken over the human consciousness. The disembodied consciousness of this unreal world is aware of the deceptive nature of the corporate world, yet it could not resist this deceptive world as it always fabricates a fantasy world for them. Both writers show this phenomenon in their writings. The protagonists of both novels know reality of the corporate world but their fantasy keeps them in the illusion of perfect world. The illusion and fantasy both work to seal the realization of human mind. In the selected novels, the realization of both protagonists comes with their destruction.

Packer is not naïve about the nature of the corporate world. He is well aware of the fascinating nature of the corporate society. He knows that all his activity of consumption will end in void, yet he does not denounce it and he prefers to follow the fantasy that is caused by his desires. Packer does not shed his fantasy till the end and he continues his unlimited consumption. He thinks that material possession has potential of providing strength to him as he feels himself connected with his tower as: "he scanned its length and felt connected to it" (9). In the end DeLillo shows that Packer's fantasy leads him towards destruction. His fantasy ruins his life at the end of the novel. The hope that yen will sink, actually sinks him down. He loses all his capital in gambling against the rise of yen.

Similarly Titus is informed by Violet about the nature of feed that feed is under the control of corporations and "it's not great, because who knows what evil shit they're up to" (58). Further she tells him that feed is "still going to control everything whether you like it or not" (59). Despite that it is seen that Titus does not resist feed as feed helps him in the

streamlining of his personality according to the ongoing trends. This easygoing nature of feed keeps Titus in illusion that feed might help him in the solution of all life problems. This illusion even prevents him to see the real nature of feed. Titus' feed produce a fantasy world for him where he can get whatsoever he desires. The so called positive aspect of feed convinces him to ignore all negative aspect of feed.

However in the end, after seeing Violet's pitiable condition, Titus realizes that feed demolished his personality and his whole life. He learns that feed has been crushing his thinking and keeping him blind to the authoritative power of capitalist market. He also realizes that his feed had created a fantasy for him and he had remained in that fantasy for years. Sitting asides Violet, he realizes the social reality and sheds his fantasy. In the end he himself whispers to Violet and says that he has "learn[ed] to resist the feed" (308). This indicates that finally he has shed his fantasy. Though late but he realized that he had lived his life in fantasy that was created by the corporate sector for him.

The crux of the above discussion is that capitalist tycoons try hard to maintain a chimerical world for people. It is because chimerical world retains fantasy of ideal world for humanity in which a person gets whatever he desires. The chimerical world guarantees the people's self-satisfaction. It convinces them that this is an age in which desires will be taken into account, an age where desires will be fulfilled. So humanity starts worshipping the fantasy world and starts following it frantically. The same thought is communicated by Anderson and DeLillo in their writings. The protagonists of both novels exalt the corporate world which at the end brings their downfall. However in *Feed* (2012), Titus shunned his fantasy and realized the reality of the corporate world in the end which to some extent liberates him from the powerful clutches of the corporate world. Whereas on the other hand, Packer destroys himself fully as he could not resist his fantasy till the end of his life.

The detailed analysis of both novels shows that the one who has the capacity of denouncing the corporate sector, can live a contented life. Titus stops his entire destruction by rejecting his own fantasy whereas Packer brings his downfall because he could not turn his own fantasy down. Packer's fantasy sinks him down to the valley of death. The analysis also shows that postmodern writers truthfully expose the sinister reality behind the glittering corporate world. By bringing social and ideological reality of the present world on the surface, Anderson and DeLillo both have unveiled the menacing reality of corporatism for the readers. Both writers do not coerce readers for their ideas rather they lay everything bare for the readers to decide and to choose.

The analysis also discloses that capitalist market is successfully flourishing in the present time through its ideology of consumerism. However, in present time people are no longer a victim of false consciousness. It is because now people are led by their own desires. The inner desires of human beings manufacture fantasy for them and people in this world start following their fantasy without considering it as an unreal phenomenon. People in this world know that the age of global capitalism and technological advancement has replaced our real world with virtual world. They know that they have lost the real, yet they treat unreal as real which is the serious subject for contemplation and thinking.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

'Conclusion' sums up the whole discussion of the present study by revealing the findings of the analysis. It sums up the discussion by revealing that technological advancement and media turn our world dramatically. On the one hand, media, specifically television, constitute a situation of hyperreality which ultimately gives rise to the hyper marketed world and the world of consumer goods where the lines between real and unreal gets dissolved and a person believes unreal as real. On the other hand, the media is also responsible for the installation and instigation of unquenchable desires among the masses which obscure their criticality and manufacture a false world where they can fulfill their desires by the activity of consumption. This chapter also talks about recommendation for further research.

The research under observation aimed at probing the nature of ideology of consumerism that works successfully in flourishing of the corporate world in DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) and Anderson's *Feed* (2012). In order to analyze the ideology of consumerism, theoretical framework of Žižek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008) and Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1987), is employed. The present research aimed to explore those essentials and factors which turn consumerism into real phenomenon and subsequently metamorphose the nature of ideology. Ideology in the present world is not *false consciousness* rather an *enlightened false consciousness*.

The first section of analysis explored consumerism as real social phenomenon within both DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) and Anderson's *Feed* (2012). For this purpose, researcher first identified those elements which make consumerism a societal verity. The present study reports that technological advancement has altered our world dramatically and media specifically television has become a significant constituent of our world. Media starts producing signs and images incessantly which subsequently turn to produce a situation of hyperreality. With the rise of hyperreal world, the boundary line between real and unreal gets dissolved and people come to believe in the unreal more than the real. By living among unreal reality, people too want to become a person on screen due to which hyper marketed world takes its rightful birth. Hyper marketed world entraps us into the networking of corporate goods in which material goods start to define our lives. Consequently these material goods transform our world into the world of corporate goods where material entities bear high worth than human beings which affirms the strong hold of corporatism. It has been revealed that in the corporate world human beings are directly commanded by the capitalist market. Even human beings are treated as products and their relationship with each other is directed by material interests.

The second section of analysis reveals the working of those elements which work best in the proliferation of the capitalist market. It has been noted that desire, cynical reason, ideological fantasy and our yearning for uniqueness work together in instigating human beings for endless purchase and the escalation of the capitalist market. These four elements seem to strengthen each other and eventually the capitalist market.

The central element of consumerism is the notion of desire. It has been discussed previously that there is always a lack in human life where desires reside. Desires desire the fulfilment of desires at any cost. It is because the ideology of consumerism convinces people that now they can fulfil their desires. It tells them that now the distance between them and

their desires can be bridged up by purchasing material stuff. It assures them that they can fulfil their wishes via conspicuous consumption. Desires even overshadow our rational power and transmute criticality into cynicism. The cynical reason of an individual creates a fantasy world for him and individual starts following that fantasy world in order to fulfil his desires.

The study revealed that a cynic knows about certain situations and he is also aware of the discrepancy between his knowledge and practice, yet he does not give up his cynical reason. A cynic is pretty much aware that all of his consumption would end in void, yet he continues with conspicuous consumption. It is because cynical reason of person keeps him under an illusion of contented self and a person loving that contented self and would try to achieve that self. This is the reason that a person does not shed his cynical reason and he continues with his practices. This study makes obvious that our cynical reason and its created illusion and fantasy contribute to strengthen the capitalistic world because people do not use their rational power to resist any aspect of the corporate world. By examining both the texts carefully it can be said that the capitalist market uses some tactics in order to attract consumers and to maintain the fantasy of perfect world for its customers. Both writers beware us about the enticing nature of the corporate world and show that fascinating nature of the capitalist world persuades people for incessant consumerism.

The persuasive nature of culture industry or mass media is observed throughout both texts. While reading both texts it has been perceived that the corporate world places advertisements everywhere. By placing ads all over the map, the corporate world attracts people of all ages and from all strata. The culture industry specifically commercials seize the rational faculty of human beings. The overpowering consumerism creates a society which is bereft of criticality. It produces society of empty-headed people who are not directed by their reason and are rather driven by urges. Advertisements have the power of installing false and artificial desires and needs. They ensure that these artificial desires and needs never get

fulfilled. So the advertisements make the human beings slaves of their whims. The present research divulges the cogent nature of the advertisements. It shows that advertisements have the capability to manipulate the masses by fasten desires with consumer goods. It has been noticed that Ads inform people about branded products which convince them that these new products can make their lives wonderful. However the analysis presents the uncanny nature of the branding and shows branding as a corporate tool which promises distinctiveness and uniqueness in the name of fulfilment of desires. The study reports the characters' obsession for the branded life as for them brands have the power of bestowing a new branded life. However the research illustrates the hollow nature of brands and shows that people in this world are living miserable and empty branded lives.

The undertaken research illustrates the insatiable nature of people. It has been noticed in both texts that people of this world overcome their dissatisfaction by purchasing consumer goods. However even the incessant purchase of goods does not produce satisfaction rather it maximizes the level of dissatisfaction and discontentment.

Moreover, the symbolic significance of material objects is also seen in the present study. Both DeLillo and Anderson skilfully presented that these days objects are judged by their symbolic value rather than use value. People buy and consume those objects which carry symbolic significance in them and define their place in society.

This research also delineates the consequences of consumerism. It shows consumerism as an endless phenomenon which at the end destroys its own consumers. It is because we are living in the age of corporatism which keeps on instigating desires among masses. In this era every succeeding desire replaces the preceding one and people keep on desiring different stuffs. In short desires remain unfulfilled.

The present account of the research outlines that both writers expose the menacing reality of the corporate world. They do not focus only on the tempting and alluring nature of the corporate world, rather they also lay bare the portentous verity of the capitalist world and inform the reader about its true nature.

Recommendation

The word consumption and consumerism remain under discussion in academic circles. The corporate market keeps on attracting consumers and consumers keep on consuming all the products blindly and irrationally. The present study was an attempt to explore the nature of consumerism and the insatiable nature of desires, cynical reason and ideological fantasy. However, further research is needed in educating the people to become literate consumers. There is a need of consciousness raising programs regarding consumption which should attempt to address educating the consumers.

The analysis reveals the need of further research on desire that how capitalist market nurtured desires among the masses and why they remain unfulfilled even after so much consumption. It would be pertinent to carry out research on Pakistani society as according to the data compiled by Euromonitor International research the consumer spending rate in Pakistan is increasing at a 26 percent average pace in the last some years. So a research is needed on Pakistan and its people that how they have also surrendered to the enticement of desires and consumerist choices and what are the consequences in the society.

There should be critical pedagogies for adults where they learn to confront the desire and subdue then. There should be a critical course for young adults which can teach them the difference between wants and needs. Advertisements shower ostensible products on us. We

are inept to decide among good, right and wrong in them. A critical thinking course is required which can correct the process of blind consumerism (in which consumers are directed by their desires) towards an organized and systematic consumerism (in which consumers only consume to fulfil their needs). There should be a critical thinking course in schools and colleges which should teach the students about the nature of consumerism and to explore how this trend of consumerism is operated in a society. In this way these students might develop a critical ability of questioning and analyzing the corporate world.

Brought up in the saturated media world, we are unable to recognize the impact of advertisement on us. By living amongst the material culture, we only learn to spend and consume. So there should be anti-commercials course in schools which can beware students about the persuasive nature of advertisements and how to resist them.

There is a need to introduce critical green pedagogy for consumers of the corporate globe, where they should be taught about how they can play their role in the sustainability of nature in the midst of all this consumption.

In the end, I believe that a critical and educated consumer can play a vital role in the world. An educated consumer would not be led by his urges rather he would be capable to decide rationally between his needs and wants and would show up with systematic consumption.

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