

Late Capitalism, Consumerism and Individualism in Martin Amis's *Money: A Suicidal Note*

Abstract

*Martin Amis's novel Money: A Suicidal Note (1984) was published in crucial period when England was experiencing the socio-economic changes. In this novel Amis presents a story of an English man who is very passionate about money and American life style. Amis's employs a character named John Self who is passionate for America and materialistic luxury there but finally he returns his homeland with the realization that thirst for money destroys everything. In this response, this research paper tries to analyze novel from the perspective of Fredrick Jameson's notion of Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. The researcher attempts to show how late capitalistic value of consumption leads people towards selfish and individualistic world. Amis in his novel presents the consequences of late capitalistic over emphasis on consumption of goods which alienates people from fellow human beings and makes them self centered individuals. This research is also based on Adorno and Horkheimer's idea of Mass Deception and argues that people in late capitalistic world always try to deceive others as John Self does in this novel but it is not easy as it used to be. Jameson's theorization of The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism and Adorno and Horkheimer's notion of Mass Deception as its theoretical tool, the researcher concludes that the novel Money: A Suicidal Note, is Amis's neo-Marxist critic on late-capitalistic values of consumerism which leads to individualist world.*

Keywords: Late Capitalism, Consumerism, Individualism, Materialistic, alienation Americanization.

This research paper examines the interconnectedness between late capitalism, consumerism and individualism in Martin Amis's novel *Money: A Suicidal Note*. It

focuses on the values of late capitalistic American life where self-centered characters of Amis' novel are fascinated towards money and materialistic prosperity. The researcher claims that late capitalism is America-led value that puts high emphasis upon consumerist culture and dismisses the familial and social values. The argument of this research paper is based on the theoretical insight of Fredric Jameson's notion of late capitalism that argues that late capitalistic society is cultural dominant. According to Jameson realism, modernism, and postmodernism or late capitalism are the three stages of cultural periodization. Among these three stages this era is described as the "Third Machine Age." This era of the production of electronic and nuclear devices is cultural dominant, depthless and there is waning of effects.

The term late capitalism was introduced by Werner Sombart in 1902. Ernest Mandel was the critic who popularized this term with his PhD dissertation in 1972. He defines late capitalism as the age of more industrialization, mechanization, commodification and fluidities of capital. Later, Fredric Jameson theorizes this term in his book *Post-modernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1984). According to Jameson, specially, after the Second World War late –capitalism began as he writes: "The economic preparation of post modernism or late capitalism began in the late 1950s, after the war time shortages of consumer goods and spare parts had been made up, and new products and new technologies (not least those of the media) could be pioneered" (xx).

Late-capitalism or postmodernism is a cultural and ideological mood that specially began after the World War II. During this time the whole western society experienced change in art, literature, philosophy, culture and so on. Because of the rise of different movements like feminism, post-colonialism and Derrida's idea of deconstruction pre-existing idea of truth and center hold no power in late capitalist

period. As the shift of the power, from of England to America: America rose as economically and politically powerful country of new era called late capitalism: “American postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror” (Jameson 5).

Jameson remarks that America has been dominating the late capitalistic world because this is the age of information, technology, military and nuclear production. Unlike in capitalism, in late capitalism producers create market themselves. Producers take the help of information technology to advertise their production and stimulate people for high consumption of the products available in the market. Due to the huge amount of production, producers pay their attention toward the need and demand of their customers. Goods are produced according to the market’s demand. So they search for better market where they can sell their goods in large amount. Different countries import the production from various corners of the world; therefore Jameson opines that people in late-capitalism cannot keep themselves away from being influenced. Because of the emphasis on money economy, technology, and consumerist culture people of late capitalistic period have been alienated and self-centered. In the very context Martin Amis shows with the consumerism and individualism of late capitalist society.

Martin Amis is an English writer who has written more than fourteen books. *Money*, *London Fields*, *Time’s Arrow* and *The Information* are widely acclaimed novels of Martin Amis. Most of his novels are about modern human fortune and circumstances. His plots have suspense, dark comedy and thrillers as he once interviewed with *Paris Review*: “Plots really matter only in thrillers. In mainstream

writing the plot is-what is it? A hook? The reader is going to wonder how things turn out? In this respect, *Money* was much more difficult to write than *London Fields* because it is essentially a plotless novel” (Amis 151). As a writer of twenty-first century and an atheist, most of the characters in his novel are victims of capitalism, holocaust and alienation in modern period. The researcher claims that Martin Amis’s *Money* reflects the consumerist culture and individualism of late capitalistic American society.

The novel *Money: A Suicidal Note* (1984) is the fifth novel by Amis. As Amis said it is plotless story of twentieth century addict John Self, “I am not allergic to twentieth century, I am addicted to the twentieth century” (Amis 91). This novel is about hurdles of the way to success and fall of a film director whose dream is to earn more money by directing a film, either *Good Money* or *Bad Money*. John Self is a young man known by few people as a director in England. He disparately wishes to move to his dream land America and produce a film to earn money. The novel is set partly in England and most of the events take place in American city, New York. Self arrives in America with lots of beautiful dreams but America and people of this land surprise him. Other characters of this novel also share John Self’s dream of money and possession of branded materials. It seems like there is competition of achievements between characters of this novel. More than anything, they choose money and branded goods in their life. They give new meaning to family, love and happiness which is profit oriented. So the novel portrays how humanitarian values are being buried under the heap of money and mass production. This novel also sheds light on how self-centered people are commodifying fellow human beings.

Since the publication of *Money: A Suicidal Note*, it has been responded in various age by different critics and writers. John Begley, in his review “Satirizing the

Carnival of Post-Modern Capitalism: The Transatlantic and Dialogic Structure of Martin Amis' *Money* “focuses upon carnivalesque presentation of the characters, irony, experimental narratives, transatlantic, consumer democracy etc. Begley also pays attention toward dramatic irony of the novel. He argues that “*Money* remains a satire of unstable cultural dichotomies bearing witness to the birth of an “Anglo-American” Society” (2). In the same way, Silva Camponon in her journal article: “Through the Looking Glass: America in Martin Amis' *Money: A Suicidal Note*” analyses the three main aspects of the novel; psychological contradiction of characters, his socio-cultural context and murderous impulses of the narrative act itself as she states:

However, a detailed reading of America in *Money* suggests some peculiar features which can only be ascribed how John Self, in common with all of Amis's protagonists, tries to survive three different forces acting on him: his inner contradictions, murderous impulses of the narrative act itself. This triple struggle is represented in Amis' narrative through different recurring metaphors. (10)

In the aforementioned reviews, Componon gives indirect hint to the context of late-capitalism and psychological state of people in this period. Begley gives space to talk about consumerism which is a basic feature of late-capitalism. This research will focus on how late-capitalism muddles human love, happiness and relation. This paper clearly shows the departure from the concept of Camponon and it contains few contextual and subjective similarities with Begley's review. This research is more specific in the context of late capitalism, consumerism, dehumanization and individuality.

Amis' novel *Money: A Suicidal Note* is a story of money and its conspiracy. In

late capitalistic society people come to think that money can buy everything including children, parents, friends, love, happiness and peace. Most of the characters of this novel have the same illusion of money. They are portrayed as shapeless, half constructed and with hybrid identities. Their perception is limited. Mediated, blinded, they are unable to understand what surrounds them and what regulates them. They are yes-men and sycophants. They are in confusion regarding their true identity and relationships as John Self does not know his real father and his girlfriend's complicated relationship but all of them are very sure on the matter of money: "As he shadowboxed he loosely babbled of fraud and betrayal, redundancy, eviction. It's my money and I want it now!" the city is full of these guys, these guys and dolls who bawl holler and weep about bad luck all the hours there are" (Amis 15).

America and England are portrayed as countries of opposite features. America is land of prosperity, "Heat, money, sex and fever-this is New York" (Amis 49), whereas England is presented as slugging in modernity as Self says: "London is an old man with bad breath (85). London has jet-lag. London has cultural shock. It's doing everything the wrong way round at wrong time" (150). Amis does not let us know how Self and other English characters became influenced by American way of earning but when we go through the economic policy and prominent role of media technology of twentieth century America that has attracted not only Britishers but other Europeans and people from different countries of different continents. Under the topic of "Consuming the American Century", Emily S. Rosenberg argues that late twentieth century American products and way of life had deep impact on the people, "advertisers began to voice a refrain that soon became a hallmark of their profession: the prosperity and stability of the nation (and then of the world) depended upon their skill in stimulating ever higher levels of purchasing and consuming and therefore of

jobs and prosperity. “Buy More, Prosper More” became their unofficial motto” (42-43). Americans were best consumers in John Self’s mind so he moved there to sell his movie and become prosperous.

John Self arrives to his dream land America to get greater success: “I have always understood that America is the land of opportunity. Vigorously mongrel America is land with success in its ozone, a new world for the go-getters and new-bromers, a land where fortune grins and makes the triple-ring sign...Yeah” (Amis 207). John Self becomes best friend to Martina Twain, though he has English girlfriend. Self’s business partner and best pal, Fieldings Goodney promises his best company and investment for Self’s film who stabs back to Self at last. All of them have money thirst. Selina Street who has relation with other men too leaves Self but return back when she desperately needs money, comes to America late but can survive in America more easily than Self does because she acts rightly according to the time. Lorne Guyland is an aging actor obsessed with his looks, appearance and virility and has a fear of aging. Selfish and arrogant, he changes the script making his character the most important and masculine, demands all kinds of sex scenes. Spunk Davis is completely an opposite character. He does not drink alcohol, does not smoke, sniff, gamble, eat junk, and never has sex. He spends his time on charity work, meditation and mind control and is completely consumed by religion.

*Money: A Suicidal Note* is all about blind followers of money and luxurious life who consume every junk that is available, including junk food, expensive materials, drug, and alcohol and pornographic materials. There is death of intellectuality in this novel. There are beauty parlors and boutiques at the place where there used to be bookshops. Self speaks, “I hate people who are beneficiaries of a university education. I hate people with degree, O-levels, eleven-pluses, Iowa Tests,

shorthand diplomas. And you hate me, don't you? Yes you do. Because I'm new kind, the kind who has money but can never used it for anything but ugliness" (Amis 58). He is the person who always searches for the way to earn money fast, so he makes the commercials for smoking, drinking, junk food and nude magazines. He does not understand *Othello* and Orwell's books. He cannot read even few pages of the book, and does not understand meanings there. Martina Twain provides him different books but he sticks at the same page for several days. Therefore, he hates the intellectual person. According to Begley, "Indeed, the preeminence of money encourages his active hostility toward learning and the educated (Alec, Doris Arthur, Amis) for their failure to acknowledge the dissolution of their elite status and the assimilation of their cultural artifacts within consumer capitalism" (10).

Self's American life, including Fieldings Goodney and Selina is full of junk, porn, alcohol and hallucination. John Self's mind is full of money and has painful body, consumes junk and fast foods in expensive places. His teeth are decayed and he has regular gum pain. He has painful back. He is physically weak who cannot stand in tennis court for few minutes. Feldings and Self play tennis: "The ball came screaming over the tape, skipped a beat, regathered its tilt and momentum-and punched me in the face. I topped over backwards and my racket fell with a clatter. For several shocked I lay there like an old dog, an old dog that wants its old belly stroked" (33). While talking about porn, he earns by producing semi-nude commercials, full of junk and porn. He reads porn magazines and watches porn movies as he says: "Besides, pornography is habit-forming, you know. Oh yes it is. I am a pornography addict, for instance, with a three-mag-a-week and at-least-one-movie habit to sustain" (Amis 38). He is addicted to alcohol, porn, brands, hand job, sex, machine and money. Addiction to all available things is what core of Late Capitalism, "Indeed consumption in the

social sense is very specifically the word for what we in fact do to reified products of this kind, that occupy our minds and float above that deeper nihilistic void left in our being by the inability to control our own destiny” (Jameson 317).

This research paper examines Martin Amis’s *Money: A Suicidal Note*, story of ambitious commercial director, focusing on the late-capitalism, materialistic orientation and the self-serving culture that alienated and disillusioned him. The characters are indirect victim of media and consumerist culture. Their wishes are designed by some companies and advertisements. Their dreams are junk and their struggle for success is in vain. There is chaos, disorder, bewilderment, indeterminacy in the time of late capitalism and consumer culture. Instead of moaning on mess of late capitalistic period, people of this age are following this all the disorder and chaos. For this purpose, this research paper critically analyses the issue of late-capitalism from the perspective of neo-Marxism.

Representing the various aspirations of those in *Money* includes an English model Vron, Barry Self’s fiancée. She is photographed for a low-quality nude magazine and it is something she is proud of. Porn is constructed as an “expanding and diversifying service industry, aggressively responsive to the fetishistic demands of the international market-place” (Begley 88). John Self and other characters in his film prioritize to nude and other vulgar scenes. Their film’s plot revolves around love affairs and fight scenes. With a few twist and turns of the plot, Amis is able to intertwine the late-capitalist thirst of money and addiction of money, materials, drug, porn and alcohol.

Late-capitalism is a broad term used to define the general features appeared in the economic, socio-political, philosophical and literary field especially after the Second World War. Fredric Jameson defines the late-capitalism as avatar of

capitalism but with lot of changes, antifoundationalism and nonessentialism, “the end of ideology, art, or social class; the "crisis" of Leninism, social democracy, or the welfare state, etc” (Jameson 1). The term has been used in the United States to refer to absurdities, crises, injustices and inequality created by modern business development. Therefore present era of late-capitalism is era of chaos, indeterminacy, fragmentation, heterogeneity and fragmentation. Jameson uses the postmodernism to indicate the term late-capitalism, the period of rapid economic, technological and social changes. Fredric Jameson in his book *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* argues that inversion in the preexisting ideas. According to him, there we can find tremendous change in the field of media and machines have been the inseparable part in human life:

The technology of contemporary society is therefore mesmerizing and fascinating not so much in its own right but because it seems to offer some privileged representational shorthand for grasping a network of power and control even more difficult for our minds and imaginations to grasp: the whole new decentered global network of the third stage of capital itself. (37-38)

Jameson, in the above excerpts, gives the general introduction of the present condition of late capitalism. According to him late capitalism is acceleration in the pace of our living.

People in this age seek short way for everything. World has become narrower because of the media and availability of things produced in different corner of the world. There is emergence of chaos, disorder, individuality and alienation in consumer culture. Those chaos, disorder, consumer culture and alienation are not the things to lament in the age of late-capitalism. Owning the expensive goods and living lonely life gives the meaning of success and freedom in this age. These facts are

portrayed by Martin Amis in *Money*. Self, including other characters have bitter relation with their near and dear ones but they never regret on those thing. Instead they blindly follow the trend of making money and luxury: “When I make all the money I am due to make and go off California for that well-earned body transplant I’ve promised myself” (Amis 18).

This is the age of reason, science and technology. People in this age enslaved themselves by their own inventions. They produce and sell the things in the market with the advertisement of improved features. People prove themselves with the help of scientific data and reason. Machines and other goods in this age are sold with the comparatively better features and quality but science is misused by people to create discourses too. This fact is addressed by another philosopher Jean Francois Lyotard also addresses the issue of technological monopoly in late capitalism. As he opines that bourgeois cannot hold their position as in capitalist period but monopoly of certain group and country cannot be easily avoided, “Yet that monopoly, like the rest of the private property system, cannot be expected to be reformed by however benign a technocratic elite, but can be challenged only by genuinely political (and not symbolic or protopolitical) action” (Lyotard xx). Here he pays his attention toward the advancement of technology in late-capitalism. According to him, technology is the main product of this period and group or nations who are related to the technology have monopoly in the market of late-capitalism. People this age cannot ignore such domination of machine rather they celebrate this. Lyotard takes modern science as the tool of establishing own philosophy by those technocrats:

Science has always been in conflict with narratives. Judged by the yardstick of science, the majority of them prove to be fables. But to the extent that science does not restrict itself to stating useful

regularities and seeks the truth, it is obliged to legitimate the rules of its own game. It then produces a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy. (Lyotard xxiii)

In the novel *Money*, there are descriptions of different advanced model of machines like cars and aeroplanes. John Self never think critically towards those machines. Instead he loves machine more than any human being. His car for him is superior to a good racing horse and greater than a creative poet. Because of over dependence upon machine, people act like a robot, which functions according to the direction but never thinks critically. This issue is addressed by Theodor Adorno, late-capitalism is materialization of human beings because of money value. He compares human beings of this age as the “flock of sheep without shepherd.” Human beings in late capitalism seem free and independent but in reality they feel continuous alarm of the sense of restriction and dependency on certain philosophy: “The widely lamented immaturity of the masses simply reflects the fact that they are now no more the autonomous masters of their lives than they ever were” (Adorno 116).

Among the broad dimensions of late capitalism, Amis’s *Money* addresses the late capitalist features of unspoken restriction in human life because of their avaricious nature and love for technology. Setting, characters and story in *Money: A Suicidal Note* present the major characteristics of late-capitalism. There we can observe the monopoly of technocrats and people have sordid characteristics. In the age of late-capitalism people are self-centered and alienated because of their obsession of capital and technology.

Jameson has uses the term late-capitalism and postmodernism interchangeably. In this sense capitalism and late-capitalism are not completely separate ideas. Few concepts of culture of capitalism are getting continued in late-

capitalism as Herbermas and Lyotard indicate. Herbermas opines that late-capitalism or post-modernism to be the incomplete project of modernism which was flourished in the age of Enlightenment. Therefore, the term of late-capitalism is a broad term which includes multiplicity, distorted ideology, and meaninglessness. Issues related to society, economy, politics, philosophy, arts, and literature are the fields of late-capitalistic study. But this research paper is limited to the analysis of the late-capitalist culture of consumption and estrangement among people.

This research paper has been divided into three sections, *Money: A Suicidal Note*, Late-Capitalism and American Society is the general introduction of the whole study. Second section is late-capitalist consciousness and consumer culture in *Money: A Suicidal Note*. In this last part of this research paper, researcher analyses individualism of late-capitalism in *Money: A Suicidal Note*. It puts together all the findings of the research. It draws the conclusion from the analysis and findings of the preceding chapters and proves the claim of hypothesis.

Consumer culture is one of the significant features of late-capitalism. Due to the industrialization and flow of over production, produced things are advertised through the means of advance communication media:

It would seem essential to distinguish the emergent forms of a new commercial culture-beginning with advertisements and spreading on to formal packaging of all kinds, from products to buildings, and not excluding artistic commodities such as television shows (the "logo") and best-sellers and films-from the older kinds of folk and genuinely "popular" culture which flourished when the older social classes of a peasantry and an urban artisanat still existed and which, from the midnineteenth century on, has gradually been colonized and extinguished by commodification and the market system. (Jameson 63)

Consumer culture of late-capitalism is shown through the characters of this novel. Characters in *Money* consume almost everything available in the market and they are addicted to those things. They are addicted to machine, junk food, sex, porn movies and money. They celebrate consumer culture because “Indeed, consumption in the social sense is very specifically the word for what we in fact do to reified products of this kind that occupy our minds and float above that deeper nihilistic void left in our being by the inability to control our own destiny (Jameson 317).

Machine is main production of late -capitalism and addiction of many people. This is dominant, it has become impossible to live life without machine in this age. It is appropriate to recall the excitement of machinery in the moment of capital preceding our own, the exhilaration of futurism, most notably, and of Marinetti's celebration of the machine gun and the motorcar. These are still visible emblems, sculptural nodes of energy which give tangibility and figuration to the motive energies of that earlier moment of modernization” (Jameson, 36). People's problem in late-capitalist age is they love machine more than the human being. Main character of *Money*, John Self is passionate about motorcar. This is something he is proud of in his achievement: “The Fiasco, my pride and joy. (63) ...my Fiasco, like all the best rest horses, poets and chefs. You can't expect it to behave like any old Mistral or Alibi. I bought it last year for an enormous amount of money” (Amis 63). Fiasco has more value in Self's life more than anything, more than his girlfriend Selina, his other friends and more than his fathers. This symbolizes that the age of human domination and humanity has already ended because they do not have their own unique identity and love for fellow human. Brand of machines has become their introduction. It means materials or human produced objects replaced humans' value itself.

Machines have replaced human beings and unlimited addiction of late-

capitalism is associated with other materials too. Amis shows the lavishness of the people of this age through the clothes they wear and things they use. John Self and his girlfriend Selina Street only use branded things. Both of the characters are unaware of manipulation, universalization and legitimization of the idea of those products and consumption of them:

In different modes of production or concrete socioeconomic formations, the integrative function is predominantly exercised through different ideologies: magic and ritual, philosophy and morality, law and politics; although to a certain extent each of these different superstructural practices performs such a role in every class society. The reproduction and evolution of these integrative functions is achieved through instruction, education, culture and means of communication — but above all the predominant categories of thought peculiar to the class structure of every society. (Mandel 476)

They never care of how so-called brands got this value and power over millions of people living on this planet and they do not bother to critically think on those issues because their knowledge is the result of late-capitalist discourse. Instead they blindly follow the trend and they are proud of this. As Self puts a tie which is \$3,476.93 in its cost (189) and Selina uses expensive accessories.

Behind the blindness of characters regarding consumption of all the junk production, media plays a vital role to legitimize and universalize the culture of consumerism: “Under the private monopoly of culture tyranny does indeed “leave the body free and set to work directly on the soul. The ruler no longer says: ‘Either you do as I think or you die.’ He says: ‘You are free not to think as I do; your life, your property—all that you shall keep. But from this day on you will be a stranger among us” (Adorno and Horkheimer 105-6). In the age of capitalism, though people look free to

live and make choices they live in unspoken restriction in making choices. Producers universalize their idea related to limited production with the help of media and scientific reasons because this is the age of reasons. People become persuaded with the ideas supported by scientific facts but those facts are production of media. Facts are created. So people are condemned to choose those productions which is widely advertised and supported by different reasons. In capitalism goods used to be produced without proper market research but now a days producers produce the goods as market demand and those market demands are created by themselves with creations of new discourses. So people buy those goods which is famous through advertisement, fashion show etc. as Adorno and Horkheimer, if they do not consume those trendy goods they are regarded as outdated, rigid and out casted. They are unutterably compelled to buy the things available to them not to make their own choices.

Consumption of materials is the culture of this age. Consumption gives the socio-economic identity to the members to the group so they are grabbing everything available to them. While talking about culture related to the spirituality and sacred, these old believe have already extinct:

The deep underlying materiality has finally risen dripping and convulsive into the light of the; and it is clear that culture itself is one of those things whose fundamental materiality is now for us not merely evident but quite inescapable. This has, however also been a historical lesson: it is because culture has become material that we are now in the position to understand that it always was material, or materialistic, in its structures and function. (Jameson 67)

Jameson in above excerpt points out immense consumption of goods by people of this

age. And money is the major thing to have access to those materials. As they are celebrating consumer culture of this age, characters in novel consume junks. Junk does not mean only the food but it also refers to all the productions of this age which are unhealthy and unhygienic to body and mind. Through the characters of this novel *Money*, Amis presents today's addiction to junk. My clothes are made of monosodium glutamate and hexachlorophene. My food is made of polyester, rayon and lurex. My rug lotions contain vitamins ... I'm just junk" (265). Process of making fast money has made people to consume fast food as they have very less time for them to rest, eat and think. Characters in the novel do not think critically. They are blind followers of fashion and media. Among them, Self is devitalized individual. He has no vigor. He cannot play games and enthusiasm does not remain in him. He needs to drink to drive and lives in the environment of hallucination and paranoia.

People in this age live in hallucination of alcohol, drug and sexual appetite. Self every night visits expensive bars. Get drunk, dance with girls and fights. But his mind cannot clearly remember those incidents. Everything is like a blur image to him. Only his body feels the pain when he gets out of alcoholic intoxication. While talking about drugs, it merely indicates the chemical drug. It is used by Amis to represent the addiction of money to handjobs. Amis points that in the age of human alienation from the society, chemical drugs are useless. The way people live and behave in this age equivalent to the actual drug: "the time in which society could dissociate itself from the problematic compulsive behavior characteristic of a shadowy and marginalized drug culture is over. The notion of drug culture and addiction has infiltrated the entire consumer system to the extent that it functions more as the fabric of the world in which individuals are ensconced than as a fringe phenomenon" (Cohen 132).

In consumerist society everything is taken as the object of consumption. Even

the girls are presented as the things to consume. Human beings have lost their humanistic value. They are compared to the factory production as Self compares his girlfriend with expensive Fiasco. Both of them have same value in Self's life because both of them cost money: "I swear, that fucking Fiasco, it costs me more money than little Selina ever could" (Amis 261). Money can buy anything in this age, even the girls. Many women in this novel are being mobilized for money. Selina only follows Self when she financially suffers. Self unlimitedly wants to earn huge amount of money, not only to live a live with modern facilities but to buy girl's time to spend with him. Once he says: "That's why I need all this money. I've got all these chicks to support..." (Amis 42). It shows that girls are taken as the object of consumption. People who have money can afford girls and those who are poor try to earn the money and enjoy the same gratification.

Amis presents pornographic addiction of this time as a major addiction. John Self is pornographic addicted person "Besides, pornography is habit-forming, you know. Oh yes it is. I am a pornography addict, for instance, with a three-mag-a-week and at-least-one-movie habit to sustain" (Amis 38). Video-cassettes, wide range of nude magazines, prostitutes, Self is addicted to everything. When he is not in London with Selina, he goes to public houses, solo-bars, and when he is with her he admits he does not need it because she is the epitome of pornography. "I can't say I'm too much bothered now that pornography is on its way in a cab" (Amis 64). Porn is constructed as an "expanding and diversifying service industry, aggressively responsive to the fetishistic demands of the international market-place" (Begley 88). Because of the people like Self and Goodney, girls like Vron get the market to be sold.

Martin Amis carefully selects female characters in this novel to represent the contemporary society and female here. In this novel, even the girls are self motivated

to sell themselves in the market. They are ready to do anything to make the money:

Postmodernism is the consumption of sheer commodification as a process.

The "life-style" of the superstate therefore stands in relationship to Marx's

"fetishism" of commodities as the most advanced monotheisms to primitive

animisms or the most rudimentary idol worship; indeed, any sophisticated

theory of the postmodern ought to bear something of the same relationship to

Horkheimer and Adorno's old "Culture Industry" concept as MTV or fractal

ads bear to fifties television series. (Jameson x)

To make Selina Street ready for physical relation, John Self buys expensive gifts to her. Sometimes he shouts and sometimes speaks very politely just to make use Selina as his desire. Another female character in this novel is John is introduced to Vron, Barry's fiancée and his future stepmother who has fascination of being photographed for nude magazines. She desires to set her career in the field of pornography. When she meets John Self meet, she shows porn magazine with her nude picture in it and discusses about her career. Actually she is proud of being photographed in porn magazines. Barry does not have any objection to Vron and her profession as porn artist: "Vron, in her full majesty. The poetry of Vron's body gives a vision of true beauty. Pleasure is Vron's philosophy. Joy is her religion. Love is her art...Vron" (Amis 369). People who buy such magazine take the Vron's body part as some object for which they pay their money. She sells her love as some artistic material.

Not only the characters in the novel but Self's characters in the film have same characteristics. John Self and Fieldings Goodney use girls to make the money. Story of their film moves around girls. All the men in their film fight for a girl. Father and son have the physical relation with the same girl. And the climax of film is fight for a girl: "It's kind of climax, I said. You and Lorney, you're fighting over the girl. And

also the money” (Amis 140). By adding girls and fight Self thinks to make huge amount of money. *Good Money* does not contain any story that could give some life lesson but it is purely commercial product. Self and Goodney try to cheat their audience for money purpose. In Adorno and Horkheimer’s view this is “mass deception”: Works of art are ascetic and shameless; the culture industry is pornographic and prudish. It reduces love to romance. And, once reduced, much is permitted, even libertinage as a marketable specialty, purveyed by quota with the trade description "daring" (Adorno and Horkheimer 111). Therefore, consumerism culture works to weaken human relation. People dedicate themselves for commodities without the sense of responsibility for fellow human beings.

Late capitalism, consumerism and individualism are interrelated.

Individualism is an idea, in which thought and concept of each individual is prioritized rather than communal and shared responsibility. Individualism is the ethos which emphasizes the autonomy of the individual as against the community or social group. Notion of self is important in the age of late capitalism because consumerism value helps to flourish the culture of individualism. Market is full of commodity and human being human beings take those things for granted, Monle Lee, Anurag Pant and Abbas Ali argue: “A consumerist society is defined as one directed largely by the accumulation and consumption of material goods The underlying connotation is that such consumerist societies are too much about themselves and not enough about others” (567). In this age materials become the best friend to human beings. As possession of materials has been the way of introducing themselves, rather than making harmonious relation with people, they concentrate on themselves for achievement of commodities and luxurious materials.

This novel *Money: A Suicidal Note* is a satire on late-capitalistic

individualistic culture that was slowly growing in England when the novel was published. During this age previous value on family, integrity in people was gradually being weak. To present this fact John Self says: "Cars are doubling while houses are halving. Houses divide, into two, into four, into sixteen. If a landlord or developer comes across a decent-sized room he turns it into a labyrinth, a Chinese puzzle" (Amis 57). In above mentioned lines, Amis presents the truth of families being divided but number of modern machines being double. People's thinking of freedom and independence caused disintegration between them. More than anything they concentrated to their own wishes and demands. Concept of freedom and independence broke the family and individual became the owner lifeless materials. John Self and people around him are the exemplary people of this age who have been selfish and greedy in the name of freedom and liberation.

John Self is an archetypal youth of late twentieth century England. He is an opportunist personality of England and Thatcherism has influenced him a lot. As a general advertisement producer, he saw better opportunity in New England as it was newly emerging world power in twentieth century. As the power shifted to America from England, people also chose the new land to make their life and prosperous.

England's socio-political situation worked a lot in his decision to move to America:

Meanwhile Reagan has floated massive deficits through foreign borrowing that has undermined the value of the dollar and brought with it the displacement of customary commercial and industrial relations in communities across the country. Farmers, businessmen, and small manufacturers, whose interests are historically at the heart of the Republican Party, have watched speculators profit while their own positions are ever more effectively challenged by increasing international competition, giant mergers, and even

foreign- based takeovers. (Kenneth R. Hoover 267-68)

As Hoover focuses During 1980s England adopted new economical strategy which threatened small entrepreneurs and manufacturers were challenged. This fact cannot be applied to John Self. Throughout the novel we do not find any clue that John Self as semi nude commercial producer is not suffered as other people there. He earns good as he produces the commercials desired by the mass of that time. His own over ambition causes his downfall because he has a big dream to achieve in new land. His individualistic nature makes him to go America. He disregards his smooth life in his own nation and desires to achieve more that he was doing in his homeland. He is dragged to America because of his own selfish nature and achievement of material prosperity. He wants to buy money from money. He has illusion about America, where he plans to make lots of money by producing same kinds of film and by deceiving the audiences. Selfish Self becomes victim of another self-centered American Fieldings Goodney as Fieldings Goodney pays for people to act in his plan to get Self's money, even Fielding's mother and film Self's friend Doris Arthur are involved in this acting. To reveal this deception Martin Amis presents himself in the novel: "At the corner a yellow cab sharked to a halt and Doris Arthur climbed out of it. She turned, measuring herself against me and the big hotel. I warned you, she called. I tried to tell you" (Amis 352).

Amis presents the individualistic way of living created by consumerist culture. He uses his main character to portray this situation which is also noted by James Diedrick: "Money represents a high-water mark in Amis's career, building on the strengths of his earlier novels but far exceeding them in scope, depth of characterization, and organic unity. It also stands as one of the indispensable novels of and about its decade" (70). Amis names main characters of this novel as John Self.

The word itself carries meaning of living a life with prioritizing own self. Self is representative individual of consumerist culture. By the name of main character it is suggested that person who is thirsty to the materialistic world is self centered and alienated. John Self is synonymous to western individualistic culture because character in any fictional work represents the main theme of the story or philosophy of the author. The relationship between characters, their thought and way of life signify something deeper. David Rush talking about the characterization says that characters are not only selected as medium of constructing plots but author carefully chooses characters and “He wants to express his attitude and vision about larger ideas: a social problem, a moral issue, a philosophical question” (Rush 75). As David Rush, Amis presents the social and psychological condition of that time through John Self. His deepest love for money and machine make him alienated and sadistic.

Postmodernist culture of putting much emphasis on capital and materials makes a person vicious. People become busy in making money to satisfy their needs have very less time to maintain their relation to human being: “In technological alienation, human beings are not only dominated by the commodities they produce; the very tools with which human beings labor dominate them” (Wendling 56) as John Self loves his car more than all of his people. Once, John Self describes his childhood and wrong upbringing: “He submitted a bill for all the money he had spent on my upbringing. That’s right – he fucking invoiced me, It wasn’t that expensive, either, my childhood, because I spent seven years of it with my mum’s sister in the States. I’d cost him nineteen thousand pounds (Amis 178). His father bargains with the cost of his son’s upbringing. In this age money is everywhere. He is one of those who are ignored by their money minded family in their childhood. John Self’s mother has already died and his biological father Fat John never reveals the truth that he is real

father to John Self. Self is isolated person from his family and his second father too as he never enjoys addressing John self as his son. John Self is representative of modern alienated selfish man. Life in this age is losing lively things and enjoying industry production: “Life is all losing, we are all losing, losing mother, father, youth, hair, looks, teeth, friends, lovers, shape, reason, life. We are losing, losing, losing. Take life away. It’s too hard, too difficult. We aren’t any good at it. Try us out on something else. But shelve life. Take life off the stands. It’s to fucking difficult and we aren’t any good at it (Amis 273).

As money is highly valued, people in present world have become machine like. They lost human emotion and empathy to fellow human beings. Human beings have become sadistic as John Self is not only individualist but selfish and sadistic at the same time: “I felt a gulp of innocent, bright-eyed pleasure that my oldest pal was in such serious trouble. Mm, it’s so nice when one of your peers goes down’ (Amis, 131). Here we see death of humanity in the age of money and materiality. Human in this world is equal to something factory production, as they are produced to make money. This is the result of consumer culture because human started loving goods more than other human being as Jameson argues: In our own (postmodern) period, however, in which the socialization and institutionalization of individual life have intensified beyond any equivalents in an earlier twentieth-century capitalism, we will not be surprised by the paradoxical discovery that the hobby has itself been organized and institutionalized in groups like Oulipo” (Jameson 148)

Individualistic person sets his own goal for money than familial and social responsibility. A self fashioning individual only thinks about own progress no matter how they can be achieved. Self is ignored by his family and loved ones. He is made by self. He tries his best to deceive the people around him but he is deceived by all the

people around him, his parents, girlfriend, co-workers and friends. Money is always in centre, relation does not value as it used to be because “It is within the possibilities of late capitalism that people glimpse the main chance, go for it, make money, and recognize firms in new ways” (Jameson 408). Among those selfish people, Selina Street and Ossie are two people who try their best to deceive John Self and Mertina. Selina and Ossie keep secret of their relationship and plan to engage John Self and Martin in relationship to hide their own relationship. Once Selina says to John Self: “You know, it can be good fun deceiving people, you don’t see it because you’re no good at it. You haven’t got the talent. When you lie, it’s a joke” (Amis 363). Strong nature of selfishness in people has made them blind and sadistic. They act as they do not see other things except money and they lack empathy for other.

In late capitalist world, human needs have no limitation. More than human need, people started consuming the goods because of their greed. This human greed has made them strange even with their family and friends. There is lack of solidarity between people in this age. Human connection has been weakening as many things in this age are already distorted. Individualism caused by consumerism has become like a trap to today’s human beings:

At a local level, an individual, uncertain of his or her future and seeing the costs of failure, will do all in their power to avoid being tumbled out of the system and to protect those closest to them from a similar fate. It is not surprising that those with ‘pointy elbows’ and inside knowledge will manipulate systems and processes for individual gain, and that cities become partitioned between neighbourhoods of well-serviced affluence and those of flight. Others, for whom flight is not a realistic option, batten down the hatches and hope to survive in quiet disengagement. This has been the strategy

of many older people, who now find their plans have been overtaken by events. Their fixed incomes have not stayed in line with rising costs. (Thackeray 6)

It is very hard to get rid of consumerist culture as they have been facing the truth for very long time and it is today's motto: "Buy More, Prosper More" became their unofficial motto" (S. Rosenberg 43). In this age of consumption culture, human beings have become part of consumption; consume everything available to the people. Relation between people is equal to business deal. Every beautiful aspect of human life is seen through the angle of profit and loss. Neville Kirk in his book *History, Language, Ideas and Post-Modernism: A Materialist View* talks about hedonistic culture that is growing in postmodernist era, humanity is being ignored in front of luxurious factory production. Self centered Self is victim of such culture in capitalist period. John Self's trust on his best pal Goodney is cause of his own downfall. He finds himself living in a fake situation, dreaming to produce a fake film which does not have any real script. He signed fake contracts. Everything was fake around him: "You signed a lot of documents. My guess is that you signed them all twice. One under co-signatory, once under Self. It was your name. The company you formed was not Goodney and Self. It was Self and Self. It was Self. The hotel. The plane tickets, the limousines, the wage bill, the studio rental. You were paying. It was you. It was you" (Amis 378).

John Self desperately wanders in England and America in search of money. America for him is the land of prosperity but he finds it very difficult land to live without money. He finds it a land of money mongers and his concept of America and money is changed in the in the final section of the novel. As Fredric Jameson argues that "Americanization" is one of the main features of late capitalism, with the failure

of John Self and his money dream, Amis tries to show the failure of American adoption by English people of his age. Amis had a beautiful dream of making good money by producing the film *Good Money* or *Bad Money*. His dream project of film had two names; one is *Good Money* and *Bad Money*. Goonday once tries to convince Self that the title of film *Good Money* is for American audiences and *Bad Money* for English audiences. In this stage Goodney is mouth speaker of Amis himself because he knows money cannot be good to English people as it is to American. Good money has become a note that forces to suicide. He loses everything in America and finally returns his own country with the reality of America and people there. As Martin Amis is a writer who writes on the contemporary issues of society, in his novel *Money: A Suicidal Note*, satirizes late-capitalist self-centered values led by America.

In short, Amis is a writer who writes about contemporary issues. That is why most of his works deal with socio-political changes and their effects on people. In his novel *Money: A Suicidal Note* he criticizes those values which give more emphasis on money and materiality. With the help of science, technology and media consumerism is promoted in late-capitalist period. Consumption in twentieth century is taken as integrated part of freedom which contributes to alienate human with fellow human beings. This period has given unlimited goods for its customers and consumption has become passion than need in this age which is presented in Amis's novel.

Consumerist culture of late-capitalism separates people and encourages individualistic and selfish nature in human beings as John Self has. Amis presents John Self as representative character of twentieth century who is passionate about earning money, enjoying luxury and living alienated life with self-centered values. With the failure of John Self's dream, Amis sheds the light at the dark aspect of this consumerist and individualistic society. This novel was published when England adopted American

economic policy, and many English people had illusion about America and American dream, Amis's novel *Money: A Suicidal Note* captures transitional shift of English economy and the reality of American adaptation by English people. Thus, Martin Amis as a neo-Marxist criticizes the negative effect of late-capitalism upon ordinary people's life.

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