BOURDIEU IDENTITY ADORNO

DEBT ADVERTISEMENT DECOMMODIFICTATION

CULTURE JAMMING CONSUMERISM

FASHION

OBJECTIFICATION

YOUTH LIFESTYLES FEAR TOURISM BOURDIEU

STATUS

2011-2012 ISSUE NO. 7

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JEWELLERY

IDENTITY NEOCONSUMPTION SEMIOTICS VALUES BRANDS SIGNIFICATION CULTURE JAMMING

SYSTEM OF OBJECTS

BRANDS MASS PRODCUTION CONSUMER MUSIC SEMIOTICS ADVERTISEMENT

LEISU SYMBOLIZATION

STATUS VEBLEN IDENTITY CONSUMER

BAUDRILLARD IDENTITY

TOURISM DANCE FEAR

SEMIOTICS VEBLEN

Consumerism is so entrenched in the manner in which modern man conducts his life, that the ability to realize its repercussions is not in itself adequate as a motive to mend the situation. Whatever it was that distinguished need and want has been transformed into an unintelligible whole constituting acquisition and nothing else.

The title of the magazine, in being represented as a logo attempts to convey precisely this: by turning itself into a brand in order to sell, it becomes that which it seeks to problematize. The words that surround the 'logo' are words associated with the theme. It is these aspects of a culture of consumption that define the virtual construct of reality that has shrunk the world, making common our likes and dislikes, defining our choices and labelling our taste.

"Materialism coarsens and petrifies everything, making everything vulgar, and every truth false."

- Henri Frédéric Amiel

Veda Thozhur Kolleri

EIDOS 2011-2012

**Annual Journal of the Department of
Sociology and Anthropology
St. Xavier's College, Mumbai**

**Issue No. 7
Cultures of Consumption**

THE TEAM

EIDOS

'Eidos' is 'something that can be seen'. It originates from the Greek word 'eido' which means 'to see'. The earliest usage of the word can be traced back to Plato's philosophical works where he used it synonymously with 'idea' and described it as 'the ideal essence of something'.

The word 'Eidos' found different meanings across disciplines. It was used in medicine to mean symptoms, and still later, in the mathematical field where it was used to define a figure or schema.

Gregory Bateson used the word eidos in 1936 to refer to the essence or identity of a thing consisting of the unique way in which it is related to everything else. This includes the opposition between collective and individual constructs, between cognition (eidos) and the affect (ethos), and between economic relations and cultural constructs. Such an approach presumes that the essence of social reality can be encapsulated.

Today, however in the postmodern regime, we recognize the complexity of human society and that reality is multifaceted. For us, Eidos represents a plurality of ideas — expressions of a critical and imaginative understanding of human experience and social life.

Eidos, the journal, aims to be a forum for critically examining contemporary issues of sociological relevance. Facilitating a free exchange of ideas that are not oriented towards any single perspective or ideology, it attempts to discover a multiplicity of realities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DHVANI TOPRANI
(Editor-in-Chief)

EDITORIAL

"In a consumer society there are inevitably two kinds of slaves: the prisoners of addiction and the prisoners of envy."

-Ivan Illich

How would one define consumption in a world filled with desires stemming not from needs, but as written by Illich, from 'addiction' and 'envy'? Every object that the consumer possesses communicates his status and position in society. As emphasized, in his interview by our esteemed guest Mr. Alyque Padamsee numerous times, 'status' has become an integral part of consumption, whether it is about education, jewellery or merely the phone one uses. Looking at consumption in a place where its idea itself has so many facets brings us to question the existing sociological construct of 'consumption' and track its change.

Douglas and Isherwood (1979) present the argument that consumers use goods to construct an intelligible universe and to make and maintain social relationships. Then one can look at the perspective presented by Baudrillard that consumption is something that is tightly linked not to the individual consumer but to the overall economic system as a whole – consumption here becomes part of a communication system but not one tied to individuals. Coming to the 19th century, Norwegian-American economist Thorstein Veblen and the contemporary French writer Pierre Bourdieu concentrate on the effort to indicate social distinction through the uses of goods. Veblen's view revolves around the idea that the source of one's good repute in society lies in one's pecuniary strength. These theories however fail to explain the complexity of consumption in today's society.

The idea of consumption is seen to influence the rise of modernity. As argued by Georg Simmel, while presenting his 'Philosophy of Money', money exchange accelerates the objectification of social life in modernity. While modernity resolved some of the previous structural limitations on consumption, these changes also imparted a whole new set of impediments, which include: objectification, rationalization, and proliferation. An indirect impact on modernity is that it reduces the subject-object distance thereby enlarging the pool of consumers. We have moved out of the idea of assuming a good to be unavailable because it isn't produced in one's village to sitting across the computer and ordering goods from another country. The globe has shrunk to a size that is unimaginable. This has impacted consumerism and has also been impacted by it. As the hassles involved in completing the process of consumption are decreasing, consumption is increasing at a greater pace. Earlier people used to have a limited stock of money to spend. But with the invasion of credit and debit cards into people's wallets, one can not only exhaust everything that they have in their bank account but even go over and above that.

Going beyond the idea of consumption and money, Douglas and Isherwoods talk about the status and cultural component involved in consumption, one can see that it's not all about satisfying a need. When an individual consumes something it will be in accordance with his needs and social position in the society. More often, the goods he consumes construct his social status. For them, the essential function of consumption is not to fulfil needs in any prosaically useful way, such as food for eating but rather its capacity to make sense: it is not so much that food is good for eating, but that it is good

for thinking. Indeed we might say that food of any sort might be able to fulfil our bodily needs, but we know that we do not think about food like this: we do not normally eat human flesh because it lacks nutritional value but because of what it means to us. Hence society influences consumption and the emergence of consumers by the virtue of the meanings it attaches to various objects in society.

Veblen talks about consumption from a very interesting perspective that relies on wealth but uses a different rationale. Merely possessing money doesn't help one gain the social status which Douglas and Simmel speak of. Until that wealth is not consumed in a productive manner it won't be converted into social honour or social status. Demonstration is above possession. In today's worlds this very phenomenon is being used wisely. Even if people don't possess, they try to demonstrate. And by merely demonstrating they gain the illusion of experiencing that social status.
These are the established thoughts backed by their own set of research. But as is always true of sociology: reality often goes beyond the theories. Consumption today has a different face, different value and a much different social connotation.

The department of Sociology and Anthropology has tried its best to give all its students an opportunity to explore this overriding phenomenon through its Annual Seminar and other classroom discussions. Eidos 2011-2012 is yet another venture to expand this idea to everyone who consumes it!

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY 2011-2012

Every year the department of Sociology & Anthropology makes it a point to go beyond academics and involve its students in extra- curricular and co-curricular activities, and this year was no different. The Sociology Academy organized a film screening followed by a panel discussion as a part of the campaign 'Humari Zindagi, Humari Choice', which is undertaken by women groups and gender- rights activities to commemorate the 16 days to End Violence Against Women. In the month of January, the Academy will also organize a 3-day Career workshop. This is to give the students of Sociology & Anthropology an orientation to the various career opportunities that they may pursue having studied sociology and anthropology. As a part of the workshop experts from various fields such as Media, Human Resources, Research will be here to address the students. The Sociology Academy, as last year, established itself with more members and aims to synthesize Sociology and Anthropology with themes that are of interest to students across St. Xavier's College. A few exhibitions are also planned by the students. The theme of the exhibition to be organized by Anthropology students of the first year is 'Culture Sketches', while the students of the Second year will be working on the theme 'Culture Studies'. Apart from this, the professors make it a point to incorporate discussions, film screenings, presentations & articles to supplement and make lectures more interesting, interactive and meaningful.

The department also organized a wide array of co-curricular activities that were targeted at enhancing knowledge with the help of practical examples under the banner of the 'HonoursProgramme', co-ordinated by Prof. Vinita Bhatia and Prof. Fr. M.T. Joseph.

A workshop on Visual Anthropology conducted by Sayalee Karkare:

The aim of the course was to introduce students to a sub-field in anthropology, namely visual anthropology. The visual forms used were films and documentaries, followed by active discussions which brought forth an array of opinions and perspectives. For the assignment, students had to select a film of their choice and analyze it from an anthropological lens.

People and the Environment conducted by Sunetro Ghosh

This eight-session lecture series was centered on the 'environment'. These lectures provoked students to think critically and encouraged them to think beyond the 'perceived obvious'. It drew on several lines of thought to provide a cross-disciplinary canvas to explore ideas of the environment.

Understanding Society through Film conducted by Sayalee Karkare:

The programme was aimed at examining how films affect society and vice- versa. Interesting films from world cinema such as 'The Edukators', 'Le Quatre Cents Coups', 'Taxi Driver' were screened followed by interactive discussions and presentations. The workshop helped students gain an insight and understand how closely films and society are intertwined and enabled them to be more critical.

Islam and Society conducted by Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali

This programme focused on introducing the students to the basics of Islam and helped throw light on the common misconceptions we have of this religion. Interesting topics such as 'Jihad', 'Islam and Democracy' and "The Arab Spring' were dealt with during the course of the workshop.

The Annual Department Seminar in Khandala was based on the theme of 'Cultures of Consumption'. It witnessed students presenting papers that were both theoretical and applied. The topics covered a wide range of issues, the focus being on the influence of consumption on culture.

The department has seen quiet a few achievements this year:

Dr. Sam Taraporevala was on the Committee of Internal Quality Assessment Cell, The Staff Appraisal Screening Committee and The Director of the Xavier' Resource centre for the visually Challenged (XRCVC). He also attended a staff seminar in August.

Prof. Madhuri Raijada is a member of The Council of International Programmes, coordinator of the Infrastructure and Cleanliness Committee, member of The Academic Board of the College (as head of BMM) and also a member of the Board of Studies for Sociology and BMM. She has also attended a couple of seminars including The Staff Seminar on 'Psychological needs of Students and Mentoring' in August, A National Seminar on 'Sociology in India and the Bombay School: Retrospect and Prospects', organized by the Department of Sociology- University of Mumbai and Indian Sociological Association.

Prof. Vinita Bhatia is on the Exam Committee and the coordinator of the Honors Programme. She also accompanied our students to the Stern School of Business in NYC from 22nd May to 5th June.

Dr. Fr. Arun D'souza is on the management Board. He accompanied our students on an exchange programme to the University of Berkeley, California during the summer vacation.He attended the staff seminar in August, attended and submitted a paper at a three-day National Seminar on 'Challenges to Human rights in the 21st Century' organized by the department of Civic and Politics- University of Mumbai and the Maharashtra Human Rights Commission. He also attended and presented a paper at the National Seminar – 'Sociology in India and the Bombay School: Retrospect and Prospects' organized by the Department of Sociology – University of Mumbai and the Indian Sociological Association.

Dr. Fr. M.T. Joseph was on the Committee of the Women's Development Cell. He presented a paper on 'Democracy, Civil Society and the State' – a reflection on the anti-corruption crusade in Bhopal in July. He also attended the staff seminar in August.

Nandika was the Sociology subject topper at the University Level at the TYBA Board Examinations 2011.
Aditi Nayak was topper of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in the TYBA Board Examinations 2011.
The Department would like to record its thanks to Ms. Vidya Balan for her generous support for the helping to refurbish the department.

The Department is looking forward to its Academics, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in the coming year and appreciates the enthusiastic participation of students across departments.

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Pooja Krishnan
TYBA

Christabel George
TYBA
Chairpersons, Sociology Academy, 2011-2012

Herold Quadros
TYBA,
Treasurer, Sociology Academy, 2011-2012

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TOWARDS A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURES OF CONSUMPTION:

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALYQUE PADAMSEE

Prachi Saxena, S.Y.B.A. and Dhvani Toprani, T.Y.B.A.

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Alyque Padamsee, an alumnus who calls theatre his "satisfying wife" and advertising his "bewitching mistress," is a man of many talents. One can go through his gamut of interviews and feel like they know him. But we at Eidos like to do things differently and the sheer content of this interview is proof of how we have kept to our belief that Anthropology and Sociology is all pervasive. The man professes to have consumed sandwiches rather than his subjects in his college years, so what could he have to say about "Cultures of Consumption"? Quite a lot, actually . . .

Sir, when I say cultures of consumption, what really comes to your mind?

You see, in the two areas I operate, that is, advertising and theatre, you take what you have and through your inputs make it more than what it was. Let's take advertising to see what I mean. The best kind of advertising is about exciting the customer or consumer about the product you are selling, whether it is a car or a Center Fresh. If I am selling a car, say, a Jaguar, it is the fastest car but apart from that, it adds to their status. Now, status is something that is incessantly consumed by the Indian populace – izzat ka sawal is the adage under which even a poor farmer functions to the extent that he borrows from the moneylender to give his son a splendid wedding even though it means a lifetime in debt for him. Here, I must stress that izzat isn't 'honour' as the correct usage of the word implies, but rather 'status'. Look at cell phones, though a useful device, it can't be denied that they are being sold in the name of fashion, a pink one for the lady while maybe a Black one for the alpha male. Now fashion really again is just an aspect of status, because when we say someone is fashionable, what we mean is that she is more fashionable than those around her. And really what is that but status?

Not just keeping 'up' with the Shahs and Patels but staying ahead of them is part of the game we play. Now, in this I in some way also speak of those below the poverty line, as in a survey I had conducted after the advent of television and various television channels in India, we found that even in the slums of Mumbai people were willing to forgo a meal so that they could save up for a television set! Entertainment, especially the Bollywood type of entertainment that was being shown on T.V was considered equal in importance to food!

So when we talk about consumption, we are looking at so many areas!

Another area that advertising often touches upon is sex appeal. Could you give us an insight on how advertising uses sex or sex appeal to convince people to consume?

Well, I launched the condom brand Kamasutra in 1991 and there again our research showed us that for males in the age group 18 to 35, condoms or as they called it "rubber" was an object of derision, it was 'unfashionable'. So I said "why don't we do the opposite and make it something that excites them," and that is how the Kamasutra was born. It was about sex, not safety. Even though the government wanted it to be about family planning and preventing STDs, I reiterated that the Kamasutra was just going to be about "the pleasure of making love", an idea that the younger generation completely turned on to. What they were consuming really was, 'an of idea sexual enhancement', rather than a condom. It was almost, you might say, verging on being an aphrodisiac.

So, this is how advertising works and it makes the consumer sort of fall in love with the product but it is not the product really, rather the surround of the product that they fall in love with. Now, this surround may include sex appeal, implied higher status etc but ultimately it all has to do with the self.

The 'self' is quite a complex idea. Could you tell us more about this notion of the self in relation to status?

Well take any product, say rice. Okay, so you eat rice and in quality, Basmati may taste only slightly better and have longer grains than say any other unpolished rice but rice today comes in packages and these packages now have their own status appeal. You find this in every area of your life, like in finding a school to go to, they might not be the best, but they all promise a 'brilliant' education and though the appeal seems to be of brilliant education leading to a well-paying job it actually has more to do with the fact that if you go to a school/tutorial that is admired, people will think highly of you and hence, it all has to do with the self. Your own personality is enhanced. And fashion, as I mentioned earlier, has always done

this, be it at the races or William-Kate's wedding, an inconspicuous object such as a hat now signified your status. Reams and reams of paper were spent on describing the fashion at the wedding including her gown and her sister's backside which frankly could have gone a long way in saving the Amazon forest! So, all this means that we are in a consumer culture where consumption is as important, if not more important than practically utility.

So, zooming in on your point, do you think status has formed a culture of its own?

Yes, absolutely! Status is the culture. Everyone wants to be better than they are at present and preferably better than their neighbours and the word 'better' does not mean more useful , it means that other people will envy you, envy has become the great trigger mechanism for buying products.

And that is probably because the social arena in which we operate has expanded from mere tribes and villages to the globalised world of today where we can compare say even what we study here to what students in America study!

That brings us to the media, especially the social media. Initially a newspaper was local to where it was written and then came television because of which everyone who had it was now watching essentially the same thing , then came the internet and on top of that facebook. Now Facebook, I think, is a community of people, who are essentially interacting with people from all parts of the world like Iceland, Congo, Brazil, such that they all make one community. To the extent that I believe it should now be called the 'new world'. I believe this transnational world will soon occupy about 8 hours of our 16 waking hours in the next ten years. Facebook is already the third largest country in the world with a population of above 3 million, though it may not have a geographical entity it is very much a mental entity! And all these people are basically consuming other people's culture, habits, lifestyles… Lifestyle again has certain elements of izzat built into it. In sports itself playing Cricket is more prestigious that Hockey, similarly, in the west, Golf is the most prestigious with deliberate usage of words like 'clubs', making it an exclusive elitist kind of lifestyle that a few can subscribe to.

'Usage' of words like 'club' is indeed a very interesting idea. Makes you wonder about how words not imply popular perception but also form it in a way. How do you think this has occurred with the 'usage' of words?

Well the idea of belonging to a club can be equated to the use of the word caste. When one says I belong to particular club he means to imply that I belong to that caste or class. Everyone wants to be exclusive the same way everyone wanted to be a Brahmin and not a harijan. Infact now the names also have changed from bhangi to harijans to dalits! Even words seem to go out of fashion (with a twinkle in the eye). The latest versions shaping our ideas and our thoughts and in turn being shaped and used by them. Words itself are being consumed at strikingly fast pace.

Like how people moved from Orkut to Facebook, and if someone admitted to be loyal to Orkut , we label them as "backward".

That's right! So, it's like each name carries its own status and sometimes that status declines… Like how in the south, especially Tamil Nadu, the word Brahmin for a long time was looked down upon because of the Dalit movement, now no one wants to be called a Brahmin! So this is what happens, you get all these kinds of 'tectonic changes' where once you thought you were superior but now you are seen as inferior!

Coming to a new topic: you have been called India's 'dream merchant'. What are your views on consumerism as this 'dream merchant'?

Well you see I look at the alternative. One is the simple, Gandhian life - Eat simple, live simple, live in a village, draw your own water from the well, grow your own crops etc; the other, is the MNCs, known for their greed and thirst for consumerism. They say MNC corporations are taking over the world. And I think to myself, "Yes, that's true." I have worked with a few and they do have a tremendous greed for consumerism, for making products that people will buy and

they will then profit. But I think "what's the alternative?" Well Hitler was an alternative, where he wanted to conquer the world with weapons and well America is another who goes about stamping its will and then there is the MNC's who seek to conquer with products and the option of making life better, even though it benefits them as well, I cannot begrudge their cause as much when the alternative is much less edifying.

Take Steve Jobs, for example. He is being heralded as a saint but really at the heart of it is he anything but an agent of consumerism? He is credited for making life easier and but really what I see, he seems to have brought to front is the culture of the 'latest'. Now people aren't really consuming the product but rather the fact that it's the latest. The advertisements itself are focused on getting across the message that this is the newest, the fastest and the latest product. And if one wants to maintain their status they must join the bandwagon or be left in the dust.

An excellent observation sir, but now moving on to your second area of expertise. Do you see the theatre being consumed, if at all?

Theatre is a very strange phenomenon. It started very long ago with Kali Das in India and the Greeks in the western theatre. And it was the only form of entertainment because there was no cinema or television, so people watching other people perform was the way entertainment then was consumed.

But you see the Greek plays were not just entertainment but they were what you would call 'minded fashion', that is they all had a moral message. Like for example even though Oedipus unwittingly married his mother, he then blinded himself.

So theatre became this one place where people would go to be entertained and stimulated. In those days some even 'speech-i-fied' like Demosthenes, who stood in the street and spoke about whatever he found interesting or troubling and people gathered to hear . And all this was a part of theatre, a reflection of which can be seen in street plays where they give out a string social message through their play. Hence, as I mentioned before, this was a time of consumption of entertainment and stimulation. This carried on well into Shakespeare's time and is aptly represented in each of his play, in which not even one goes without sending a strong message that makes you think about human nature etc. 'Taming of the Shrew' is one of my favourites, which again has a strong message on women's emancipation. Then came the restoration period where theatre became a kind of escapism and consumed by masses that needed a break from harsh reality and comedy became the essence of theatre. In the modern era we had playwrights like Ibsen who went back to the old morality and there was August Strindberg whose plays were a lot more psychological and Anton Chekhov who wrote about changes in society. Now these playwrights were not only popular but their plays were watched at dinner time and then followed by a discussion. And thus, again it was not just about entertainment but also about making one think about the world around them.

Another popular perception of theatre is that it is elitist. Do you agree?

Yes, it is elitist. It is for propagating ideas on life. And therefore, it is only if you come from a certain intellectual background like that of a college student, only then can you appreciate serious theatre.

Here, I do not speak of the Gujarati sex comedies which are consumed by all with much gusto! Theatre will always remain elitist as it is to appease people with a shared background. Now, if i ask a man sitting in a Bharat Dabholkar comedy, what he thinks of Shakespeare he will probably say "who?" There is no shared background, you see! Therefore, it is elitist only in that sense.

But the interesting thing about theatre is that it will always remain. The power of theatre outweighs the spectacle of cinema and the intimate quality of television because even though one must leave ones house to watch theatre, it is the closest thing to life. If you and I talking here were a play it would still be real to people but if you shot a movie around it, it would be one stage removed. And thus consumption of theatre also involves the immediacy of the act. Performing arts are also the only kind of art that uses the audience to increase the impact. So, when I am on stage and I am performing and I feel the audience responding, I get heightened and so my performance gets heightened and this feeds back to the audience. Any other medium is a frozen medium.

Facebook too allows people to interact in real time…Maybe someone should look into that as a medium as well…

That's quite an idea! Any last thoughts you would like to leave us with? What you think the readers should 'chew on' or take away from this conversation?

Well, I believe it is the intrinsic nature of human beings to consume. Consumption is a part of being alive and the only time we stop is when we are dead. Because till our very last breathe we are consuming the air around us and so I think it is time we look beyond the negative, materialistic and economic connotations of the word.

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CULTURE INDUSTRY REVISITED

Proshant Chakraborty, T.Y.B.A

One of the Frankfurt School's major contributions to sociology, as well as to media and communication studies was Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer's 'culture industry thesis'. In a world where the tentacles of consumerism and the increasingly 'materialistic' way-of-life are sounding off alarm bells in the minds of cynics and ecomentalists alike, I shall try to interpret these trends using the culture industry framework.

The major themes I choose to analyse are the mass media and considerations of the culture industry. I shall try to juxtapose them alongside more contemporary examples, such as Noam Chomsky's works, to illustrate not only the efficacy of the culture industry, but also its relevance in democratic societies.

In contrast to theorists like Bourdieu (1968) and Baudrillard (1998), the Frankfurt School's thesis focuses on the politics of consumption. Taking off from Benjamin (1936), Adorno and Horkheimer, attempt to structure their thesis basically around what was then (and even now) referred to largely as the 'mass culture' and the political dimension surrounding it.

The Culture Industry: A brief evaluation

Adorno and Horkheimer's usage of the term 'culture industry' stemmed from the 'mass culture' which, often erroneously, is used synonymously to the culture industry. However, Adorno and Horkheimer were careful to articulate the implications of the culture industry, which:

…fuses the old and familiar into a new quality. In all its branches, products which are tailored for consumption by masses, and which to a great extent determine the nature of that consumption, are manufactured more or less according to plan (1991: 98).

Thus from here, we can deduce that their conception of the culture industry was explicitly that of an 'industry' in the proper sense of the word; as a production unit which churns out commodities in a factory-like setting (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944:23). And it functions not only by churning out these 'culture products', but also manufacturing attitudes and behaviour, which are consumed by the 'choices' we make.

Cultural monopolies, such as television networks, film studios, publishing houses, are weaker as compared to the power monopolies like banks, or financial institutions. Thus, for survival, these cultural monopolies enter into alliances with the power monopolies (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944:

3; 1991: 80, 88-91).

Whatever freedom these studios or publishing houses had, is now guided by corporate dictum, thus, facilitating the entry of ideology into the minds of people constantly exposed to the media. Or rather, as the media now pervades into every aspect of our lives, we (are made to) consume ideologies that are manufactured by corporations and governments (Chomsky, 1991: 16). And most often, this happens without us knowing.

Noam Chomsky's works (1989, 1991) in this regard are perhaps a watershed in media studies. In Media Control, for example, Chomsky's description of Lippmann's "bewildered herd" (Chomsky, 1991: 13) aptly illustrates the unpredictable nature of the "general population", and thus the greater need to control them by manufacturing public opinion itself.

From this, we can understand the shift in the way we conceptualize consumption: first as an active, engaging activity; then, to it being a more passive, controlled one. Political opinion is perhaps one of the most vital constituents of a healthy democracy; a public which is informed, aware and makes political decisions accordingly, is an asset to democracy. But before we analyse Chomsky's alternative view of democracy, it is imperative to encounter the implications that the culture industry presents before a democracy: the media—unarguably the primary agency of disseminating knowledge and information—is controlled by cultural monopolies. And thus, whatever information we get from it, no matter how objective it may profess to be, is constructed and manufactured by experts.

And we're left with one burning question: are all our opinions truly our own? But very often, not many reach the stage where they become aware of this dilemma.

The recent anti-corruption movement spearheaded by Anna Hazare is a classic example of the culture industry's success, where most media houses, public figures, and politicians benefited as they garnered political mileage from it (French, 2011). The media's dedication (or, over-enthusiasm) to equate becoming "pro-Anna" to being patriotic, as well as their disdain for criticisms of the movement(Kumar, 2011), were enforced by public opinion, and indeed shaped the very same to a large extent. The Jan Lokpal Bill, and anti-corruption became contexts of the cause which was 'Anna Hazare - the 74-year old Gandhian's struggle'.

The Anna Hazare issue goes to show exactly how the culture industry acquires political undertones, or rather, how it gets people politically involved in issues which are its own creation.

The "enlightenment as mass deception" in Adorno and Horkheimer's text (1944) could not have been captured better and the irony here, in Adorno and Horkheimer's words, could not be any more unequivocal.

Since the Frankfurt School's intellectual prime in the late 1950s and early 60s, the world has indeed changed, and so has the sociology of consumption, with authors like Ritzer (1990), Bryman (1994), contributing theories like 'McDonaldisation' and 'Disneyisation' of society respectively.

However, it would seem that the culture industry—either as a concept, or a thesis, or even as an "omnipotent" entity—has not really faded or diminished. Its dependence on power monopolies has become more acute, and necessary for its survival. Media barons like the Murdoch's, industrial concerns or even politicians for that matter, own TV channels and newspapers which openly and publicly propagate their ideologies. And it is not that the people are unaware of it; in contrast to it, people are becoming more and more political—in terms of opinions, attitudes and behaviour in the public domain.

Campaigns, movements, causes have become the way forward for media networks—from anti-graft, or environmental consciousness to bad roads—newspapers and TV channels are openly competing against each other to outclass their rivals. And the strategy of doing so involves giving the masses something to think of, a cause to believe in. For, it is not only consent which is manufactured, but conscience as well; no one remains isolated because there's something for everyone: from the ecomentalists to the socially conscious, there's a cause in the mainstream for everyone—perhaps with the exception of cynics.

To conclude, there can really be no resistance to the culture industry; it is as entrenched in contemporary society as, say perhaps, technology is. And in an age dominated by information technology it has the assurance of total success. The "most telling evidence" of the culture industry's existence, in Marcuse's (1964: xvii) words "can be obtained by simply looking at television or listening to the AM radio for one consecutive hour for a couple of days, not shutting off the commercials, and now and then switching the station".

The culture industry has become an undeniable aspect of modern, contemporary society; to refute its existence is to commit an intellectual blunder, and to admire its veracity and success without criticality, is as grave a folly. Now, more than ever, the need for critical thought is realised; perhaps, not to sustain a perpetual state of cynicism, but to maintain whatever autonomy of thought—if any at all, that is—we may be able preserve. The phrase, "…the world wants to be deceived", to reiterate Adorno's pessimism, "has become truer than ever" (1991: 103). And our widespread, uncritical acceptance of this fact is reflective of our own idiocy.

End-notes:

i. Logically perhaps, in Adorno's terms, 'mass culture' could be called the product of the culture industry. The connotations surrounding its usage in Adorno's works largely reflect this manner of thought, when he states: "under monopoly, all mass culture is identical" (1944: 1). See also the chapter 'Schema of Mass Culture' in The Culture Industry(pp. 61-97).

ii. Benjamin himself claims that with technology, such as photography, art acquires "a hidden political significance" (1936: 8).

iii. "High art is deprived of its seriousness because its effect is programmed; low art is put in chains and deprived of the unruly resistance inherent in it when social control was not yet total" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1991: 20).

iv. This conception is akin to the term 'Fordism', which implies manufacture of similar or identical products on a large scale. Large-scale mechanisation of production leads to standardisation of not only products, but also of attitudes. Thus, attitudes, behaviour and ideology are 'reproduced' by the culture industry, and perpetuate themselves as such (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1991: 101, 108; see also, Marcuse, 2001: 60-61, 236).

v. Marcuse talks of the "logic of domination" (1964: 128) through which Marxian concepts of technological rationality/dominance begin to take shape in contemporary industrial society; this "technical-political rationality" (2001: 42, 47-48) is what stabilises the social system of domination, and "allows for progress within this framework of domination".

vi. Adorno raises the issue of motives of the writers/authors of TV shows and the presumptions, in terms of "formulas which…pre-established the attitudinal patterns of the spectator" only to dismiss the former claim (1991: 169).

vii. "They (the 'bewildered herd') function in a democracy… as 'spectators', not participants in action. But they have more of a function than that, because it's a democracy. They are allowed to say, 'We want you to be our leader' or 'We want you to be our leader'. That's because it's a democracy and not a totalitarian state. That's called an election." (pp. 13-14, emphasis in original)

viii. "An alternative conception of democracy is that the

public must be barred from managing of their own affairs and the means of information must be kept narrowly and rigidly controlled. That may sound like an odd conception of democracy, but it's important to understand that it is the prevailing conception. In fact, it has long been, not just in operation, but even in theory."(Chomsky, 1991: 2; emphasis added).

ix. "The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them" (Adorno & Horkheimer: 1944: 27); and "…intellectuals anxious to reconcile themselves with the phenomenon…to find a common formula to express both their reservations against it and their respect for its power, a tone of ironic toleration prevails" (1991: 102-103).

x. For example, with the anti-corruption wave, DNA's 'Nation with Anna' series, or The Times of India's 'Hazare Khwahishein' campaign, clearly sought to capitalise, and propagate, the public sentiment to their advantage. Even Hindustan Time's recent movements like 'The Mission: Fitter Mumbai', 'Give us a Pothole-free Mumbai', or even its gala event 'No TV Day', are very clearly a celebration of the culture industry in a most uninhibited fashion.

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ARE WE CONSUMED BY FEAR?

EXPLORING CULTURES OF FEAR.

Shreya Sonthalia, T.Y.B.A

"Give us a happy ending and we write a new disaster story."(Glassner, 1999) The words of Barry Glassner aptly describe the world today which lives by constantly keeping catastrophe on people's minds. Fear is being constantly kept alive with a lack of vision, politics being preoccupied with doom-mongering, all perpetuated by a constant consumption of the news media creating a culture of fear. Fear has been attached to everyday events. Fear of not achieving a good life due to negative influences - people wear varied stones for luck; fear of dying – security mechanisms have lead youngsters to carry pistols; fear of being forgotten – people are living on social networking sites; fear of failure – people join the rat race, whether they believe in their work or not; fear of rejection – peer pressure has become such a big issue, people need "self – help books" to teach them conversational skills! Fear is no longer merely a distressing emotion inducing the survival response of fight or flight; it is a social and not an individual phenomenon.

Fear itself has become a social problem. "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."[1] It is not the cause of fear but the sentiment of the emotion which occupies us. This is seen in stampedes where panic spreads without the actual knowledge of any real threat. False alarms have the same result as a genuine warning.[2] People accept these nonchalantly presuming some element of truth to it. Such is a culture of fear: a society where fear not only exists but is grossly exaggerated, naturalized and normalized.

The creation of cultures of fear can be broken down into three stages, which Brass (2004) uses to explain the production of riots: preparation, activation, and interpretation. Within a culture of fear, the processes of normalization and naturalization serve to instigate fear among the masses or prepare them to panic at certain future events. This situation of normalized and naturalized fear comes into being due to the constant construction of the idea of fear and through the process of criminal victimization. Cultural and racial differences may sometimes provide a base for constructing certain ideas. This idea is supported by Varshney (2004) who sees the structure of civil life as the base for riots. The Hindu-Muslim divide in parts of India is a result of the construction of "the other". Once the base is laid, these ideas begin to act to the advantage of those who planted it. A consequence of the divide is frequent riots.

Riots are a manifestation of fear, providing us an insight that such dynamics may exist within cultures of fear. Perhaps, the alert system fulfills the purpose of activation. The process remains incomplete without an explanation for the event, which is often manipulated. Lack of confrontation allows politically driven agendas to incite the masses and such interpretations lead to creation of a culture of fear and the cycle continues.

Within this framework, the essay seeks to examine the culture of fear through the concepts of normalization and naturalization. Normalization, considering fear to be the normal state of being, makes fear all encompassing. If fear is seen as something normal and not something to question, we are hoodwinked by a culture of fear. When fear is normalized, there is unusually high attentiveness and awareness about threats and objects of danger, giving an illusive sense of security. Eve Ensler (2006) explores this idea and says that security itself breeds insecurity. When we are constantly aware of the fact that we need to be protected, we are also fearful. Thus fear and security both become illusionary. Foucault speaks of this normalized fear as a discourse (Smart, 2002; Whisnant). Making fear the center of our understanding, it becomes a lens to see all phenomena. Fear becomes a spark which spreads like wild fire.

A culture of fear emerges with the naturalization of fear. It is based on perceived threats and not always real threats. For instance, panic is often caused by unattended baggage although all left belongings are not intentional nor threats.[3] Additionally, fearing certain racial groups or communities based on stereotypes or trends is the consequence of created threat or naturalization. The presence of Muslims increase caution in daily life, which is irrational and arises due to the construction of the artificial threat of Islamic terrorism (Bryner, 2008).

The normalization and naturalization of fear are a result of various processes, like criminal victimization and construction. Crime is made to appear something that is omnipresent and increasing, making everyone a potential target, instilling fear. A culture of fear leads to security mechanisms, which is accepted by the masses as needed due to criminal victimization or making one appear to be the next victim of crime. Much of the checking at public places is, at best, cursory in stopping any calamity. This may not only lead to desensitization of fear but also reinforces

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1. Franklin D Roosevelt on his first inaugural address.

2. Recently, there have been incidents where students have been injured following a bomb scare.
Nine students injured in stampede(August 7, 2004)
Hoax bomb threat sparks panic at school (August 19, 2011)

4. Unattended bag causes brief scare at Honolulu Airport (April 27, 2011)

fear in the minds of people. For instance, Glassner (1999) believes that the alert system serves no real purpose. By merely declaring a "high alert" with no directions, nothing but panic is achieved. This alert system is seen as a regular by Brian Massumi (2005) who models fear on a spectrum. By moderating fear, the government gets a tool for control. The Armed Forces Special Provisions Act, 1958 in North East India and Kashmir is a case in point. The fear of insurgency (Naxalism) maintained by the government gives them the 'right' to arrest people which would otherwise be against the law, thereby denying them constitutional freedoms.

"Politics has internalised the culture of fear." Furedi (2006) says that the politics of fear has no other objective but to manipulate. The government can misguide and distort focus by creating fear. They win elections by sustaining arbitrary fears. In a similar context, Brass (2004) and Varshney (2004) examine the Hindu-Muslim divide in India, naming the 2002 Gujarat riots and Delhi anti-Sikh riots as pogroms respectively. Extensive research suggests planned violence. Such instances and blame displacement are responsible for creating anxiety and are based on manipulation and strategic planning. Additionally, as Brass (2004) notes, by showing riots or terrorism as "agonies of governance", political parties gain support.

Politically, a culture of fear is a manifestation of inadequate political leadership and ideology. In an age where grand ideas have failed, a fear of a Phantom enemy is all that politicians have, to maintain that power. In a disillusioned world where people are searching for meaning and a cause to believe in, fear allows interests to be imposed. The Bush regime attempted to consolidate the nation against Osama and started the "war on terror". As Glassner (1999) observes, this vague phrase succeeded to frighten the public and permitted the government to pursue a policy of their interest.

Apart from political interests of individual nations, there exists a global political agenda. The hype of global warming and the consequent burden on the developing world is a result of this. Propagating the approach of doomsday and blaming industrialization for it, hinders the progress of the LDCs who are now more conscious of their carbon foot prints. Fear then becomes the unseen force which leads developing nations to reduce production halting their development and competition with the first world.

Phenomena like global warming also find place in movies and other media, the hyped fear increasing their profitability. As Barry Glassner (1999) says, the media creates stories around devastation and crime, as it makes big news earning them big bucks. To fill pockets and to divert attention of the people from serious issues, the media and the elite in general constructs fear, an idea explored by Chomsky (2004). The manipulation of facts, disproportionate attention and repeated telecast is a method used. Connecting it to Marx's concept of the dominant class and consciousness, the powerful impose their ideas luring the masses to believe there is reason to be fearful at all times. These profits have a social price. Apart from material resources used in security, time is wasted, health is affected due to anxiety and suspicions have reduced social activities. A culture of fear is not a desired way of life. It is also not the only view of the world.

The discourse of hope provides a counter argument to the culture of fear. Hope as an ethical and political principle is a democratic ideal which fosters participation and social transformation in a desired way, and can be used to guide behavior. Anna Hazare's India Against Corruption is a movement which can be seen under the lens of hope. Providing a vision, an ideology and a strategy, he has aroused hope among the masses who have succumbed to his leadership, giving him the power to control. However, fear and hope in a way meet the same end, one of control.

Appadurai's (2007) develops the idea of the politics of hope. He says hope fills in the gap between what ought to be and what is. Possibilities (positive) are the focus, not probabilities. Fear is not the only way to capture support. Hope, by providing a vision, fosters democracy. The city of Mumbai, which continues work as per normal life post attacks and people come forward in rallies as soon as the emergency is dealt with can be seen to reflect a culture of hope.

A culture of hope can be established according to Furedi (2005), who says the interpretation of an event decides if it creates fear or not. This can be related to the stage of interpretation given by Brass(2004) discussed above. If a disaster is manipulated as danger, fear can be inculcated. On the other hand, if a disaster is seen as an unfortunate episode, not to be repeated, it leaves the production of fear incomplete, and should not lead to panic. It is the meaning attached that influences the existence of fear or hope. Thus, the culture of fear as the only existent culture can be questioned.

Varshney (2004) provides a similar perspective. Studying communities and civil life, he says that if we build connections and increase inter-communal interactions, there will be less violence. This can be attributed to the increase in confrontations reducing the possibility of manipulations. Interaction also helps to deconstruct "the other" and see similarities creating a broader "us", and also increasing trust. The level of confidence and trust play an important role in the dynamics of fear and hope in society. Fear and hope, though binary opposites, are inseparably

linked. A fear of the future is only possible when there is hope for a tomorrow. Hope can also lead to fear, an anxiety for a better future. If fear is always accompanied by hope, can we deconstruct a culture of fear into one of hope?

A culture of fear when analyzed within the framework of consumption implies an atmosphere conducive to the manufacture and promotion of fear. Fear is sold and bought as a commodity as it satiates the consumer's need for an idea to guide lifestyle and rationalize phenomena; the effect (control) that this consumption has is the reason behind its production. The consumer here is an uncritical individual, yearning for something to believe in, accepting the norm rather than going through the pain of falsifying the basis of the claim or someone who needs to be pacified with a false notion of protection arising out of a perceived threat. Consumption of fear is surrendering to an abstract entity, making it unconscious as against the conscious consumption of goods. Consumption goes beyond utilizing to imply something that becomes a part of the individual. Are we then consumers of fear?

Most vividly and pervasively seen in today's world, deaths by terrorism in 2001 worldwide were 3,547 out of which 3,000 were on 9/11 and deaths due to motor vehicle accidents were 42,900. Yet the world seems to fear terrorism much more than road accidents(Glassner, 2003). The world is giving into fear as seen through increased security and alert systems where terrorism takes priority.

In conclusion, the question remains whether fear is engrained in society. Looking at the naturalization and normalization of imaginary and exaggerated fears, it seems we live in a culture of fear carefully crafted for the agenda to gain mass control. However, the construction and manipulation of fear can be checked by hope. Are we then consumed by fear or is fear a conscious response towards certain things known as a potential danger? Additionally, if a culture of hope exists, will hope also then become a commodity, a means to an end, tampered by the powerful?

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THE DISNEYIZATION OF SOCIETY

ARE DISNEY THEME PARKS TAKING OVER THE WORLD?

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The word 'Disneyization' brings to mind hordes of Mickey Mice taking over the world, one television set at a time. Alan Bryman coined this term and has pioneered research in the topic.

Bryman defines Disneyization as "the process by which the principles of the Disney theme parks are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world." [1] He also describes how many aspects of Disney theme parks are trickling into and affecting our social, economic, and cultural life.

Disneyization is very similar to Ritzer's concept of McDonaldization, which is when society adopts certain principles followed by fast-food chains. McDonaldization is the process of rationalization, taking a task and breaking it down into smaller tasks, repeating this until all tasks have been broken down to the smallest possible level. The resulting tasks are then rationalized to find the single most efficient method for completing each task. All other methods are then deemed inefficient and discarded.

In a sense, Disneyization takes up where McDonaldization leaves off. It seeks to create variety and difference, where McDonaldization thrives on likeness and similarity. Disneyization is based on the principle of consumption beyond necessity. At the same time, it tries to provide the consumer with an experience which seems different and exotic.

This paper seeks to explain the meaning of Disneyization and its processes even outside Disney theme parks. The aim is to show how the four dimensions of Disneyization (i.e. theming, hybrid consumption, merchandising, and performative labour) have pervaded various sectors that we interact with every day. It is not merely the act of consuming, but also the manner, which is becoming increasingly more important in today's world. This paper concludes with a case study examining how the chain of Hard Rock Cafés exhibits all the four processes of Disneyization.

The four main principles of Disneyization, as listed out by Bryman, are as follows:

1. **Theming** – This is basically the application of a particular narrative to institutions or places. The servicescape, of which theming is an important part, is crucial to customers' response. Servicescapes refer to the components added to the service itself for the enjoyment of the customer.

2. **Hybrid Consumption** – This is the process by which the forms of consumption are interwoven so finely that it becomes difficult to differentiate between each of them. 'Forms of consumption' could include anything from eating at a restaurant or shopping at a mall or gambling at a casino. Hybrid consumption sites are increasingly becoming like holiday destinations. The idea behind this is that people stay longer when more of their needs are fulfilled. In Disney theme parks, the visitors who stay in Disney hotels are able to avail of features that regular visitors cannot, such as entering the park earlier and being able to reserve tables in the restaurants there.

3. **Merchandising** – This, simply put, is the activity of promoting the sale of goods at retail. It could include things such as t-shirts, mugs and other memorabilia. In a way, it is a mechanism for obtaining additional value out of goods and services that have already been established in the minds of people. These products serve a dual purpose – not only do they help in the selling of the actual product (say, a cereal), but also promote a movie or show.

4. **Performative Labour** – It is largely modelled on Arthur Hochschild's concept of emotional labour. It is reminiscent of Goffman's principle of dramaturgy and, of course, Shakespeare's 'all the world's a stage'. It works on the basis of service workers always being cheerful and comforting, whether it is welcoming you with a warm smile or sending you off with a "have a nice day!" Visitors are more likely to respond positively when they are served in a pleasing way rather than a surly one. The affability of Disney theme park employees is renowned and even expected by visitors. The employees are made to create the impression that they are not actually working, but having fun. The explanation for this is that discourteous behaviour is common in the outside world and goes against the impression of a magical, trouble-free paradise that Disney wants to create. We largely see performative labour in airlines with stewardesses who are encouraged to maintain eye contact and be friendly with passengers, often with a sexual undertone.

Applying the process of Disneyization to the Hard Rock Café chain:

Hard Rock Café was started in London in 1971 by two young Americans craving hamburgers served by red-

1. Bryman, A. (2004). The Disneyization of Society. Great Britain: Sage Publications

haired waitresses. Today, Hard Rock Café has opened over a hundred and forty branches in six continents and employs over twenty thousand people, and has extended its purview beyond just dining – it now has thirteen hotels and casinos. Starting with a single guitar donated by Eric Clapton, followed by one from Peter Townshend, the proprietors received over 70,000 pieces of music memorabilia over the years. I shall now examine how the Hard Rock Café chain has imbibed all four processes of Disneyization.

Theming – Hard Rock Café, as is indicative from the name itself, is themed on music. It prides itself on the performances it has, the memorabilia it houses, and the atmosphere it creates. In fact, most Hard Rock Cafés would have a similar ambience – muted lighting, loud music, comfortable seating with levels and the like. According to Pine and Gilmore, at themed restaurants such as Hard Rock Café, food is just a prop for what is known as 'eatertainment'. The visitor knows exactly what to expect when he or she walks into this kind of establishment as compared to a regular restaurant, which has gives nothing to the customer to organise their impressions around. The experience they have with Hard Rock leaves a lasting memory in their minds, which may coerce them to return at some point in the future.

Hybrid Consumption – Few institutions can couple food, music, shopping, and relaxation in the same way that Hard Rock Café does. An evening spent at HRC is a complex amalgamation of all of the above. Over time, HRC has opened hotels where patrons can crash after an 'epic party'. Today, one can have rock-themed weddings, bar mitzvahs, conferences at the many Hard Rock Hotels and Casinos all over the world. Thus, it fulfils several needs all at the same time to the extent that the consumer cannot separate each component from the other.

Merchandising – The Hard Rock Café sells over 12 million logo items annually, which contribute to over 40% of its revenue. Like Disney merchandise, the products themselves are simple and do not cost much to produce. On the other hand, they are sold for up to $150 each. Not only do these contribute to a major portion of HRC's profits, but also serve as a kind of advertisement for the company. Hard Rock Café also often releases limited-edition merchandise or "collectors' items" at a higher cost (such as the 40th Anniversary Celebrations collection). They also have philanthropic causes such as 'Pinktober' and 'Love All – Serve All' which are great excuses to churn out more products.

Performative Labour – Hard Rock Café embodies 'kick-ass', 'revolutionary' service. Jobs are described as 'a way of life'. According to them, working with HRC helps one to mark their place in rock 'n' roll history. Employees are the 'living, breathing personification of rock'. Not only do they undergo training for between eight and eleven weeks in order to be 'authentic', 'irreverent' and 'unpredictable', but also consult a Rockipedia whenever they want to look up a café process. These are all conscious efforts to make the employees come across in a particular way that is likely to appeal to young music-lovers. This, apart from the fact that they literally do perform to the YMCA song every night, exemplifies the theory of performative labour.

End of Story:
In summation, Disneyization is a manner of making goods and services seem more desirable to consumers, especially in the face of standardization in the form of McDonaldization. Although relatively few institutions display all the four processes of Disneyization described above, a growing number has begun to internalize characteristics of Disney theme parks, whether knowingly or unknowingly. However, one must keep in mind the way the environs inside Disney theme parks are, due to technology, providing visitors with a fantasy land that puts them closer to reality than the real world. As Baudrillard puts it, this so-called 'reality' represents only positive elements, effectively "reversing the fiction of the real." The sociological implications of Disneyization are thus certainly far-reaching, and deserve special attention.

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FARM HOUSES

CONSUMING THE GREEN SPACE

Christina F. Kinny, T.Y.B.A

Leisure: an abstract but concrete concept is something that is intangible on one hand and at the same time tangible on the other. Take entertainment for instance, though the means of entertainment are concrete, a performer on stage or a show on television the amount of pleasure one derives from it is abstract. In a similar fashion the understanding of leisure faintly refers to the feeling of being in a cool, calm and stable condition away from all the stress that seems to frustrate humans all through their routine lives. The very idea of leisure being divorced from work is a construct that is made very desirable. This lures people into 'consuming' it in a way that seems 'natural'.

Some aspects of this kind of leisure consumption can be studied by taking the case of farm houses. Karjat, having one of the largest chains of farm houses in Asia is a 'hot spot' for such an observation. The very thought of a farm house brings to mind a green, cool & pleasant place that somewhere associates with the notion of leisure thanks to the representations and images that advertisements create in the minds of people. A farm house cannot be neatly defined but a common feature that every farm has is that of being surrounded by a farm. It could be anything - a fish farm, animal farm, an agricultural piece of land.

Farms were practically a part of every Indian space in the colonial and pre-colonial era. However, the concept of leisure being associated with it is an English concept. The original traces of farm houses as being leisure homes has been found first in England mainly due to the industrial revolution. One of the reasons why it came to be associated with leisure is the spatial demarcation between "home" and "work" that the industrial revolution brought along with it. The fact that the only house of the Indian farmer had the potential of being a place of a good get-away was on account of the colonial influence.

It has been observed that over the past 10 years there is a steady rise in the purchase of farm houses. The consumption of the 'rural', 'traditional' or 'ethnic' adds to the status of the consumer if one considers the rising prices of real estate as compared to that of gold or equities. It also provides the investor with tax rebates and other benefits thus making it a 'safe' investment. It therefore, solves a multiple purpose of being a space meant for leisure, income, exploration and change. However, on the other hand it may involve a "loss" of livelihood or land for a poor farmer. This is highly debatable as many people from the rural sector are also indulging in property deals and land swaps as it

may aid them earn a quick buck through commissions. So, basically it is the increase in credit mobility that is acting like a catalyst for such a change or rather exchange of rural – urban lifestyles.

Passing the buck

Farm houses and rural properties too are not untouched by land politics and seemingly never ending corruption. Agricultural lands are illegally converted into Non – Agricultural (N.A.) plots as the latter is a catalyst in earning a faster buck. No wonder the forest minister of Maharashtra has no clue of the amount of forest land that lies missing (Gadpale, 2011).

This newly "formed" N.A. land now needs to be developed. The new land owners become new source of 'resource' to the village people. Owners of big land pieces are bound to have political links with respect to the development of the lands at the same time the political party or individual involved has to strike a balance between the locals and the migrants. It is in this way the vested interest of vote bank politics is played very carefully. As a result this leads to the manipulation of various kinds of information be it the status of the land or the price of the land. Town planning gets disrupted in this clamor of corruption further leading to unorganized developments and practices. Unorganized urbanization results in a kind of unorganized society.

Role of advertisements

There are various players in this belt of weekend homes. Soft corner and Disha Direct are the few forerunners among the huge set of entrepreneurs that have played a major role in familiarizing this unfamiliar place. Their ads smartly display the home as property. Housing is neatly associated with ownership. Their project locations are wisely chosen. Some near the river or hill displaying the closeness to nature. Others are located near highways or railway stations, such properties display availability as well as accessibility. However, there are some projects of Soft Corner like Palm village near Murbad that are neither in close proximity to transport networks nor to 'good' natural landscapes. Such projects construct or rather 'manipulate' natural landscapes and beautify them keeping in mind the target consumer. There is an artificial lake, rainbow, well planned gardens. The advertisements are kind of distortions to lure consumers into purchasing them at fairly cheaper rates. They display the huge demand for such markets and capitalize on the busy lives of the urban consumer in order

to sell their product.

It is interesting to analyze even the names of the projects. For instance, in 'Palm Village', 'River Dale', 'Hirval' (green), 'Relax County', 'Wellness City', the words used themselves are associated to particular images that automatically hit the consumer mind without even a pictorial depiction of what the project must be like.

The designs of the house model are mostly a western concept (USA). There are row houses with a garage, a small garden with little seating arrangements, lawns, even the kind of plants are imported (nursery industry). Palm trees on both sides of the road. The colors, textures, styles used are not restricted to a particular kind of culture or community. The spaces that every person wants to live in are made real. All seems to be a dream lived. There is thus a production of a home space. There is a manipulation of the functional aesthetic of the home space in terms of utility, health, lifestyle, fashion and family.

The home that initially constituted intimate personal and familial relationships has become a space of acquisition. Even the status of the farm house is determined by its location and proximity with nature, the size of the land, whether it touches both the river & the road.

Consequences

It is observed many a times that the transfer of ownership of agricultural lands to a person/ firm which does not engage in similar activities results in the creation of waste lands. This is accompanied by soil erosion as the new buyer is busy with his urban life and does not invest much time in any kind of development. This is mainly typical of NRI investors. Pollution and spoiling of spaces comes in the making of urbanization.

One of the main social effects is the change in the labor structure of both the rural and urban population but there is a greater impact on the rural population. The people that were initially engaged in agriculture and allied activities are now engaged in working at the farm houses as domestic workers and laborers who maintain the farm house in the absence and presence of the owner. Thus they serve as security systems. This phenomenon is similar to the traditional Jajmani system.

Many people specially men work as brokers in property deals for specific builders, developers and sometimes even have their own small business operating in the informal sector. There is also an increase in exposure for both the rural and urban populations. Thus, it is kind of a catalyst in people swap along with land swap. However, the migrants from the urban sector are relatively temporary as compared to that of the rural sector. Urban migrants if any constitute the retired class, educational class (boarding schools). The

working class is still interested in a weekend holiday as it is most convenient. This sudden leap in mobility has increased the complexity of demarcating the different identities that exist within the same social structure.

Though the number is relatively small there is a section of urban people which invests in primary activities like ostrich breeding, fish breeding, growing export quality plants, large scale milk production and processing factories. Though there is a creation of employment for the local population through such activities there is also a lot of exploitation that constitutes this process.

Rural markets get upgraded further leading to increasing profits of local firms. There is considerable amount of development within these areas with respect to transport facilities, electricity supply and other basic facilities like schools, hospitals etc. Rising inflation has made it difficult for the locals to sustain their lives, on the other hand this urban intrusion increased in the flow of capital.

Conclusion

This attempt of familiarizing the unfamiliar has led to the creation of a new set of identities and new territorial discourses. The westernization of local concepts (glocalization) has made it even more desirable. This has helped to boost the domestic estate lobby and the tourism industry for inland tourism and exploration. Networks of mobility have helped transform local identities. There has been a shift and increase in identities thus making it difficult to differentiate between the tourist and the local. The tourist now in one way or the other superficially slides into the position of the local. Material transformation has led to non-material transformations. For instance, the second home residents try and participate in the local festivals as and when feasible. They all together form a new community of their own.

However, whether if this is development in the real sense or not is the question to be asked. To understand this it is important to understand the cost at which this 'growth' is taking place. It is a development by displacement. However, the displacement is done this time by an invisible hand. One hand that hoards is governed by another that gives in the guise of being the benevolent.

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GOING THE ORGANIC WAY

ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS IN INDIA AND THEIR GROWING IMPORTANCE

Sharmishtha Bose, S.Y.B.A

Why are organic food products today gaining importance among Indian consumers?

Let us begin with an anecdote, as experienced by an Indian mother, who has the responsibility of being the health minister to her husband and kids. She has a hectic daily schedule due to household chores, is very health conscious, strongly believing in the idiom 'Health is Wealth' and even enjoys gardening. Her belief in the use of 'Organic' fruits, vegetables, herbs and meat (poultry) germinated after she read an article in a leading magazine, regarding the benefits of consuming 'home-grown' fruits and vegetables. She combined this faith in the consumption of organic food products with her interest in gardening and started growing vegetables like tomatoes, chilies, brinjals, at home itself.

Many people across various states in India are now switching over to the use of organic products. What is interesting is to note how this changing trend is becoming a rage among the health conscious citizens today and how these products are becoming increasingly popular.

What are these organic food products?

Organic foods are foods that are produced using methods that do not involve modern synthetic inputs such as synthetic pesticides and chemical fertilizers, do not contain genetically modified organisms and are not produced using irradiation, industrial solvents, or chemical food additives. These foods are produced by those farmers, who stress the use of renewable resources and believe in the practice of soil and water conservation, so as to enhance the environmental quality for future generations (sustainable agriculture). They are produced without the use of most conventional pesticides, fertilizers or made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge, bioengineering or ionizing radiation techniques. Similarly, organic meat, poultry, eggs or dairy products are obtained from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones.

Origin

There has been a constant debate as to when the idea of the consumption of such foods become prominent. One such debate states that the organic movement, under which the use of organic food products was introduced, probably started in the early 1900s. It was in response to the shift towards the use of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers and pesticides, in the initial days of industrial agriculture.

Another theory states that the beginning of this movement can be traced back to 1840, Justus Von Liebig, a German chemist, developed a theory of mineral plant nutrition. Many years later, in 1910, in the period preceding the First World War, chemists Fritz Haber and Carl Bosh developed an 'ammonia synthesis process', which made use of nitrogen from the atmosphere.

Then and Now

Initially, the consumption of organic foods was seen as a trend and a fad, only among the eccentric few. Today, it has become a more widespread movement and constantly being adopted by many consumers. Before a product can be termed as 'organic', a government-approved certifier is vested with the authority of inspecting the farm where the food is grown, to ensure that the farmer is following all the rules, as prescribed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to meet its organic standards. Besides, the companies that process these organic foods have to be certified before they get to the local supermarket or to the restaurants. Also, organic farming methods have proven to be more effective as many conventional farmers have realized and methods used to produce organic foods are becoming more and more important these days.

Which foods do we eat organic and why?

With this kind of awareness among the consumers about the use of organic food products, there is a growing concern about consuming certain important food products, in the organic way. Some of these include strawberries, bananas, peaches, apples, cherries, apricots, grapes, corn, green beans, celery, soybeans, potatoes, cucumbers, green and red bell peppers (capsicum), raisins, rice, milk and even baby food (for infants). More or less, most of these food products tend to be consumed by us on a daily basis. The primary reason for the popularity of these organic foods is because most fruits are grown using a lot of chemicals, pesticides and fertilizers, as some of those foods mentioned above are also termed as 'exotic' fruits and vegetables. Many of these crops are also genetically modified and thus, pose greater risks, if consumed on a regular basis.

It is true that many of the above mentioned foods are seasonal and cannot be 'home-grown' in the literal sense. Thus, if possible, it is extremely beneficial to grow these foods at home. If that is not possible, then, the consumers can request their local supermarkets to carry the natural/organic foods and label the others as 'Genetically Modified'.

The consumers can also shop at local farm stands or purchase these foods from markets that specialize in organic foods.

The Growing Importance: Reasons

As mentioned above, initially, the consumption of such foods was considered a trend only among some. With the emphasis on mass production of goods, population explosion and so on, the very ethics connected to the production and distribution of food, dissolved, with an increasing demand for cheaper food products. This lead to producing food crops on a large scale, using a variety of pesticides, chemicals and fertilizers (containing 'Persistent Organic Pollutants' or POPs), thus bringing in fatal diseases like cancer, immune deficiencies, nerve damage, fertility problems and also other problems like birth defects, declining sperm count and sexual abnormalities , along with it. With the growing awareness about health problems and a bid to restore one's health in this world marked by constant rat-race and stress, a switch to the consumption of organic foods, on the part of the Indian consumers, can prove to be extremely beneficial for them, in order to maintain good health.

Organic foods do not have any synthetic additives, artificial colors, flavors, artificial sweeteners or monosodium glutamate (MSG) and are preserved and sweetened naturally. They also have a relatively high content of Vitamin C, iron, phosphorous and similar nutrients. This has proved to be a boon for the extremely health conscious Indian consumers and also, people suffering from health problems like diabetes, certain cardiac problems. Organic livestock production does not use antibiotics or any growth hormones and have no synthetics injected into their systems. The consumers thus, are assured of consuming foods that do not contain any harmful chemicals, which otherwise, could lead to fatal diseases. Consumption of organic food products guarantees consumers a healthier lifestyle. It is being recommended by the doctors, dieticians and health experts today.

Besides, natural or organic foods are not only healthy, but are eco-friendly too. This seems appealing to many consumers, as environmental issues are assuming much importance today and many do not mind going the organic way, as a part of their contribution towards sustaining the environment.

Certain Limitations

Organic foods, however, also have a few limitations. It has been argued that organic growing is a slow process. The weather dictates what and when plants can be grown, thus leading to lower yields and resulting in different produce throughout the year. Growing such foods is more expensive as this process is devoid of any technology that can produce these crops on a large scale. The produce has to be picked late and quickly sold, as it makes no use of any preservatives, which in turn, can also lead to a lot of damage, if not sold/consumed on time. Lastly, it is not within the capacity of every consumer to spend enormous amounts of money on a regular basis, to consume such foods. Many studies have shown that organic foods cost 40% more, as compared to conventionally -grown produce. Thus, along with all its merits, there also exist certain shortcomings related to the use of organic foods.

Conclusion

In this contrasting situation, the idea 'To each, his own', applies really well. It is now solely upon the consumers, if they want/do not want to consume these products. The choice is theirs. However, taking into consideration the importance of maintaining good health and an emphasis on an active lifestyle, it is important that these organic products be consumed by the people. It is not a compulsion to consume all the fruits, vegetables, eggs, poultry in the organic way. Consumers can begin by buying basic foods like bread, eggs, certain fruits like apples, bananas and vegetables like potatoes, beans and so on, organic, and then incorporating the other foods into their diet plan, on the basis of their accessibility and the consumers' purchasing capacity. True, the picture of switching over to these foods is not easy, as it also involves questions of 'Which foods are genuinely organic?', 'How do the consumers measure the originality of these foods?', and so on, but one can also not deny the fact that a lot of reading material is available everywhere to enlighten consumers and help them make the right choice. After all, today's market gives all the power and priority to the consumers and 'customer' satisfaction' is always of utmost importance.

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CONSUMPTION OF NARRATIVES IN DANCE:
AN ANALYSIS OF CONSUMPTION OF MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES IN INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE.

Saee Tendulkar, T.Y.B.A

It is not very easy to look at a narrative as something being consumed. A narrative is a story which is passed on from people to people. The idea of consumption of narratives sounds very unheard of. However, when I gave this idea a thought, it didn't look that unfamiliar. I have grown up learning classical dance. I have been a consumer, as well as a performer of classical dance. I have consumed this 'so called' source of 'entertainment' from an audience's seat, from a performer's stage and also from a teacher's shoes.

One of the biggest parts of any classical dance is *abhinaya* which purely means acting. As I learnt more about it, *abhinaya* was an integral part of a performance. No classical dance performance was complete without it. Classical dance, perhaps, was looked at as an effective medium to narrate a story, which is mostly a means to bring back the mythology into the lives of today's generation. This *abhinaya* is actually consumption of narratives. In *abhinaya*, the performer portrays a narrative on the stage, in effect consuming it. They are consuming the narrative to make the performance complete, beautiful and graceful. *Abhinaya* is given much importance because of the expressions on the dancers face, hence involving the audience in the performance. Otherwise Indian Classical dance performance is all about hand and leg movement which, to an amateur audience might be a little boring after a while. However, the *abhinaya* adds the effect to involve the audience back in the performance because of the expressions displayed by the performers. The audience can relate to it easily and can understand the performer.

Most often, the *abhinaya* involves Indian mythological narratives. Hence, the performer in other words is consuming the narrative to grab attention of the audience, getting into the role of a mythological character, showing the peculiars of these characters.

For the audience, it is easier to get involved in such a performance. Most of them are familiar with the narratives and even if they are not, by the expressions on the face of the dancer, it is not very difficult to understand what is happening on the stage. For example, a mischievous look of young Krishna. Even when you give a mischievous look, the audience is most likely to relate it to Krishna, hence in this way relating the entire act to mythological narrative. The dancer is not actually narrating the story verbatim to the audience, it is done by the expressions

and the body movements and hence, in this sense the audience also is consuming the narratives when they are relating it to the famous mythological stories. However, this consumption is the success of the dancer as it shows that, the dancer has successfully portrayed the narrative and the audience has received and comprehended it right. Consumption of a dance narrative might look as simple as entering a theatre and watching a performer present his/her skills. However just as a lot of creativity, innovation and monetary capital are required to manufacture a product, the same holds true for a dance narrative. Each and every movement of the eye, finger, hand and legs are set and decorated to portray something which the performer expects the audience to consume in its literal sense. Dance narratives face a problem here. They are unlike chocolates, which even when consumed by the buyer taste the same as what produced by the producer. Narratives are presented with one idea in mind by the performer and sometimes consumed differently than that, by the audience, subjective to their own perception and experience. The narrative is understood right but interpreted differently. The kind of emotions aroused by an act for one person is different from those aroused for another. This is what makes the consumption of a narrative much more complex.

As a teacher or in dance terms, as a choreographer, the consumption of the narrative takes place in a way that the famous narrative is thought of. Since it is famous, most of the people know the narrative. So the given narrative is to be put into the dance without damaging the essence of the narrative.

It was in the very origins of the classical dance forms that narratives were performed in the temples. Clearly, it was a way to show the devotion and spirituality of the dancers. The *abhinaya* for such dancers extends to *bhakti ras* (the mood of devotion). The consumption of such devotion was a huge part of the history of Indian Classical dance forms. Bharatnatyam and Odissi were done only in the temples. However, in the Mughal *darbars* in the north of India, the tradition of dancing for the entertainment of kings was evident and the form which was performed in such *darbars*, Kathak, is one of the most popular seven classical dances of India. Hence, it won't be right to say that Indian Classical dance forms concentrate more on devotion to the God and spirituality. Along with the consumption of devotion, there was always consumption of sensuality in Indian Classical dance forms. With the spread of dance

forms, they found a way of narrating the mythological stories which are familiar to majority of the audience, e.g. Krishna and Radha love story, *Seetaswayanvar, Vishnu Dashavatar* etc. With the help of facial expressions (bhavas) and appropriate body movements and gestures (angas and mudras), such narratives are shown in these dance forms. The navrasas which means 9 moods, are supposed to be created with the help of these *bhavas, angas* and *mudras*. The navrasas are *shringar* (erotic mood), *hasya* (humorous mood), *bibhatsa* (odious mood), *karuna* (pathetic mood), *raudra* (terrible mood), *veer* (heroic mood), *bhayanaka* (fearful mood), *adbhuta* (wondrous mood), *shanta* (peaceful mood). When an *abhinaya* piece is performed, creation of one these moods is taken for granted.

To explain the idea of a narrative, I am going to use an example of a narrative from mythology. The narrative is famously known as *Droupadi Vastraharan*. Some call it the game of dice. Briefly, the story follows the plot, from Mahabharata where the Pandavas are against the Kauravas. Droupadi is the wife of the Pandavas, the five brothers, of whom Yudhishtir is the eldest and in the narrative, he is playing the game of dice against Duryodhan, one of the hundred Kauravas. Duryodhan along with his uncle Shakuni who was skilled at winning this game by unfair means, defeat the Pandavas several times. After losing everything, Yudhishtir agrees to put Droupadi on bet and loses again. Hence, even after being opposed by the elders and others present in the kingdom, Duryodhan gets Droupadi and Dushhasan, another of the Kauravas starts undraping her sari. However, Lord Krishna comes to her rescue and the layers of her sari keep on increasing hence protecting her. This is a famous narrative of Mahabharta. It is marked by the war between Kauravas and Pandavas, the pride of the Pandavas and holiness of Krishna. The consumption of this narrative takes place in the dance with help of expressions of pride to show Duryodhan creating *veer ras*, helplessness of Droupadi creating *karunaras*, Lord Krishna creating *shantaras*. Not only are the expressions important to showcase the story but also the hand movements and the body gestures and structures need to be appropriate enough. For example, when portraying Duryodhan, facial pride mixed with the proud walk of the dancer creates the heroic mood. When showing Droupadi, feminine and delicate movements are portrayed. Also to put on stage, there are certain hand gestures known as mudras which portray different things. While portraying the narrative in dance, the body movements and expressions are also used. As we are talking about, cultures of Consumption, we may say that the expressions and movements are consumed by the dancer for the purpose of narrating the story and for it to be received by the audience.

When I have to look beyond Indian Classical dance, it is quite obvious in other forms of dances all around the world. The consumption of narratives is also found in western dance forms like contemporary or free style. Such narrative dance performances are especially seen in the form of ballets where the entire performance is based on the stories or sometimes even fairytales, in a way that they are consuming the stories or fairytales for the performance to look good.

Moving from the mythological narratives and fairy tales, now we can also see an entire new story presented to the audience in the form of dance. What I mean by this is the audience doesn't know the characters in the story and through the dancer's body movements, gestures and expressions, the audience can predict the story and such narratives are successfully conveyed to the audience. Such narratives are mostly based on social issues surrounding our daily lives and the things which the audience is familiar with. This is for the purpose of connecting to the audience and portraying their lives on stage. Hence, we may also say that such trends are consumed by the performer to get connected to the audience.

Generally, the word consumption is looked at as a negative phenomenon in a sense of increasing consumerism. However, the consumption I am talking about has no such limitation. The portrayal of mythological narratives in dance, as long as true, can't be looked at as good or bad. I am just trying to show how it is consumed and not the morality of this consumption. I believe that when a story is narrated without words, with help of expressions and the entire body, it is much easier to understand the characters and the story entirely. But also there is a danger of it being misunderstood or when the audience doesn't know the meaning of certain mudras as a single mudra can mean different things in different situations. Hence, I would like to conclude by saying that it is only better not consider such consumption good or bad or even real or fake.

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AMBIGUITY

OF GUYLINER , BOYFRIEND JEANS AND EVERYTHING NICE !

Meher Joseph, F.Y.B.A.

For all the brouhaha surrounding men sporting V-neck Tees, shirts with floral prints, skinny jeans and eye make-up (popularly referred to as "guyliner") and women in the quest for that perfect pair of boyfriend jeans, boyfriend jackets, grandpa sweaters and accessorizing it with a fedora, Oxfords, a trilby or a pair of brogues – you do realize that what we are witnessing now is a "gender-blender" - the considerable amount of ease with which the sexes are dipping into each other's wardrobes, causing traditional gender lines to blur.

The Fairchild Dictionary of Fashion defines unisex style as, "garments designed so that they may be worn by either men or women. Included shirts laced at the neckline , pants with drawstrings, and double-breasted jackets with buttons and buttonholes on both sides so they could be buttoned to the right or left" and notes that "introduced in 1968,it became a popular look particularly with young people." (Fatima, 2011:70)

The History of a Trend

The first step towards unisex style was taken in the year 1851 by a farsighted American woman, Amelia Jenks Bloomer, who began a campaign to encourage women to wear trousers. To facilitate this she introduced a two-legged garment for women – Bulbous Pantaloons (a skirt divided and gathered at either ankle). Frenchman Paul Poiret became the first designer to adopt them – this for the ballet production of Scheherazade (1910)

Beth Dincuff Charleston in her paper Demure to Deviant: Ladylike Fashion in the 20th Century writes, "The 1920s were the first decade where fashionable woman are offered a sartorial model that was a viable alternative to ladylike fashion: the Flapper. Brash and physically bolder than women of previous generations, the flapper demanded a silhouette that was simple and allowed for freedom of movement, eschewing the hour-glass silhouette that had been a salient characteristic of feminine fashion for over a century, for a boxy, boyish silhouette and an abbreviated hemline, the flapper flaunted an androgynous , sexually provocative style". (Charleston, 2011:2) Eventually World War I saw women working in factories adopting overalls and trousers as work-wear.

Hollywood and Unisex Style met in the year 1930. Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo and Katherine Hepburn sported top-hats, bow-ties, tails, wide-legged trousers and tuxedos–all traditionally items du jour of men's fashion. These worn with confidence spelt nothing short of elegance. It was these icons that helped elevate masculine attire into a great fashion statement for women. Another World War followed and brought with it more widespread acceptance for trousers.

Unisex fashion saw its lean period in the 1950s, where fashion for women emphasized fragile femininity in the form of soft shoulders, billowing skirts and stiletto heels. However, designers such as Pierre Cardin, Yves Saint Laurent and Ted Lapidus had a different vision for the '60s. They showcased trousers and safari suits for both sexes on the runway. The changing image of femininity was embodied by Twiggy who with her 'elfin crop' and 'slight, curve less body' was anointed the face of fashion at 16 in the year 1966.

It was the younger generation who embraced unisex dressing which was due to the widespread popularity of unisex fashion during that period of time which can be attributed to several events and movements which mushroomed in various corners of the world. This 'New Look' certainly didn't develop in isolation.

Student uprisings in France popularly referred to as 'mai 68' and protests within America against her participation in the Vietnam War were gradually reaching their crescendo. Rebellion was in the air and clothes were an outward manifestation of the same.

The year 1967, the Summer of Love saw America's west coast become the centre of the universe for a convergence of people, detached from society, repudiating its technological progress and materialistic outlook. This new breed of people had a relaxed attitude and their own style - both men and women would sport long hair and beads. Their clothes were a mish-mash of psychedelic prints, Indian cotton, ponchos and kaftans either picked up from their travels or made to look as though they had been.

The generation of the 1960s or "The Counter Culture Generation" defined itself not only by what it stood for but also by what it opposed. Jefferis Kent Peterson in his lecture on Androgyny and Pop Culture says, "The lack of a norm except the norm of rejection of the past, created a climate where new ideas and behaviours were valued precisely because they seemed 'unconventional'. In fact, the generation delighted in challenging and defying social expectations. So anything that was new and unusual in

pop culture served to validate the generation's desire to redefine itself."

The commercial value of the unconventional was quickly realized by the music and entertainment industry. It was marked by the entrance of music icons such as David Bowie who in 1972, created a flamboyant, androgynous alter-ego named Ziggy Stardust. Amongst others were Boy George and Culture Club, Annie Lennox ,Grace Jones and Michael Jackson who not only by creating speculation regarding their sexual orientation but also with their unisex style and fashion, always managed to trail a crowd of the curious – making sure it adopted their style into their personal wardrobes. The movie Annie Hall saw Diane Keaton set the trend with men's button down shirts, vests and ties.

However, it was Yves Saint Laurent, designer par excellence, who made a lasting impact on unisex style and dressing. It was his pioneering work which helped trousers become acceptable as daily wear for women.

Stereotypes and roles were being challenged in western society and women were redefining their roles. These changes increasingly took hold in the following decades as women entered the workplace in large numbers. Thus, fashion kept pace with social change.

The Current Scenario:
The year 2000 witnessed a resurgence in the popularity of unisex style – this via a menswear innovation. Hedi Slimane, immediately after being appointed the creative director of Christian Dior Men, introduced the Slim Suit, whose skinny tailoring, narrow fit and unisex appeal, "not only downsized the macho male bodies but sent women everywhere scrambling to buy one of their own." (Fatima, 2011:70) The mid-2000s saw the debut of skinny jeans and unisex style in its boy-meets-girl avatar, "where each sex borrowed from the other with no thought of anything but an enhancement of style." (Fatima, 2011:70) In its current avatar, unisex style has nothing to do gender neutral ensembles, gender politics, sexual orientation or even a sense of androgyny. This time round, "it's all about the fashion, the ability to forage into any wardrobe, be it of the opposite sex and pick anything you want for the simple reason it works stylistically." (Fatima, 2011:70)

The Indian Situation:
Previously only a limited section of urban Indian population followed Western trends. It was the opening of the Indian economy and the explosion of ready-to-wear clothes that marketed the concept of seasonal and transitional fashion to the mass consumer.   Despite the preferred professional uniform of several high-powered executives being the sari and the salwar kameez , we see an increasing number of women executives in menswear-inspired clothing. Service professionals in the hospitality, organized retail and aviation industries have embraced menswear-inspired fashion too. Designer David Abraham in his article No Man's Woman writes, "Interestingly in India ,the story of unisex dressing probably begins much earlier in history with the gradual adoption of masculine inspired garments such as the salwar and the kameez by women in North India in past centuries. Much of the traditional stitched clothing for women actually draws its origins from the Persian inspired male garments that were introduced by Islamic invaders who ruled over much of India for many centuries." (Abraham, 2011: 87) The kameez, churidhar and angarkha are today, basic elements of the contemporary Indian woman's wardrobe making it clear that these silhouettes have made a successful transition from traditional men's wardrobes – and this one a lasting success.

The Downside:
While Unisex fashion for women is seen as a symbol of empowerment, be it an executive in her pinstripe suit or a pilot in her uniform, when the reverse occurs, society tends to view it as a transgression and a diminishing of power. Several people are also of the opinion that the whole trend of unisex fashion that has been introduced and showcased by fashion designers across the globe is the exploitation of a minority and their sexual orientation.

We cannot avoid the political, sociological and cultural implications of clothing in any society. Fact is, fashion shall continue and is cyclical in nature – a fad shall eventually fade and come back in fashion 10 years later. So while, fashion continues its flirtation with unisex clothing, we certainly do have a choice whether we want to make it a part of our lifestyle or not.

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GLAMOUR ROCK AND THE CONSUMPTION OF ANDROGYNY

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Music does not provide its subscribers with merely something soothing to listen to. It provides them with beliefs, and serves as a platform through which they find their sentiments expressed. The act of listening to particular genres implies that one tends to be attracted to certain aspects and identities that are associated with the genre. This is brought about by the increasing awareness of basic philosophical assumptions, normally within a society. Thus, we do not just consume units of music, but ideologies and beliefs attached. This paper analyses the extent to which Androgyny as a sexual identity is promoted for consumption through Glamour Rock.

An analysis is drawn from theorists like Sandra Bem and Judith Butler who speak against gender polarity. In addition to this, Jean Baudrillard's propagation of consumption not being restricted to objects, but extending to ideas too. This is made relevant by understanding subculture studied by Dick Hebdige and Stan Hawkins who understand subcultures as a stray from normalcy.

Gender and Related Myths

The classic proposition by Simone de Beauvoir, of one not coming into the world as a woman but becoming one instead seems an appropriate summation of the consumption of gender by human beings based on their genitals. Gender may be expressed as the socialisation of an individual into performing particular roles in society with reference to behaviour, extending to appearance, emotion and conduct based on the individual's sex. The sex of an individual is considered to be biologically determined.

Our indulgence in bipolarity at this point (what with our subscribing to ideas like Globalisation and Modernity) of development is pitiable. By subscribing to the personality construct of masculinity and femininity, we not only shut down the possibility of there existing various other gender options, but also neglect the existence of biologically different beings. Judith Butler speaks of sex, itself, being a social construct existing to validate the neat division of gender. This promotes stereotypes of transsexual beings as 'abnormal', when there in fact, exists a biological possibility of such an occurrence.

Theorists like Sandra Bem question this clear cut male-female distinction and reject the assumption that masculinity and femininity are necessarily negatively related. She further goes on to question the need for any such distinction at all, other than, if absolutely required, for reproduction. "With complete gender depolarisation, the biology of sex would become a minimal presence in human social life. This does not mean that males and females would merely be freer to be masculine, feminine, or androgynous, heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual than they are now. What it means is that the distinction between male and female would no longer be the dimension around which the culture is organized."(Bem 1995: 329)

With this in mind, a link between Androgyny and its emergence in subcultures may be determined.

Glamour, Music and the Consuming Being

Ian Taylor and Dave Wall speak of a change during the 70s. This referred to the pre-war, working class institutions being eroded. Including within it, phenomena like the bourgeoisification of leisure, and the "sensitization of consumer capitalism to a market available for class based product." (Hebdige 2002: 58)

British culture saw a split into black British culture and white working-class youth culture. Glamour Rock emerged by representing the dying cultures of the Underground and the skinheads, in an exclusively white line. The Underground had by then moved towards a fashion-conscious outlook, whereas the skinheads tried to represent a mockery of the process of social mobility, portraying through their apparel, the proletariat, and shunning any bourgeois influences. This led to it coming into the clutches of consumer capitalism. However, the culture surrounding this newly emergent genre did not concern itself with familiar problems related to authority, but rather with convention and questioning the space that existed between parent culture and the dominant ideology in search of an alternative identity.

In Baudrillard's understanding of consumption, an individual does not merely behave, but is influenced to behave in a particular way (Hebdige 2002: 58). Therefore, consumption is a social fact and one would give into it if it were the prevalent ideology. Consumption, however, does not include merely the buying of goods, but the subscription to various ideologies. Glamour Rock may then be viewed as a rebellion against collective behavioural patterns.

Stuart Hall puts forth how the media progressively colonises the cultural and ideological sphere. He states that "As social groups and classes live, the mass media are more and more responsible for providing the basis on which groups and classes construct an image of the lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes."(Hebdige 2002: 85)

These images and thus ideologies are not necessarily overtly represented nor can they be put forth so easily in the form of words. The understanding is abstract. As Nicholas Cook puts it, "Music transfers its own attributes to the storyline and to the product, it creates coherence, making connections that are not there in words and pictures; it even engenders meaning of its own. But it does all this, so to speak, silently."(Cook 1994: 38)

The Bowie Regime

"You see, if there was no resistance, there would be no Power relations. Because it would simply be a matter of obedience. You have to use power relations to refer to the situation where you're not doing what you want. So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance. So I think that resistance is the main word, the key word, in this dynamic." -Michel Foucault (Gallagher, 1984: 167).

David Bowie may be seen as one of the main figures who heralded the Glam Rock music movement in the 1970s. His daring stage appearances and a change in ideological leaning led to his fame as being against convention. His 'followers' thrived on challenging traditional working class puritaism, the representation of the working class by the media and stressing on beliefs through their adaptation via images. For example, through magazines. Thus, an alternative identity of Otherness could emerge, questioning the "naturalness" of class and gender stereotypes.

It may be then understood why Bowie decided to appear in his extravagant, tight, gender blurring apparel, with his face made up and his hair flaming orange with streaks of silver and gold, with his 'followers' reflecting the same. Bowie proposed an escape from class, sex, personality and obvious commitment to a fantasy past or a science fiction future. As Taylor and Hall, and by extension, Angela Carter, believe, Bowie promoted a questioning of "value and meaning of adolescence and the transition to the adult world of work", creating a dependent adolescent class purchasing leisure prior to the assumption of adulthood (Hebdige 2002: 62). In other words, it promoted consumerism, but with the intention of breaking away from convention.

Bowie also stayed away from political positioning, turning up at Victorian town halls in a Nazi suit, and claiming "Hitler was the first superstar. He really did it right" in a blatant attempt to stay away from "real" world occurrences. We may see his strongest opposition in terms of his apparel, which brought about a louder questioning of gender stereotypes, and sexual identity, previously hinted (and ignored) in rock culture.

If we then go back to Baudrillard, theorising sexuality and the consumption of the same, he speaks of an object that supersedes the commodification of all else. That object is the body. It is neatly wrapped, packaged in clothes and ready for the consumer. "Everything offered for consumption has a sexual coefficient. At the same time, of course, it is sexuality itself which is offered for consumption."(Baudrillard 1998: 129)

Rock, Femininity and Androgyny

Women rockers were an uncommon phenomenon until the late '60s and the '70s, during the second wave of the Feminist Movement. They now appeared on stage to try and break down conventional gender stereotypes, in order to propagate a new, awareness-based understanding. Chiefly radical feminists, these rockers took to all women member band formation to break away from the hegemony of masculinism.

Mavis Bayton notes that women did not want to appear "butch" nor did they want to be seen as "fem". She notices how there prevailed polarities when it came to representing themselves. Some did not wish to 'dress up' and seem distant from the crowd, while others wanted to dress up and, colloquially "glam out". Either way, we may notice that appearance was a chief mode through which women rebelled against gender stereotypes (Bayton 2005: 181).

Having established that Glam Rock promotes consumerism, Annie Lennox may be considered the best example of androgynous representation among women. By manipulating traditional representa-tions, she challenged these traditional norms that existed in a pluralist society. As Stan Hawkins notes, Lennox represents the politics of power, pleasure, sexual fantasy, empowerment and gender. He says, "Through her womanliness and parody of femininity, one might argue that Lennox achieves success in destabilising the male heterosexual gaze."(Hawkins 1996: 34)

He quotes her commenting on her androgynous look and her sexuality, saying, "I don't want to change sexual labels – I want to sidestep them, and to confound people a little bit with something fresher and less clichéd."

Lennox particularly shocked audiences when she appeared on stage in 1984 for the Grammies as a man, singing in Eurhythmics, the track, Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This). Covered largely by the media, one can imagine the impact it had on the masses. "Lennox's portrayal of male characters drew the attention of critics and audiences alike, and their impact seems to have been due mostly to the shock of seeing convincing female-to-male drag in the early 1980s."(Rodger 2004: 19) This drag imagery throughout her career allowed her to keep a distance from femininity, also allowing the women viewers to be spectators to this

role. Judith Butler believes that when considering drag, gender is the performance of ideal constructs. It then also produces "the illusion of an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core." Consuming this realisation, the viewer is aware of such a sexual identity (Hawkins 1996: 33). The impact may be noticed as so far reaching as to the Video Music Awards held in August, 2011, wherein Lady Gaga decided to 'borrow' Lennox's stunt, appearing as her male alter ego, Jo Calderone.

Gillian Rodger cites Randall stating that Lennox's sexuality was questioned to the extent that MTV demanded proof of her being a woman. She also notes that Lennox despised her private life being spoken of. She also rejected being termed 'lesbian'(Rodger 2004: 20). The obvious reason being her not wanting to be placed into a category.

Conclusion

Rock attempts to question dominant ideas revolving around racism, sexism and classism. It possesses a sexual power wherein women's sexuality and pleasure were legitimised. Furthermore, it allows for the individual to be as sexually questioning as desired, regardless of convention that surrounds it. It never renounces the passion for comfort and success, and promotes social mobility and consumerism.

Drawing from a post-modern ideology as promoted by Bem, Butler and Baudrillard, it is possible to realise a common understanding. The relativity of the impact of music on an audience to time. Bowie gathered for himself, a local crowd of followers who felt their fears being expressed. He achieved the propagation of androgyny by way of empathy. Lennox gathered fans due to the media coverage of her acts that stayed away from gender stereotypes. What runs parallel between the two is they realised the way in which they could promote their ideas and used it to their advantage. Bowie, through his performances and deliberate quotes that assured immediate attention as being unconventional, and Lennox through her portrayal through media by way of videos and appearances.

So while it is not a battle as to who can promote gender-blurring more efficiently, it must be understood that the manipulation of resources work to their advantage. With figures like Michael Jackson, La Roux, Lady Gaga and Adam Lambert to name a few, we may realise the power that media plays in the consumption of ideologies. However, whether these ideologies exist in their essence is debatable.

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A CULTURE OF DEBT

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India is a diverse country with innumerable rituals and customs that are peculiar to the different thriving communities. While all this adds to the beauty of our nation and is characteristic to its identity, it also creates opportunities and avenues for increased consumption. In today's society where one household strives to outdo the next in their display of grandeur, maintaining the top spot is becoming a rather expensive affair. With the invention of the credit card, people are resorting to "plastic money" to fund their extravagant lifestyles and mortgages are becoming very popular among the middle class today. Total loans, including mortgages and unsecured loans such as credit cards, grew around 30 percent annually in the last three years, an expansion the Reserve Bank has called "unprecedented". Mortgage rates have risen to around 12 percent, from 6-7 percent a couple of years ago. Credit card rates have risen to between 20 and 36 percent. Late fees touch 50 percent.

Festive seasons signal party time for most shops. "Customers find something interesting and they swipe their card. People don't mind swiping a card for one lakh rupees ($2,500)," says Nagendra Singh, a manager at Hometown, a 300-staff store that he describes as a mix of Home Depot and IKEA, and where free Hindu religious blessings come with the furniture package. Credit card debt has risen faster than household disposable income, raising concern among policy-makers. Increased borrowing on credit cards to finance consumption is usually seen as a stimulating factor for the economy. However, there is concern that high levels of debt may curtail spending in the future and hence ultimately slow economic growth. There have been conflicting findings on this issue from studies based on aggregate data. Without doubt, the delinquency level in the country is on a rise but the prime reason considered for this hike is the rising interest rates over the past. In fact, rates of interest for credit card holders are four times more than the interest rates on home loans. This may be a cause of high delinquency in the card segment in the recent times. The card users are first lured to spend money, which they cannot repay due to exorbitant rate of interest that leads them into a debt trap. Later they are encouraged to convert the outstanding into a loan. The banks do so to avoid an increase to their non-performing assets (NPA), which dents their balance sheets.

"More and more people are resorting to debt to finance their consumption needs," the RBI said in a 2008 study on financial literacy. "Aggressive marketing of personal loans and credit cards to a vulnerable section of borrowers could also have consequences of over-indebtedness and rising non-performing assets."

Another factor is the ease with which one can procure a credit card. Banks have made it so accessible and easy. It's almost like they're forcing us to take credit cards and enticing us into this sticky web of debt. Online sites like e-bay and Amazon present a whole array of goods and services that could be obtained with a mere click of the mouse. Today, ordering a pair of designer shoes from Paris or the latest gadget before its official release date in India is not as bizarre an idea as it might have seemed five years ago.

Apart from having to deal with sky-rocketing prices and fluctuating markets and unstable economies, the common man today has also to worry about his mounting credit card bills and various other dues. A major part of his salary goes in paying his credit card dues. The market is also expanding and more and more goods are being made available to the buyer. Monthly installment payments and other such offers make it rather convenient for the buyer to satisfy his immediate desires but ultimately, he is left with a mammoth sized mountain of bills that he will have to face at some point.

Take a case study:
Armed with an MBA from the US, Amit Viswanath began his working life in 2004 as a consultant with a multinational firm in India's southern IT hub, Bangalore. After a few months he received a credit card with a modest Rs 30, 000 limit from HDFC Bank, where his monthly Rs 15, 000 salary was deposited. "The first card was difficult to get," he recalls. Not so the next ones. State Bank of India sent a card with an Rs 39, 000 limit. Then HDFC raised his credit limit to Rs100, 000. Both Citibank and HSBC sent cards. Soon after, HDFC offered an Rs 30, 000 personal loan, which he refused. But by the time ICICI contacted him to offer an Rs 90, 000 personal loan in 2007, he says, "my greediness increased". India's stock market was booming, so Mr Viswanath, 30, took the ICICI loan to invest in equities. ICICI later offered a "top up" to Rs 350, 000. When India's stock market plunged in 2008, Mr Viswanath used his credit cards and personal loans from two more banks to cover his losses and living expenses. Soon his Rs 40,000 monthly debt repayment exceeded his Rs 32,000 salary.

And this is only a brief account of many more such stories. Not only are banks enticing customers to get credit cards, we have become a generation of people who

seek instant gratification in almost every sphere and this is becoming an alarming trend. The number of people living in debt today is increasing at an exceedingly high rate.

Therefore, although the credit card has made shopping so much easier and E.M.Is have increased the opportunity for people to access luxuries they wouldn't otherwise have been able to afford, it has also had a negative effect in the form of people indulging themselves and splurging unnecessarily or rather mindlessly and ultimately drowning themselves in steep debts. We see the changing and ever-expanding cultures of consumption in society today, the limitless variety and the accessible luxuries and one wonders if the incentives and choices being offered to the consumers have resulted in a culture of debt...

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OLD EN VOGUE

Oindrila Dutta, F.Y.B.A.

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"…Bangles, jewellery, handloom cloth in vibrant tones, lampshades, trendy jewellery made of metal beads, glass showpieces, terracotta magic, mehendi artists, the micro calligrapher who will write your name on a grain of rice.. Nothing fills up the soul and senses as does the artistic magnificence of India. Full of gaiety, colours, boisterous and interesting people, the Indian bazaar is a single halt for a plethora of experiences that will last a lifetime…"[1]

The recent growth in domestic trade, migration and tourism has led to the establishment of large ethnic subcultures and ethnic minority owned retailers in a number of urban centres in India. This led to the development of a market place that is co-inhabited by traditional Indian arts and handicrafts as well as the fast moving consumer goods that are a boon of the industrial revolution. Our contemporary cities are characterised by a process of symbolic modification in consumption, as a broad subject, which plays a pivotal role in cultural change. In the last few years, marketing strategies have involved developing experiences, rather than selling products as brand images. Companies today have found a new secret to face market competition.

Today we look at 'ethnicity' as a means of consumption delivered as a particular kind of experience and customers are seen as tourists travelling to exotic cultural destinations. Sociologically speaking, emotions play an important role in stimulating the buying sense of the consumer and consumption is seen as having a symbolic perspective (Baudrillard 1974, Bordieu 1979). The market today is a stage from which consumers show their personal identity or group cultural affiliation (Guiliana P, 2009). If the culture of contemporary consumption is characterised by constant production and reproduction of signs that modify the existing symbolic order then the very activity of acquiring – the shopping – cannot be reduced to a simple economic transaction. A significant part of present day consumers look for vivid emotional experiences in their choice of what to buy (Featherstone, 1991). Besides the monetary value, the contemporary consumer is also interested in whether a product suits his lifestyle, habits and values.

Post 1991, as the diaspora widens and the effects of globalisation and multiculturalism become more and more rampant in India, people face a slight problem in the classical relationship between place and culture. Identity today deals with issues of instability and lifestyle rather than only of belonging. As more and more people wonder about their ethnic origins, the consumer market witnesses the rise of a new trend – an influx of products that are attached to a traditional cultural symbol, for example the hand-spun khadi or the peculiar bandhani print. Individuals today are becoming increasingly active in choosing and constructing their own ethnic identities, they no longer succumb to ascribed reality. Indians today, and especially the youth are making a much greater effort to connect to their heirloom of handicrafts and main d'oeuvres than did their previous generations. In the last few years, hand printed cotton kurtas, jute and cloth bags, dress materials with embroideries and sequin work native to particular states, handloom scarves, fancy hats made of straw and wooden showpieces are back in vogue and slowly climbing the ladder of social and market dominance. It is evident that the return of these goods cannot be because of a renewed faith in their quality or their easy availability, for it is but obvious that mass produced machine made goods would easily decry that assumption. So we can safely conclude that it must be their aesthetic element that appeals to the senses of the consumer.

Aesthetic consumption is an aspect of sensory experience that is made manifest in the consumption of everyday goods that are presumed to have artistic traits or appeal to the eye in an enticing sort of way. It is believed that the purpose of aesthetics is to bring enjoyment and pleasure in our lives (Carroll, 2001). Hedonism is believed to be one of the greatest motivating factors in the buyer-seller relationship of such commodities. The consumption of aesthetic experience is used as a resistance to the existing hegemonic order. It is a process that is both liberating and fulfilling.

In India, the aesthetic element of our ethnicity has been perceived as a commodity since times immemorial. Our Pan Indian Philosophy recognises the value of true beauty in the term 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram'. 'Bhava' or the state of mind and 'rasa' or the emotional flavours that have been crafted into a piece of work, have dominated our decisions of consumption as part of our cultural heritage. Whether it is Tagore's literary work, a mural painting of Kerala or Rajasthani folklore, it is evident that a balanced emotional meal is what is demanded by the consumer in question. At the same time, the ethnic element associated with these particular goods gives us a cognitive high, a feeling of cohesiveness with our cultural baggage. In India, consumption of ethnic aesthetics is a rising trend, especially among the new generations who are rediscovering the fashions of the past.

For almost a decade after the influx of globalization in our culture, Indians tried very hard to bring themselves at par with the west, and in the process of doing so, they lost

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1. (March 4, 2009). Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation. The Times of India.

out on a considerable amount of 'Indian-ness'. However now that the novelty and glitz of the machine made commodities, a bi-product of the industrial revolution, have begun to wear off, the varieties of our own hand-crafted works are rising in worth once more. And this time they are closely associated with a strong cognitive appeal. Modern education has ensured that individuals are ingrained with desire to ensure the betterment of their fellow human beings. And what better way to encourage cottage industries and small-time artisans than by consuming our own ethnic produce?

Another closely observed upshot of the market growth of aesthetic and ethnic commodities is the demand for these goods amongst foreign tourists and non resident Indians. Sporting a pair of silver jhumkas embellished in coloured stones or a Patiala salwar of a vibrant colour with gold print is very much in vogue on the streets of New York and Paris, if you have just returned from a trip to India. In fact, the typical Indian cotton kurtas with large prints have a huge market abroad for their loose comfortable look. And the same saris adorned with sequins that our ancestors have worn over the centuries have today walked the red carpet at the Academy Awards.

The consumption of ethnic aesthetic goods can also be studied from the view point of the social proletariat. Take, for instance, the company by the name of Rangsutra, comprising a thousand artisans from the remote regions of Assam, hilly Uttaranchal and the deserts of Rajasthan. Their main goal is to ensure sustainable livelihood for the artisans and farmers by creating top quality hand-made products based on the principles of fair trade and a celebration of India's rich craft heritage. Socially, the arts and crafts people come from the most disadvantaged communities with very little opportunity for self development and growth. The fact that they still retain their skills is a miracle given the fast changing trends in the urban market. The artisans make use of traditional technology to produce a wide range of apparel, home furnishings and accessories which are then merchandised and marketed by several urban brands, one of the most prominent of them being Fab India. Rangsutra ensures a fair price to the producer as well as quality goods to the customer. Since the shareholders in the company are the producers or the artisans, the profits earned from sales go back to ensure a better life for the communities. Thus it is evident that the influx of ethnic and aesthetic goods in the market plays an important role in assuring employment to several rural households that make up an important part of the Indian populace.

Today, these 'traditional' cultural industries are increasing their involvement with the modern means of interaction. The new technologies are providing them with innovative tools to improve the quality of their goods,

blend two or more existing patterns to form a third new design altogether, make more efficient use of time and market their produce in a more consumer friendly manner. The authors of Age and Arts Participation (1982-1997) state that: the future of arts depends critically upon their ability to compete for attention with a popular culture that is powerfully propagated by the mass media of radio, television, films and the culture of advertising and promotion to which they are enmeshed. In the past, people had to physically visit Shantiniketan to purchase the unique batik printed cloth bags and unglazed terracotta vessels, or travel to Himachal to find delicate woodwork on pine and deodar, beautifully patterned carpets and colourful leather embroidery. But in the ever-expanding world of present reality, art emporiums and exhibitions, craft bazaars, NGO sponsored retail outlets as well as private enterprises are changing how we view and partake in culture traditions. There is no doubt that consumption of ethnic aesthetics has a dazzling future ahead, however, adaptations and innovations will be required by culture suppliers and supporters if they are to continue to attract audiences. In the light of declining budgets, audience fragmentation, competition from new services and rapid advancement in distribution technology, the face of ethnic consumerables will have to keep evolving in order to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

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CONMEN AT WORK

Sushree Sahu, F.Y.B.A.

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Congrats from Naaptol! You have WON a diamond studded "Frank Belluci Watch" of Rs3950+ warranty. Pay Rs999 to get your precious gift. Call 09223533000.

- TD Naaptol

How often do we come across such promising (but fraudulent) advertisements? The answer couldn't get any simpler, "Almost EVERYDAY". Be it through SMSes, radio, television, internet or newspaper dailies, these advertisements have become a part and parcel of our mundane life. Be it 'looks', 'quick money', attractive watches, free vacations, 'sex toys' or something equally enticing, these advertisements seem to have an instant (and not to mention 'effective') remedy to all. But, of course, you may see yourself far from falling prey to such advertisements, because you are educated, intelligent and have known about these Quakers since ages. But, hasn't there been a single advertisement which lured you into buying a particular product, and you decided to break off from the common belief of advertisements being a source of 'loot' and set a fresh experience for yourself, of 'how I got duped?'.

Thus a great misconception challenged! It is not only the less educated and the ignorant, but very often, the highly educated and the best informed class of people who fall prey to these advertisements. The post modern forces in the twenty-first century have contributed to the rise of consumption. The economic forces (like the LPG and the establishment of the MNCs) define not only the economic dynamics of the Indian society but also impact the social life of the 'aam janta'. Thus, these forces have attributed to the rise in a new class of consumers with a more than average bank balance, and a rise in the number of enticing products (which too, are a result of the post-modern forces) which 'apparently' posses the ability to make the 'impossible' ' possible'. Also, sometimes, the desire and the social pressure to increase one's standard of living can come in the way of one's ability to reason. Lack of maturity and experience, and also ignorance can be attributed to falling victims to such advertisements.

Very recently, my grandfather invested a huge sum of around sixty lakh rupees in a bank (which boasted of a high brand value) promising great returns, but even before he knew, the bank shut down. Hence, he was unable to retrieve the money invested. Although he has filed a consumer complaint, there is little relief.

Unfortunately, even the elderly population is unable to resist such advertisements.

Telemarketers very often target the elderly due to specific reasons. The old have money, savings, property and investment. They are likely to be at home to receive phone solicitations and hear the fraudulent sales pitches (due to loneliness)for a longer time. In fact, the elderly people can be more easily trapped into the disguised schemes and offers of the so called 'effective fake promises' on products that they need but know little about. Another example is that of mobile phones and service providers. Very often, schemes (like caller tunes and ringtones) are activated without the knowledge of the consumers. The old seem to suffer the most since they know little about technology and are unable to understand the working of the cell phone but at the same time can't live without it either. Hence, they feel that they have themselves to be blamed. The issue is brushed aside lightly without being dealt with any seriousness. Also, the less educated people are likely to fall prey to such disguised marketing techniques. Hence there is no specific profile of a victim and the victim can be anyone. The difference is, few of them retaliate and most of them accept that they were less wise to be fooled.

Most of the testimonial advertisements are designed to entice the young population.

How about this: "I lost 20 kgs by wearing slimming soles in just 15 days."

Such advertisements don't inform but only persuade. The consumers are enticed by these advertisements as they think that they can do better than the person giving the testimonial. Very often, the target audience are those who are unsatisfied by the way they look and are desperate to change their physical appearance. This can also be due to the demands of a particular profession; certain professions like modelling and airlines recruit employees on the basis of physical appearance. Studies have shown women to be greater victims of this than men.

The women are expected to be more attractive in the social context. The emphasis on looks can be viewed largely as a product of social conditioning.

For example, in the Indian society, the grooms and their mothers(in the case of arranged marriages) seem to have a peculiar fixation with thin, fair and 'socially good looking' women. (Although the definition of 'socially good looking itself is open to varied interpretations and is quite vague). The evidence of this can be found on the matrimonial website of whichever caste to see and whichever class you

observe. A woman's qualifications in the marriage industry are her 'looks'.

Social discrimination based on looks could offer another explanation to the victimisation of the gullible people. Discrimination based on the skin tone is the most popular, and at the same time, the most humiliating of all, especially in a racially mixed society. Thus if there were no discrimination in the economic and the social networks (like marriage, employment), such advertisements would have never been in the market at the first place. Thus, many people fall into the trap which is so cleverly designed by the conmen.

Hence, psychologically, too, people become susceptible to these advertisements.

Sanjay Srivastav, Professor of Sociology at Delhi's institute of Economic Growth sees it as the manifestation of an expanding consumer culture. "The media has been carrying such misleading advertisements for years. What's new is that the trend has caught up with rich and the middle class. The formal system is severely limiting. It takes a lifetime to fulfil one's aspirations. That's where the formal system is seen to be handy," [1] he says. Since people have limited resources and limited time to become rich and satisfy all their needs, they consider such advertisements to be like 'Aladdin's oil lamp' granting all their wishes without much hard work.

Thus the role of the media too, cannot be denied. The media is seen as a weapon to victimize people since it serves as the channel through which such advertisements reach the audience. Be it the leading dailies, or the television, or the social networking sites, the mass media is the vehicle of the twenty-first century quacks. One of the best demonstrations of the power of the media is the advertisements of fairness creams or say 'bye-bye to wrinkles'. By using advanced technology and unusually fair complexioned models, the media and the ad-makers are in a way duping the public into buying skin products promising great results. But, we know that these products are far from producing desirable results, yet, sometimes, we give in by thinking "What's the harm in trying?" This very statement confirms the significance that media has assumed in a consumers' life.

Furthermore by roping in celebrities like actors and cricketers (in this much 'Bollywood worshipped' and 'cricket crazy world') to endorse these products, the ad-makers play on the psychology of the consumers and lure them into buying the products — all of which wouldn't have been possible without the 'MASS MEDIA'. But, we know

that besides being a business, these brand endorsements by the celebrities is the best form of disguise for the dupers and yet, we allow ourselves to be fooled by them.

However, one may argue that the victims would eventually end up filing a consumer complaint against the fraudsters. But it is easier said than done. "Many victims refrain from filing police complaints due to embarrassment," says SHO Hauz Khas police station Atul Kumar. He continues, "People may shell out a million for something life changing both personally and professionally. There are times when people cooperate, but most of the times, they are tongue-tied when the matter reaches the court."

However, according to the Delhi Police, there are 500 reported cases against fraudulent companies and individuals all over the country. In Mumbai, the Economic Offences Wing of the police has registered 78 cases of fraudsters this year (upto August 2011). Most of these cases are related to get-rich-quick-schemes.

Besides shame, some victims may also reason with themselves, convincing themselves that the losses are not large enough to be reported. They think that the crime, if reported, may not be taken seriously. Unfortunately, in India, this is true. Thus, it is imperative to have an effective system in place to tackle the conmen.

Thus, the expanding culture of consumption has its own share of pros and cons. So, the next time you come across a similar advertisement, BEWARE, the CONMEN are at work!

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1. Sanjay Srivastav, professor

BRAND MATTERS

CONSUMPTION OF BRANDS BY THE YOUTH

Subhadra Venkat, F.Y.B.A.

Quite a few middle class youth prefer branded goods over any other. Earlier, people used to buy things to serve a purpose. Bags were bought to carry our possessions, 'chappals' and shoes were bought to protect the feet. However, now, when offered with a plethora of choices, one is not simply satisfied by buying these things for a mere use value. We feel that much of what we own defines us and hence we tend to buy goods from popular brands that make us feel unique, identify with our social group and give us the characteristics of the brand.

Today, the youth prefer to spend a majority of their time with their friends. Due to the advent of the mall culture, the best place to 'hang-out' would be malls. There, we often end up buying things that we don't need. Shopping has more or less become a leisure time activity and terms like 'window-shopping' has given a whole new meaning to this word. According to Veblen's theory of conspicuous leisure, we need to visibly show that we have a lot of free time to spend, which would render us a high social status. One does not actually need to purchase items but merely show that we have a lot of spare time at hand. When we spend time with our friends at the malls we mostly end up buying many things that might have caught our fancy. Our peer group is the most influential group at this age. They influence a person to change their attitudes, values or behaviour. Therefore the opinions of our friends regarding certain brands tend to influence our opinions about that brand.

According to Veblen's theory of 'conspicuous consumption', we need to visibly consume to exhibit our wealth to ensure us a high social status. Even if a person is filthy rich but is stingy in parting with his money, he will not be given a high social status, as he has done nothing to show off his wealth. Every item has a certain brand value attached to it and depending on this we tend to pick what we want and we choose the good that befits our social status. The Blackberry phone for example used to be an exclusive property of the rich businessmen and was an elitist commodity. As it is becoming cheaper and more people are buying it, it is slowly losing this distinguished status. We want to buy products that would offer us 'more' for the same or lesser cost. For example, Manikchand mineral water is 'oxyrich' with 300% more of oxygen. The product that we buy would be just like any other but has an additional feature that makes it novel. For instance, Camlin pens write just as well as ad gel pens, but the latter has additional features like a proper grip for the fingers to enhance the smoothness of our writing, which gives it a novelty status.

Baudrillard suggests that the world we live in has been replaced by a copy world, where we seek stimulated stimuli and nothing more. Consumerism relies on semiotics (signs, symbols etc) and hence might contribute to hyper reality. Hyper reality is a means to characterize the way consciousness defines what is real in a world where media can radically shape and filter the original experience. Pepsi has always been a brand that caters to the youth and they keep coming up with innovative ideas to draw the youth. When 'my can' was introduced, the can had become sleeker and it was made fashionable to drink it by making the 'yo' symbol which being a jargon of the youth, immediately became a rage. Another example could be the shoes bought from 'Nike'. The shoes as such would be extremely useful all on their own but when the tag name 'Nike' is attached to it, the value of the shoes immediately shoots up and they become exceptionally desirable.

The youth have a distinctive style of life. They have a different preference in clothing, food and leisure activities. Therefore, today, consumption is not only limited to commodities but also an entire lifestyle. Watches, bags, sunglasses etc that are sold under the brand name 'Fastrack' mainly cater to the youth. With the use of a catchy slogan like 'move on', it embodies the meaning that one should own better and much 'cooler' things. Pepsi has announced that it is going to come out with pet bottles, which will be biodegradable. This could be in accordance to surveys conducted by several sources like Brandweek (a weekly American trade publication), the Alloy's 'college explorer' survey etc that the youth prefer products that are 'socially conscious and even if it was a 'green product'. Here, in India itself, a study conducted by good cause consumer study has found out that 76% of Indians would recommend a brand that supports a good cause. As it is important to maintain our social status, we conspicuously consume commodities that support good causes as this is becoming increasingly popular and thus leads to an increased consumption of goods. Many brands are supporting various causes. For instance, the tata tea 'jaago re' campaign is aimed at the youth to ask them to vote and choose their leaders carefully. Another example could be the shiksha programme initiated by proctor and gamble. From April to June 2010, anytime a consumer bought a large pack of a product from the p and g brand in India, part of the proceeds went towards educating a child.

Recently, post the LPG era; a dense network of global connections has been woven across the world. Cultural hybridization or glocalization is when certain aspects of the foreign cultures are inculcated into the local cultures but in accordance with the local cultures. For example, Chinese food has been adopted into the Indian culture but at the same time, the Chinese cuisine prepared here greatly differs from the one prepared in china. While the cuisine we prepare would be spicy, the authentic one would be bland.

The products that target the youth need to be in sync with their ideology. Gone are the days when marketing strategies were developed by merely observing the society and its people from afar. Those strategies that were designed in such a way have most definitely failed. For eg. When 'maggi' was first introduced in India, it was marketed as full-fledged midday meal and wanted to replace the 'roti-sabji', the staple diet of the Indians. It was outright rejected. Hence there has to be some communication between the one marketing the product and the social group that is targeted. One cannot simply market the products, which they feel that the youth require. The products introduced to cater to a particular social group like the youth, should be done so by keeping in mind the ideas and things that would draw them or the ideas that they detest. For eg. 'Navneet' notebooks are said to be made from bagasse (dry sugarcane pulp) and hence save trees. The danger of youth marketing is that since the youth are looked upon as a social group with separate tastes, they are treated as a different species all together!

Different brands are making attempts to connect with the youth. When catering to the youth, one has to keep in mind the kind of products that the youth are likely to buy and supply accordingly. A variety of choices are offered to us, due to which we get to decide whatever we want to buy.

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PLAYING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

BOURDIEU'S THEORY ON TASTE AND DISTINCTION

Ratna Fabrian, T.Y.B.A.

The ability in playing musical instruments "presuppose not only dispositions associated with long establishment in the world of art and culture but also economic means… and spare time."

- *Distinction*, Bourdieu 1984 p 75

I .

My friend Ana has been playing the violin since she was 5 years old, and hence has taken seriously on practicing the instrument. At her early teens she joined the orchestra and attained the position of the lead violinist.

Despite the fact that she loves popular music, she plays classical music. Once she told me that she was interested in the guitar, but never did she attempt to play. According to her, the guitar does not suit her small hands.

There are various factors why a person chooses a particular instrument to be played, such as the influences from the agents of socialization, including the media, gender identity, personality and the characteristics of the instruments; size, sound and pitch. Here we could see that our choices or tastes are determined by our social position, by which through the process of socialization individuals become the products of their cultures. Bourdieu explains that individuals are chained to every kind of capital that connects them to their social relations. These include not only economic capital, but also social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital.

Secondly, there are creations of symbols that signify certain identity. As mentioned above there is a link between the gender of the musician and the characteristics of the instrument. Society produces and reproduces meanings and concepts. It defines what is 'masculine', 'feminine', 'high standard' and 'low standard', etc. Marxists stress that the ruling class determines society's ruling ideas. Bourdieu also talks about how the difference in taste plays its part in distinguishing the social position of a person. For instance, by distinguishing classical music as belonging to the elite and popular music as belonging to the middle class, the elite distance themselves from the lower groups.

For most people, playing musical instruments is seen as more than a hobby as it is also assumed that it is the privilege of gifted musical people and indicates how 'musical' the person is. Ana's successful achievement in her music career is thought to be due to her hard work and her musical talent. This view is rejected by Bourdieu's theory on tastes and consumption. Ana's decision to play the violin was under the influences of her parents, who sent her to music school when she was a young child. Her instrument, the violin, has the 'feminine' and 'classic' characteristics. The violin is often played in classical music, which is considered as the music of the elite. It is strange how the violin is perceived as a 'girl instrument', for it used to be dominated by men for centuries. The size of the violin which is small, even smaller than its siblings the viola and the cello, and its high pitched sound are perceived as feminine. Thus the violin is regarded suitable for a girl from the higher middle class like her.

Consumption basically shows the identity of oneself. In Bourdieu's theory of Habitus, he explains how we consume certain practices and will reproduce the practices. This also takes place across generations. Bourdieu particularly is interested in how each social class, especially the elite, preserve their social status. Educating music to the young is one of the ways to maintain the privilege position. According to Bennet:

"This is the reproduction circuit associated with schooling and formal education. Those parents equipped with cultural capital are able to drill their children in the cultural forms that predispose them to perform well in the educational system through their ability to handle 'abstract' and 'formal' categories. These children are able to turn their cultural capital into credentials, which can then be used to acquire advantaged position themselves." (2009: 13).

In this regard, parents are supposed to provide what are required for their children to gain cultural advantages, just as what Ana's parents had provided for her to achieve success in music career.

II.

Though every human loves music, not everyone plays musical instruments. Not everyone receives education in playing musical instruments, unless there are economic means including the facilities available and most particularly, parental and social supports. Thus the ability to play musical instruments is regarded as prestigious since it is not the kind of ability that everyone could attain.

I knew most of my South Korean friends play the piano. They learned it at the elementary school as part of the school curriculum. While in my elementary school we learned to play the soprano recorder, which is often

thought of as a child's instrument these days. That is why most of my school mates did not take interest in playing the recorder after passing elementary school.

As structuralism has emphasized, culture produces and reproduces meanings, and the human minds that create the meanings conceptualize the world based on pairs of binary opposition such as good-bad, male-female. In this case we give meanings to the instruments and categorize them according to their characteristics. The piano which is usually played in classical music is thought as a classy musical instrument. It is costly that not everyone could have the instrument. The harp is seen as 'feminine', while the guitar is considered as a 'masculine' instrument.

Social environment is an important factor in determining the choices of the instrument. This can be seen by different instruments that are popular in different areas. In Indonesia the guitar is the most popular instrument, especially among the youth. Usually it is learned from peers through informal ways. Playing the guitar becomes a social trend.

Traditional instruments are popular in their place of origin. They symbolize the cultural identity, including nationalism, which bonds the society. Another reason for this is the availability of the instruments. It is easier to find the instruments in the place of origin and it can be learned through social ways too.

Several researches over decades found various factors that affect a female and a male's choice for musical instruments. Young children are socialized according to their biological sex. It is considered to be appropriate for them to look upon the same-sex models. However, research also indicates that sex-based stereotyping in the choice of musical instruments can be a limiting factor. When the child grows up he may pick an instrument that symbolizes his personality. A girl may choose to play the drums to show that she is as masculine as any other boy.

As the family is the primary agent of socialization, and in many cases it is found that the parents are the ones who choose the instruments for the children, the parents' role in determining the children's preferences is undoubtedly essential. It is not necessary for the parents to be able to play musical instruments as well. Parents have perceptions on what is the best education for the children. Thanks to the media that creates a greater awareness to parents by spreading news that in order to raise the children's ability in learning, they should be exposed to music and musical instruments at an early age. Parents would put the children into schools that provide music education or bring them to music classes. This depends on whether the parents can afford the expenses of the course.

Again, this argument will return to Bourdieu's theory on taste and distinction.

III.
Bourdieu rejects the idea that our preferences are based on individualistic choices. Tastes are socially conditioned and they indicate different social classes or groups. This is due to and is resulting in social stratification, by which the dominant class have the power to define what are the 'high' culture and the 'low' culture. By giving symbolic meanings they distinguish themselves from the other lower class.

One way in seeing this is from the ability to play musical instruments. As the culture interprets that it is closely involved with the musical brain of the gifted individuals, the ability is then seen as an exclusive talent that not everyone can acquire.

Next, the instruments that are played denote different social identities and personalities of the musicians. Each instrument carries out a symbolic meaning that is created by the culture. Individuals choose the instrument that, according to them, is suitable for them.

Bourdieu makes us aware of the multidimensional social spaces we inhabit. Economic capital may not be the only factor that determines our taste. Indeed cultural, social, and symbolic capitals also play their role in choosing our preferences. That is why there are various instruments that become popular to people in certain places.

However, I would like to point out that although Bourdieu emphasizes taste as signifying the social position of an individual, there are many cases that shows individuals become 'cultural omnivores', by which the elite play 'middle class instruments' and vice versa. To the middle class consuming, or in this case, playing an 'elite instrument' would raise their social status, while for the elite, enjoying a 'middle class instrument' would demonstrate their openness towards other cultures. Nevertheless the emergence of the cultural omnivores is also related to the exhibiting of one's personal and social identity.

To conclude, playing musical instruments is part of consuming identity. Individuals are bounded to their social position and so are their preferences. This leads us back to the philosophical question whether there is such thing as individual decision. Through this paper we have seen that there are various social factors that affect individual's taste and preference, as Bourdieu has argued using his theory. Thus playing an instrument is a social and cultural phenomenon.

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EROTICISM

BEYOND CONSUMPTION...CREATING DESIRE

Bradley Fernandes, T.Y.B.A.

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'It has to be made clear from the outset that consumption is an active form of relationship (not only to objects, but also to society and to the world), a mode of systematic activity and global response which founds our entire cultural system.'(Baudrillard, 1998:7)

India has always taken pride in being mature about sex and its connotations, right from the days of Kama Sutra. Temples in India, such as Meenakshi temple in Madurai joyfully celebrate the union of Meenakshi and her consort Sundareshwara. Yet we demand the Original Sin of temptation be kept wrapped in the confines of ones mind. The wheel though, is constantly turning and by a quirk of time, temptation and human desires have snapped out of the social cages and are smeared all across the country.

Today, sexual content finds place in prime-time television, billboards, fashion posters in the clothing stores at the mall. There seems to have developed a new culture where people are knowingly or unknowingly patronizing eroticism. Sex is not merely used to sell products, but products are also being used to sell sex. The use of sexuality in mass culture as an attention-catching device and as a means of addressing specific target group, especially in the film industry displays this trend in a world driven by consumerism and consumption.

Media is something which can sell any commodity in a jiffy and make it a hit. But that does not mean it always has a positive impact even though the consumption of a particular object may increase. When some forms of 'mantras' and their fetishism doesn't work on big screen these directors readily make space for a female character and make her voluptuous and dress her provocatively to increase the queue outside the theatres. As an 'item number' or a 'bikini clad model' will surely insure some spark on box-office. Hence in the consumer package, there is one object finer, more precious and more dazzling than any other and even more laden with connotations than the automobile, in spite of the fact that encapsulates them all. That object is the BODY.

In a (fictional) film the 'photo-realism' is harnessed in the service of the imaginary order, the 'more-than-real' of the hallucinatory dream world. The perception and the representation melt into one producing artificial psychosis without offering the dreamer the possibility of exercising any kind of immediate control. The problem enters when eroticism enters feature-length film narration. The consumer society is at once a society of abundance and of scarcity. It must produce both plenty and paucity, both repletion and appetite, satisfaction and desire. So if satisfaction increases, so does the desire.

Regressive down-market, bizarre: all adjectives lose their potency when our cinema tries to call their cheap and crass love making scenes, BOLD. However such films continue to draw audiences in small centres. It is catering to those human species who will buy a movie ticket to sit and get its lusty eyes a treat for three hours. The treat even includes scenes where the woman is beaten up. The representation of domestic violence, marital rape makes films fun-filled entertainment for the psychotic male perception of women. India has plenty of such species who are gravitating to the halls, and the producer must be thanking them as he markets the film as semi-porn.

Liberalization leads to openness and, when we discuss openness in Bollywood, which is supposedly getting liberated, we mean 'opening up' in the most literate sense of the term. That is, the lesser your actors wear and the more frequently they make love the greater are the chances of the viewers coming to the halls. Hence the consumption of these so called "bold" films which packs all the elements for its high consumption, having wafer-thin plots is increasing. These are a "hit formula" for consumption because of human nature which seeks happiness without the slightest hesitation; and secondly, prefers objects which will provide him with the greatest satisfactions

The Hindi film industry sometimes shows two good bodies engaging in the act. That is supposed to be modernity, sophistication, the new world order. The truth of consumption is that it is not a function of enjoyment, but a function of production and, hence, like all material production, not an individual function, but an immediately and totally collective one. So we will have a movie on family problems but the rape scene or the bath in waterfall will steal the limelight and make it worth a watch for empty brainers. That makes me quote Baudrillard's words again; that there is a distinct relation between this consumption and the society. It is our society's order on the table that makes these films with soft –porn features exist and ask for more.

The Elle woman is `hot' with that same heat, that same

warmth one finds in modern furniture: it is an 'atmospheric' heat. Sensuality is heat. The body is no longer an object of desire, but a functional object, a forum of signs, thus we don't have movies focusing only on rape, but the 'Rape' scene will be put up in the film either for some spice or to show rape as a cause of a revenge, so what these movies are trying to reinforce is the simple message that we don't have time to show women problems on big screen but rather show her as an object and the film is ready for consumption. Everything offered for consumption has a sexual coefficient. At the same time, of course, it is sexuality itself which is offered for consumption. Admittedly, this explosion, this proliferation is contemporaneous with deep changes in the relations between the sexes and in individual relations to the body and sex. So women are preserving their body and their only virtue in society is to be covered from head to toe and the men can loiter around the by-lanes shirtless, not only in the cities but in the villages as well.

The logic is simple, the reinforcement of the female subordination exist in every society and everywhere and hence when it comes to its portrayal in films, women are always animated and beautified and their erotic image in every second film doesn't affect the society and raises no voice. Let us not even think about how badly most of these half-nude-is-so-good kind of films are being made. That they can made with a small budget making recovery so much easier is the key, which is why even a film is termed a flop can end up making money quietly, almost invisibly, thanks to the consumption of eroticism.

The 'body', 'erotic' is the key element in ensuring that people do come and see it and derive maximum satisfaction from it, the majority of consumer goods are selling perfectly well without any marketing and without any names.

Hence not only movies even comic writers make their female characters 'pose' for the seduction of the reader rather than for her fellow page-inmates. Women in comics are being turned cartoonishly sexy simply because many mainstream comic characters are now being written with big-screen feasibility in mind. So the result of such comics in Hollywood is bossomed bimbette in a fishnet costume looking like her primary source of power is Mega Cleavage. The latest issue of Catwoman makes us meet her breast and all her assets which are voluptuous. It's not until page three that we actually see her face. Our Indian imagination and fantasies are not left behind, so what if we don't have catwoman but we do have internet favorite Savita Bhabhi, a heavy breasted Indian housewife whose only activity is getting intimate with every men on her doorstep. Comics being written a certain way merely to make for more commercially bankable movies, hence consumption of soft porn through comics-turned-movies is a hit.

We may, admittedly, say that it is, then, our fantasies which come to be signified in the image and consumed in it. Consumption is a system which secures the ordering of signs. What the male dominated society wants from its female counterparts is portrayed in films and will continue thus.

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EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN POP ART AND THE CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION IN AMERICA

Mansi Sheth, T.Y.B.A.

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Popular art, a reference to the everyday, banal aspect of modern-day goods produced on a large scale, and consumed by a large portion of the general population, was the art of 'what is popular'. Not merely a cheap imitation of reality, but much deeper. It sought to contemplate on the thought that gave birth to it - within a cultural and institutional framework. Pop Art was filled with images of consumer products, rendered in styles derived from advertisements or familiar images.

This article aims at exploring this link between pop art and the consumption culture post World War II as the art form reflective of the culture, as representing an ideology that no art form ever has, and as making a remark on the astounding effect of the sheer multiplicity through mass production that America was bombarded with along with its subsequent depiction of the equation of human beings with commodities. I will also highlight the contrasting projections of viewpoints of the British and the Americans in the post-war consumerist preoccupation through pop art - celebrative as well as, to an extent, critical of the boom in mass production.

There was a huge growth in the production of items such as bottles, cartons, aerosols, boxes in the fifties. To sell, the product not only had to be functional, it had to look attractive as well. Sealed plastic bags and catchy captions such as 'heat 'n' eat', 'ready in no time' were advertised on the television and in the supermarket. Of course, as different companies manufacturing the same product realised that their items had once again achieved homogeneity in terms of outer packaging, their advertisements had to promote their item as the most 'convenient and easy to use', 'family-friendly' and even 'new and improved'. Packaging also gained importance because of the feature of self-service that was introduced. The store clerk who assisted the consumer in picking out the right item gave way to regular employees whose main job was to either arrange the products or work at the cash counter, and therefore, advertisements and outer packaging were more significant now. One could argue that it was the packaging being sold, not the product.

The American Consumer Culture seen through the British lens:

The British, in the 1950s, watched her with awe mixed with envy. She was young, fresh, and above all, free. Free from conventional class barriers. Free to embrace the perpetual churning out of inventions, to be on the receiving end of mass production.

America was, in essence, the epitome of youth. American modernism manifested itself in every aspect of cultural life: from architecture and art to music and theatre; from the Brooklyn Bridge to jazz and Broadway. The British artists admired the growing consumerism as optimism post World War II in America. A group of artists, that sought to call itself 'The Independent Group' (IG) celebrated material culture. Eduardo Paolozzi was one of the members of this group which was the forerunner of pop art.

I Am A Rich Man's Plaything (1947) by Eduardo Paolozzi, is one of the earliest examples of pop art illustrations. Credit has been given to this work for containing in it the origin of the term 'pop art', although critics and historians also regard Richard Hamilton's *Just What is it That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* to have given birth to the term.

Pop art marks the end of hypocrisy. It celebrates commercial success, unlike several who condemn materialistic behaviour while engaging in materialistic consumerism at the same time. It does not condemn this new world of objects and their consumption, but explores it by entering it. Pop art is the first to acknowledge its own subject as an object of consumption.

It is this rejection of hypocrisy that Paolozzi projects through his illustration, as the idea of romantic love, sex and patriotism are exaggeratedly shallow. Romantic love loses its seeming innocence and sincerity, the aura of mystery hanging about sex is shattered and there is an idea of being ideologically patriotic without being actively patriotic as an individual. The idea of love, sex and patriotism are commoditised as they are brought to the same level as a fizzy - drink bottle by sharing the same space with it. The artist shows us a world entirely comprising images. A world preoccupied with sex and the purchase of products.

An American Expression of a Consumption-Dominated Society

"What's great about this country is that America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest. You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola, and you know that the President drinks Coca-Cola, Liz Taylor drinks Coca-Cola, and just think, you can drink Coca-Cola, too. A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking. All the cokes are the same and all the cokes are good. Liz Taylor knows it, the President knows it,

the bum knows it, and you know it." (Andy Warhol)

Pop art may have had its roots in Britain, but soon became America's form of expression. One fundamental difference between the British and American interpretations is that while the former looked through and painted in rosy hues, the latter's style was more belligerent and blunt. While the British, still staggering in the aftermath of the second world war, could only look up to the vibrant young country that could afford to spend and consume, the Americans, being constantly plagued by the sheer multiplicity of images of mass production, saw things a little differently.

Of all the American artists, none knew the way in which the mass culture operated and recognised the potency of illustrations, of the visual arts as well as Andy Warhol did. His name being synonymous with pop art, Warhol has very astutely, proven that seemingly mundane objects can be turned in celebrities, be popularized, and celebrities can be turned into objects. Aptly naming his studio 'the Factory', he has insinuated that his work does not comprise originals, but assembly-line products created by several anonymous people. His painting of the coca-cola bottles manage to create a soar in the price of the drink, and his painting of the multiple Elizabeth Taylors was sold for $100 million, the highest price for a Warhol. His reflection on the commoditisation of people and mass production (depicted by multiple images of the same person) ironically become a product for consumption itself. It is interesting to note how both the illustrations below, of the coke bottles and the Marilyn Monroe diptych are presented in the same light - as flat, multiple images - this emphasis on repetition and the sameness of two different objects of art brings the object and the person to the same plane. The object achieves fame and the celebrity, usually a sex symbol (Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Elizabeth Taylor), is reduced to a commodity, stripped of its personality and identity. Warhol managed to capture most of Monroe's life as well as death in one illustration of his – her being reduced to an object having no human value, but something to be purchased.

Another perspective Warhol shed light on was the easy availability of products as well as images. Walter Benjamin recognised Pop art as being democratic in itself. The fact that now, with mechanical reproduction, even a work of high art which only the elite could afford to access was made available to all, was applauded by him. In *The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, he scrutinises the destruction of the 'aura' of the piece of art, thanks to mass production. He asserts that in shedding its originality and all that it stood for, it loses its 'false importance'. Benjamin (1936) advocates the stripping away of meaning from the subject, saying that "For the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual."

An Art Dominated by the Superficiality of a Consumption – Absorbed Culture?

For Baudrillard, pop art reproduces in image form the preoccupations of a postmodern society. He asserts, "Whereas all art up to Pop was based on a vision of the world 'in depth', Pop on the contrary claims to be homogeneous with their industrial and serial production and so with the artificial, fabricated character of the whole environment, homogeneous with this immanent order of signs: homogeneous with their industrial and serial production and so with the artificial, fabricated character of the whole environment, homogeneous with the all-over saturation and at the same time with the culturalised abstraction of this new order of things." (Kellner, 1994:1) He dismisses the notion of pop art as 'spontaneous realism', i.e. simply the assembling together in art form of what one sees. To him, it signifies the end of perspective, the end of the subversion of the world, of malediction of art. If an overwhelming fascination for consumption is the dominating culture, then pop artists will inevitably follow their own logic. If the society is so wrapped up in this obsession and has precluded any sort of reflection or critical thinking on itself, the contemporary art form will obviously be oblivious to reality. "Indeed, this is why Pop artists paint objects according to their real appearance, since it is only *thus, as ready-made signs, 'fresh from the assembly line' that they function mythologically*." (Redhead, 2008: 17)

Jean-François Lyotard contends that in such a postmodern culture, the truth will no longer be questioned. The pertinent questions to ask then, will be, "Of what use is it?", "How much is it worth?", and "Who will buy it?" Popular culture in the postmodern era is one of 'anything goes', where money is the significant factor rather than taste, going against the Arnoldian notion of culture as 'the best that has been thought and said.'

Strinati, in accordance with Baudrillard, argues that increasingly, the signs and images are being consumed for the purpose of consuming the signs and images, and not for what they stand for, thus raising the question: how does one define art from popular culture? Warhol's Thirty Are Better Than One, a multi-image print of the Mona Lisa, demonstrates the effortlessness of tearing down the veil of mystery, the aura of suspense and discovery by making it so easily reproducible. Are we today so consumed by the desire to consume, that nothing is left for reflection?

Conclusion

Pop art epitomises the American way of life beginning in the fifties. While the British longed for the ability to live the American dream, the Americans were living it. Lawrence Alloway, a critic credited for having coined the term 'pop art', says, "We felt none of the dislike of commercial culture standard among most intellectuals, but

accepted it as a fact, discussed it in detail, and consumed it enthusiastically."(Schmahmann)

Pop art does add a perspective by rejecting hypocritical assertions of several who pretend to condemn the new fondness for consumption, while being ardent consumers themselves. The form also offers a critique on the newly-moulded mindset of a society ensnared in a craving to purchase, acquire and consume. It comments on their subsequent dehumanisation, thus melting the boundary between consumer and product. The question one must ask oneself then, is this: Just like the utter profusion of goods produced on a large scale, has the individual also become merely one among many, a commodity among the hundreds of others stacked in the same pile, easy replaceable and reproducible?

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THE EGYPT REVOLUTION AND THE CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION.

Sanjana Kumari, F.Y.B.A.

The tyranny of thirty years of despotic rule ended on February 11th when Hosni Mubarak stepped down embarking a new chapter in the Arab Spring. The Tahrir Square, a symbol of victory of the Egyptians, resonating the despair and hope of Egyptians amongst celebrations welcoming a new era of democracy which was blatantly suppressed by the nasty dictatorial regime of Mubarak. Extreme regulation of media, opposition to formation of public associations and political pressure groups was consequential of structuring a society with heavily centralized power. The virtual protest started when Khaled Sayeed, a commoner, became a victim of a conspiracy hatched by Mubarak and the military to bury the protest before it could exacerbate the turmoil, ultimately resulting in the death of Sayeed. The tape of the brutal murder by Mubarak's men was leaked by a news channel, making the revolt acquire an unprecedented support among the Egyptians distressed with rampant corruption, growing inequality and persistent suppression of the basic fundamental rights of the citizens. What followed was a protest Facebook page-'We all are Khaled Sayeed' by Wael Ghoniem. Anonymity of Egyptians on this platform suited the nature of revolt. By anonymous contributions to a Facebook page people began to realize the strength in 'virtual unity' and kept ascending towards their goal, finally compelling Mubarak to relent. This revolution organized by Weal Goniem via Facebook achieved success in digitizing the revolution and capturing the wave of emotional insecurity of the masses. The integral opportunity that the IT services in Egypt offered instilled a belief that 'technology only empowers'.

The revolution broke psychological barriers of fear and as people marched in sublime audacity against the Mubarak regime voicing 'Down Down with Mubarak' whilst expressing their desire for their 'Right to Speech', 'Right to Equality' asserting their demand for a democratic state and immediate subversion of dictatorship in the country. Incidences of clandestine murders and brutal atrocities on people who opposed the nasty regime were presented as a euphemistic example for the crowd to control such actions in future, but did not deter the spirit of the Egyptians who were determined that it was now or never.

Democracy can be as brutal if not allowed to flourish in a coherent structure. The same fate awaited the Egyptians. Months of unrest and violent protests followed with Egyptians demanding free and fair elections in a nation now ruled by the military regime. The desire for democracy has proven to be a double edged sword. It is not something that can be consumed with immediate after effects, but needs to be carefully bred to make it prosperous and egalitarian. The revolution has brought in a desire to integrate itself with the world using the weapon of democracy. This is also being exploited by brands such as Vodafone, Google and so on who are venturing to give Egyptians an identity on the global platform. 27% of world's youth resides in Middle-East; hence it has become a gravitating market for brands to connect with rebellious youth. Nielsen, a market research firm through its Reach and Read initiative is tracking the psychology of Egyptians post revolution. Every brand wants to resonate with the struggle and connect themselves with the rebellious Egyptians. Consumption patterns then undergo changes in new found freedom from a dictated rule.

The Egyptian revolution, with the euphoric energy in its protests and conviction in its desires, has reaffirmed the need to subvert dictatorship inspite of better economic conditions; challenging functionalist's belief that consumption is the root goal for survival and conflicts constitutes a minor part of it. In contemporary societies, unequal consumption patterns have triggered a need for welfare measures and equality amidst economic prosperity enjoyed by a handful.

According to Marx, the proletariat believed that exploitation was a consequence of their ill fate and this fatalist attitude became a barrier that stopped them from dissenting from this condition. But, in contemporary society, in spite of class consciousness, the absence of a platform to express discontentment and the fear evoked by the tyrannical ruler forces the masses to relent to his authority. This is evident from the 'Corporatocracy' rampant in developing nations when developed nations exploit the oil rich nations by taking credit on the pretence of development from international banks, then build infrastructure without creating employment. The consequence is that the countries now indebted are rapaciously exploited for their oil reserves at bargained prices. Forty-four percent or 37 million people in Egypt live on less than \$2 per day. The top 20 percent of the population receives 41 percent of national income, whereas the remaining 80 percent receives 59 percent. (Grammy, 2011: 1) The statistics show that corporatocracy smothers trickle-down effect in economy, thus resulting in gross income inequality.

It's said that no disposition can be expressed better than the medium of art. In the same vein the Egyptian revolution has sparked the dissemination of expressions through art

forms, thus leading to a new culture of consumption with respect to art, as evidenced by FREE FROM FEAR, an international art institution which promotes participation of victims of extreme dictatorship. A Nation has its culture of consumption based on its economic, social and political spheres, thus, in the same vein, the culture of consumption of the people of Egypt will demand diversity in all its aspects, from commodities to art and profession, because, a bird desires to fly higher and cherish the sky when it is released from the prison after years of struggle, in spite of constraints.

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SERIAL WIVES AND CID OFFICERS
CONSUMING INDIAN TELEVISION SERIALS.

Jennifer Spencer, F.Y.B.A.

In the age of the technological revolution, new gadgets are introduced everyday and are becoming an integral part of the global culture. As a technological innovation, the television has sustained itself to become not only an important symbol of the material culture of our times, but also a driver for modifying and enhancing the non-material culture of today's world. India was first introduced to the 'television culture' in 1959 which today has become an essential part of people's everyday lives and social interactions. Indian television today is mainly known for its daily sagas and reality shows. This paper seeks to explain the effects of consumption of today's Indian television serials on its population.

Indian television serials are a reflection of people's daily lives. This statement is open to all sorts of pot shots. The characters in the serials seem to sink deeper into the quagmire of family politics and other assorted crises with each passing episode. Unlike these characters who face a new set of problems every fortnight and are perpetually on the horns of a dilemma, we are relatively unburdened, with such problems troubling us less frequently, if ever. Nevertheless, by putting forth this argument one is able to answer the most fundamental question of why television serials are so popular in India. The characters are complex creations whose lives are deliberately riddled with all types of troubles so that each viewer relates to one or the other aspect of the character and his/her life. Though the serials, their content, character, emotions, situations appear to be real, they are not. This is hyper reality wherein the distinction between the real and the imaginary implodes. Serials move from being mere representations of reality to the simulacra or illusion of life, representing something 'better than the real'. Television serials, then, are classified as escapist – something which may lead viewers to avoid reality and become apathetic. Hyper reality in television serials also leads people to believe that what they see is or should be the 'real life'. Role performance in mass media is a forged unreality that implies the realness of everyday performance. Commonly portrayed performances such as those of race, caste, and gender, normalize those modes of behaviour and train the audiences to take on, improve and master those performative identities, thus replicating the simulacra. Sociologists like Umberto Eco and Jean Baudrillard have noted that this simulacrum not only produces a 'constructed illusion' or 'prepared reality' but also creates a demand for it among the masses. Look at the construction of the ideal Indian wife which comes across in most serials. She is pliant like rubber and chinless like

Rahul Gandhi. She is at the bidding of her husband and his family, occasionally putting up token resistance for courtesy's sake. Maybe this supine wife does not exist, but this constructed illusion is much in demand among the selfish and insensitive people who require a doormat for their family to be complete.

Television serials and entire channels are often made for a particular class audience or a certain age group keeping in mind their ideologies. But very often, this leads to sections of the society being misrepresented or stereotyped. Class-based viewership tends to perpetuate entrenched fissures in society and instead of transcending them, pushes people into making sweeping generalizations about a particular community, class or section of the population. The viewers, then, alter their behaviour towards and interaction with them in their daily lives. The section-based serials do, however, perform at least one positive function: creating a certain level of awareness. An unaware urban dweller living in the rosy world of city lights or even the aware one, bemoaning the poor condition of roads, is socialized into a new world- the rural world – when he sees the rustic family dramas made on oppression of women and so on. Likewise, a rural village or small town-dweller might be surprised, awed, lured, or repelled by the 'exciting' life of urban areas portrayed in many serials. In fact, exposure to different life worlds and practices via the media may result in the viewer experiencing a virtual culture shock.

Television serials also play a very important role in reinforcing values of a particular culture or even changing them. When an eight-year-old listens keenly to Lord Krishna on TV, teaching the values of truth and karma, he is socialized into the "Indian" culture, tradition, and value system. On the other hand, if he watches serials where the actors use foul language and engage in sexually explicit behaviour, he is socialized into the so-called 'modern' culture. The impact of Westernisation in India has led to cultural invasion; Western behaviour and styles of life, food and dress are portrayed in serials as if they were always a part of the Indian culture. Westernisation extends to the story-lines for the said serials. Never before was gay love or a vampire drama shown on Indian TV. These reflect a new global culture that has emerged, and thus TV becomes a medium for propagating, transmitting and modifying culture.

Indian television serials are a complex and very often confusing mix of ideas when it comes to portrayal of

the Indian woman. Certain notions of feminism are an integral part of our daily soaps and so is the depiction of the submissive pati-vrata wives. The phenomenological perspective becomes important here. Influence of serials and characters depends upon the viewer's own unique perspective and subjective interpretation. While on the hand, an ambitious woman in a serial may inspire the masses, on the other hand, she may antagonise the more orthodox viewers who find the idea of an independent woman running against their well-established ideals or norms. Interpretation of the portrayal of ideas on TV varies according to the viewer's experiences and his/her socialization. It also varies according to the type of viewer, George Gerbner, in his theory on the cultivation differential, typifies viewers into two broad categories: the light viewer (one who is less influenced by television given his access to other sources of information) and the heavy viewer (one who has no other source but television for information and is, subsequently, greatly influenced by it). Gerbner also speaks about the effect of 'resonance' which is the reinforcement of already-held beliefs or experiences after watching it on TV.

Serials have a profound impact on people's behavioural patterns. The characters of a show many act as the reference group for the viewer and help in anticipatory socialization. People are often influenced in choosing their vocations, or entering a particular field, by viewing its portrayal in the media. While the CID officers may not be the best crime-busters around, they are the only ones we've got. The show can and perhaps does inspire people to be a part of an efficient machinery to curb the bad elements of society.

There are dichotomous views on the impact of the media. On the one hand, George Gerbner, in his Cultivation Theory, states that the media initially influences the general beliefs about everyday life and at a later stage even changes specific attitudes towards issues and subjects. On the other hand, Dr Kuppuswamy (Nadkarni, 2007) through his studies on persuasive communication by the media states that there is an image in the minds of people that the media is very powerful. However, there is no basis for this image and the media cannot always be effectively used to bring about a change in people's attitude. Selective exposure and reinforcement of pre-dispositions, existence of group norms and opinion leadership, all deter the media from acting as an agent for change. Nevertheless, there is a need for the media to portray positive ideas like patriotism, truthfulness, compassion, respect, independence and self determination, for peace and stability in society.

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STEPHANIE MEYER – SELLING BAD APPLES?

CONSUMING LOVE, SEX, AND GENDER

Vivien D'Costa, S.Y.B.A

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When the book Twilight first came out in 2005, perhaps nobody anticipated that it would, among certain sections of the population called 'Twihards', become the new rock 'n' roll. The book's overwhelming success and popularity and its effects on a generation of readers poised for adulthood is a much-studied subject today. There are entire college level courses dedicated to it. What follows here is a brief attempt to describe the ways in which Twilight has changed modern perception of love, gender roles, and sex. [1]

Portrayal of gender and gender roles

Attributing certain traits to males and certain opposing ones to females is a part of gender recognition and differentiation. Much of pop culture relies heavily on gender stereotypes acquired by pre-teens and teenagers in such a manner. Illustrative of these gender stereotypes is Twilight where there appear to be well-demarcated roles for the male and female protagonists. The book, as is well known, is the complex and dramatic love story of Edward, a vampire who is eternally 17 and a shy, awkward girl named Bella. Edward, the vampire is, by all accounts, devastatingly handsome, brooding, intelligent, and complete with moral values that would impress anyone from the 18th century that he originally belongs to. He represents ideals of morality, traditional values, righteousness, and sensitivity.

Bella, on the other hand is nowhere near as self-assured as her beau. Awkward and socially inept, she believes herself incapable of doing anything right and appears in constant need of rescuing, at first from her mother, then from her own clumsiness, and at the end of the book, from other more menacing vampires. In fact, this pattern of Bella's helplessness and lack of any worthwhile talents is a fairly recurring theme throughout the series (In New Moon, it is Jacob who saves her from her semi-suicidal tendencies; in Breaking Dawn, Edward and Jacob join forces to defend her from the Volturi — the political leaders among the vampires.)

One wonders, then, if Bella can do anything at all on her own. The book may employ her perspective but the author paints a disappointing picture of the heroine. Bella's zero-to-negative self confidence becomes painfully evident when, in New Moon, Edward leaves her. Though other critics interpret Bella's eventual emotional independence from Edward as a step forward in the portrayal of female romantic leads, one does wonder how many girls fancied themselves catatonic after being dumped by their boyfriends post-Twilight. Female passivity and male dominance is presented to be the natural order of things. A common phrase that this writer repeatedly came across in her research was, "I'm just a Bella, waiting for my Edward."

Edward is a complex and altogether intriguing mix of characters and personalities. Meyer borrows very little from the (up-until-now) vampire ideal of caveman-esque machismo. Edward boasts neither bulging muscles nor the combustible temper of "manly" men. He represents a cooler, more sensitive ideal that has captured female hearts in post-modern times. In fact, it wouldn't be an overstatement to say that much of Edward's character is probably what women love about their own sex: an instinctive caring nature, a need to nurture and protect, and perhaps, best of all, the need and ability to rescue. The writer wonders if women are finally overcoming the attraction towards angry and oppressive men and turning to gentle Edwardian substitutes.

However, this character is perhaps capable of doing more damage through manipulation and passive aggression. Consider this: it is very easy to dislike a hot-tempered alpha male, but when presented with a character that can do no wrong, one becomes convinced that the problem must be within oneself. Edward can do much in terms of creating feelings of inadequacy and shattering self-confidence.

The overwhelming positive response to the book and its characters raises the question of whether modern women truly want the kind of emancipation from males that feminists demand. Is the Twilight Saga not but a step back for the entire feminist movement? Do we not have an entire generation of teens and pre-teens worshipping the ideal of a girl who has no talents or abilities to speak of, no inclination to any kind of ambition beyond marrying just out of high school and becoming a mother at 19?

The Twilight generation seems to firmly believe that once true love is found, there is no need for education or a career. The books certainly enforce the idea that success plays a minimal role in the pursuit of happiness. It is implied that Bella, Edward, and the other vampires of the starring family are content to live off Carlisle's (Edward's adoptive father) money. In the final installment of the series, Bella

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distances herself from her family and friends devoting herself entirely to her husband and child.

Sex and Love

One of the most interesting things about Twilight is its emphasis on "adult" love. There is an evident shunning of the usual teenage principles of instant gratification and "living in the moment" and a nod to more grown up ideals of restraint and self-control.

Twilight love is more about heightening the anticipation through fleeting and forbidden touches and barely-there kisses. Edward's morals prevent him from lightly shrugging off concepts like sex-before-marriage the way Bella would like to. Though Meyer makes it appear in the books that Edward is afraid to submit to his lust because of his vampire strength and the possibility that he may rip his girlfriend to shreds in the heat of the moment, she has stated that her Mormon beliefs contribute to the progression of love through her novels. Edward and Bella, though as susceptible to the attractions of sex as one often finds individuals to be in real life, ultimately choose the 'morally correct path' of waiting until marriage.

So, to what extent does this affect the minds of young readers? Though certain groups of parents have openly admitted to using Twilight morals to encourage their kids to remain celibate until marriage, none of the Twilight fans that this writer spoke to chose to read much into that particular aspect of the book. How individual thought processes work in the interpretation of Meyer's ideal is interesting: some feel that since the all-important vampire strength does not form a part of the equation, they need not focus much on the restraint part of it, while others, with a view to emulating as much of the characters as possible, do choose to "save themselves" for marriage.

There is, evidently, a theme of eternal love and affection. Though Edward leaves Bella, with almost no explanation in the second book, she remains devoted to his memory, and the loss of her boyfriend affects her as much physically as psychologically. She is initially unable to think of anything but him. There is an underlying message that true love is meant to be enduring and everlasting and for one's love to be pure and true, one needs to put up with all of one's partner's inconsistencies and inadequacies. This seems to suggest that being in a good relationship equates, to a great extent, to being a victim.

More alarmingly, however, is how the author passes of stalking as Edward's show of affection for Bella in the first book. He follows her around without her knowledge and enters her bedroom during the nights claiming to seek pleasure from watching her sleep. What is portrayed as romantic in the books is actually very disturbing.

Romantic Ideals:

Edward embodies something that is, in most women's lives, a fantasy that is elusive in the real world. As a character in a book, he is perfect, or at least very close to perfect, and as just that - a character - he is harmless. But it is worth considering how such characters help individuals in their search for a mate. Perhaps the constant need to look for Edwardian traits in every potential husband or boyfriend raises women's standards to a height that average Joes cannot reach.

Twilight has given rise to an army of young women who are unforgiving of mistakes in their partners and quickly flit from one man to the next in search of someone as sensitive, charming, anti-social and attractive as the boy in their heads.

Men are not far behind. Though the Twilight books have enjoyed considerably less popularity with young men, one can theorize that a dependent, largely submissive, almost helplessly shy girl like Bella appeals to the alpha male in every man. Her chronic damsel-in-distress routine is enough to make any boy feel like the king of the world and her lack of ambition in terms of a career and social life (apart from her boyfriend) would make most men more secure in the relationship. When presented with such an ideal, it may be easy to see why it is often said that men feel threatened by successful, independent, single women.

The Twilight books have perhaps had the most powerful and lasting impact on young minds since the Harry Potter books. They have given young people a new set of ideals and questioned everything that liberal society and feminists have taught us over the years. Though the effects may not be as strong as suggested here, we certainly have on our hands an exceptionally large number of individuals whose lives may be directly or indirectly altered by one little book.

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GLITZY BUSINESS

Gracy Perpetual Vaz, T.Y.B.A

The glitterati, the sparkle, the bling, the junk and the metal define jewellery beyond their appearance. Jewellery is not simply an object to adorn for a stellar appearance but has considerations beyond the realm of the ordinary. There is redefining of commodification, fetishism, social status, prestige and honor with the conspicuous consumption of jewellery. The commodification of jewellery brings jewellery to the fore in the analysis in the study of capitalist social relations. Marxian analysis suggests that commodities are not simply objects that fulfill needs, but that their seeming simple utility serves to mask the social value and their value in the market. It is this underlying relationship that makes for an interesting study. Jewellery is a form of expression. A reflection of an individual's persona, it is looked upon as an identity that reflects the many facets of a culture

Consumers and their objects communicate positions in the social world. One is esteemed in society proportional to one's wealth. The idea is that jewellery then acquires significance as a claim to one's position in the social class. Classes are in competition and jewellery is a type of weapon used in this competition. What is also interesting is the ways in which different classes use different kinds of jewellery to proclaim their status on the social ladder. In India, there are abundant occasions for not just ostentatious display of jewellery but also resonating one's social position-festivals, weddings, family occasions or just a simple family affair, the shimmer should not be amiss. The inherited jewellery has a distinctive cachet as compared to the ones that are personally purchased. It carries with it memories, sentiments and emotions making them an invaluable possession. The commodification of jewellery into brands attracts consumers by portraying idiosyncratic personalities – 'the woman in you', 'beautifully timeless', 'beautifully nocturnal'. Jewellery, thus becomes a language of signs, symbols and iconography that non-verbally communicate meanings about individuals and groups. It enables us to make ourselves understood with rapid comprehension by the onlooker. The person with whom a purchaser interacts affects the final purchase and this applies to any fashion dominated item from interior furnishings to jewellery. Likewise the purchase of fashionable clothes, fabrics, or accessories becomes a visual currency and speaks volumes silently. The tools of fashion provide the signs and symbolism that function as an information service for the role-set. People are so aware that others make judgments about them through their jewellery that many run up huge debts to appear to belong to a particular lifestyle.

Long before jewellery was seen as an object of status and wealth, it was simply worn by masses to accessorize and beautify them; from kings and queens of all times to local ordinary masses everyone wore jewellery. When status takes an upper hand, people start taking jewellery seriously as they viewed it as a means to construct an intelligible universe, they wanted to make and maintain social relationship through consumption. As competition came into the picture, jewels such as gold and silver became weapons to fight the war. People started possessing precious jewels to increase their status in society some would say that with changing times jewellery started taking a back step and other factors of consumption are coming into the forefront like consumption of cars, houses, and other such properties which now people give a lot of weight age too they are used to increase their status in society and among their fellow people, but goods are something that are involved in endless definition and re-definition of societies' status and it changes with changing tastes. But in contemporary times people look at jewellery as a means of owning capital. Thus, the consumption of gold as seen in the papers is that gold purchased in the world is about 50 % in jewellery compared to 40% in investment and 10% in industry and India is the world's largest single consumer of gold. India is a land of diverse cultures and religion and with all these diversity in religion and other spheres of our Indian society jewellery without a doubt plays a huge role in the lives of the people.

The commodification of jewellery has lent to it, another aspect of a complex conundrum of identities. This is reflected in the emergence of men's jewellery - from bracelets, rings, chains to solitaire earrings and cufflinks. This list extends beyond the usual to watches and other accessories becoming patent to the metrosexual men. However, with brands attaching significant importance to the overall appeal of the product, the idea of jewellery has changed tremendously with people not hesitating to indulge in artificial gold plated jewellery as is evident from the ever expanding demand for such jewellery. Thus, has jewellery become a social obligation or it is our perception of identifying jewellery with aspects of our social life that has transformed the significance of our changing demands of different kinds of jewellery? The fact remains that jewellery has always been a significant contributor to wealth and cultural identity, but the emergence of a global network of jewellery brands has made jewellery an essential accessorizing commodity.

Very little of such luxury that has been enjoyed by the elites of the past, is not available to the majority of workers today. "Commodification" is making things which were

not 'products' earlier products now through the creation of brands and material value. It is not the creation of any kind of new product, but merely of making extremely expensive products affordable to a much larger fraction of the population. Jewellery is one such commodity available to different classes in different forms with each having a pecuniary character.

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NEO-CONSUMPTION:
OF THE HUMAN CONNECTION AND AN OPEN-SOURCE FUTURE.

Indivar Jonnalagadda, T.Y.B.Sc.

There is a very old and famous story which says that God created Man in his likeness. No matter what the Ancients thought God was or looked like, I don't think they meant his physical appearance. Even so many millennia ago near the dawn of human civilization, humans were aware of their creative potential, God-like. One might even say that the idea of God is but an image of the Super-human.

Unfortunately history is not a process of accumulation of knowledge, it is a process of learning and forgetting and learning again and even millennia later, humans have not all realized their creative potential. Looking from a very pessimistic point of view one can even say we've regressed in our attempts to do so. This regression started in the 19th century; the industrial revolution and the resultant mass-production destroyed the previously predominant condition of scarcity of goods and ushered in an age of mass-consumption. The dichotomy of producer and consumer was strengthened and conspicuous consumption became rampant. This "Consumerism" has resulted in a shift away from values of community, spirituality, and integrity, and towards competition, materialism and disconnection.

What is the human connection? I would love to say empathy, love, friendship and other such happy ideas but what is prevalent among humans is strife for dominance. Moving up is the only way to go and the way to get there is by amassing wealth or capital in any form. Society today is an orgy of consumption to achieve this end. How this indulgence came to dominate us is not a question I will be dealing with, but another question that I think is very important, "Is there a way out?"

Alexander Woollcott said that all the good things in life are illegal, expensive or fattening. All three implying consumption. Most artists and intellectuals would testify that the greatest joy in life is creation or discovery. But herein lies the problem, the existence of the 'artist' and 'intellectual'. There is no evident mental, physical or spiritual power which separates them from other humans, it's just how they use the resources at hand, yet they become objects of veneration and everyone else accepts their roles as the consumers of ideas and art of the artists and intellectuals. Even at an open stage, the audience will far outnumber the performers or speakers. Paintings of artists long dead and more or less universally accepted as great, sell for millions of dollars and are shifted into private vaults! At the same time contemporary artists struggle to make ends meet, following to some extent the trend or the idea of an artist's life as we have seen it unfold all through history. Can we go from fellow consumers, filling in particular roles, to something else?

"Play is our only weapon. The idea is to aim for a society without intellectuals or artists, without audiences and performers, a society of creative participation where we come to realise that each of us is a beautiful, creative and intelligent being capable of awesome and magical things. And if these things are considered the exclusive domain of some, we must not be afraid to talk about the structural violence happening there. The scarcity economy keeps us scared and mediocre. passive. lazy. stupid. So afraid of sucking at life, we are paralysed into dumb conformity to specialised roles."[1]

Imagine a world where every person realizes their productive potential. Every human has the capacity to create beauty. Can't the world be reconceived in this light? Where society consists of creative individuals and our relations are defined by their exchange and not just in the form of buying and selling, our idea of exchange has narrowed down to this "buy-sell" mechanism. Market economies are prevalent but there is nothing natural or inevitable about them, we just take them for granted. Consumption needs to be revolutionised, replace the market economy with a hybrid economy, one with elements of market and gift economies and something altogether new. Where information is truly free and ideas and art are exchanged not solely for consumption but a constant regeneration or evolution. Where the consumer is assumed to be not only rational, but also intuitive. Where countless amounts of time and money are not wasted on enforcement of copyrights but where individuals are free to build upon and incorporate ideas without having to pay the supposed "inventor" vast amounts of money.

What I have said may sound like optimistic-futurist-utopian novels, but the revolution has begun and it is driven by two words 'Open source'. "The open-source model includes the concept of concurrent yet different agendas and differing approaches in production, in contrast with more centralized models of development such as those typically used in commercial software companies. A main principle and practice of open-source software development is peer production by bartering and collaboration, with the end-

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2. Pillai, Chandrajit, Ex-Xavierite

product, source-material, "blueprints," and documentation available at no cost to the public."(Raymond, 2000) According to Ilkka Tuomi (2002), key uses of a product are often unintended uses invented by user communities that reinterpret and reinvent the meaning of emerging technological opportunities. The existence of such user innovation is a core part of the argument against the Linear Innovation Model i.e. innovation comes from research and development, is then marketed and 'diffuses' to end-users. Instead innovation is a non-linear process involving innovations at all stages. The open source movement has gained great momentum in the past few years, open source philosophy has always been part of human society in terms of food recipes and how they have been passed on, but even today it is spreading from the information technology industry to all types of other industries, even pharmaceuticals which critics had said would not be feasible.

The open-source movement epitomises the revolution I spoke of earlier. It takes on aspects of market and gift economies. It is constantly challenging prevalent production methodologies. It is even trying to bring about social change with instruments like Wikiversity and other projects of the WikiMedia Foundation and WikiLeaks. Most importantly consumption of an open-source product implies innovation, they are produced not only with the intention of being utilised in their existing form but the consumers are encouraged to build upon it, it is a neo-consumption. It is a true Rhizome, which Deleuze and Guattari (1980) spoke about. Rhizomes oppose the idea that knowledge must grow in a tree structure from previously accepted ideas. New thinking need not follow established patterns. A rhizome is a root-structure which is characterised by four principles which are, connectedness and heterogeneity (i.e. any point on the Rhizome is connected to every other point), multiplicity and the principle of "asignifying rupture" (it means that a rhizome may be broken, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines).

Open-source is not easily applicable to fields where a lot of capital is required at the research and development (R&D) stage; for example if a pharmaceutical company develops a formula for a drug and makes the formula known another company could modify the formula slightly and sell it at a competitive price, but the former company would have to incur the cost of R&D. Open-source methods are most suited to information technology because replication of information is virtually costless. While there are some exceptions, a lot of companies deem open-source methodology as unfeasible; I believe it is not unfeasible but only incompatible with their beliefs and motives. A universal paradigm shift is impossible, however, the open-source revolution is in full swing and although today open-source products are more or less restricted to computers and not accessible to everyone, it is expanding into other fields. It will be interesting to see how open-source methodologies are applied to fields outside information technology and how effective they are. As a result of this revolution human society might just end up becoming one of sharing, symbiosis, innovation, creation and a sort of neo-consumption. Its nature and consequences might just provide us with a way to come closer to realizing the super-human.

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