

## Critique of Consumerist Culture in West's *The Day of the Locust*.

*Abstract: The present research paper analyzes the fragmentation and artificiality caused by consumerist culture in Nathanael West's The Day of the Locust. Beside this, the researcher has tried to find how the social rule, costume, human desires, languages, families and materialistic desires are determined by the state, how state rules over common people and attempts to prove how state agencies break the natural desires of the people. Moreover, it tries to find out how the protagonist, Tod and other common characters are compelled to live under the shadow of capitalist ideology due to the desires of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. In order to analyze the text, the researcher has brought the idea of Louis Althusser's Ideological state apparatus. On the basis of Althusserian ideology, the research establishes an idea how the state ideologies shape desires of the ordinary people in the society and how common people have become victims of consumerist culture.*

**Keywords:** Fragmentation, state, ideological state apparatus, consumerism and American dream.

The present research analyzes the sense of fragmentation and artificiality in Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*. All the characters are in one way or another way attempting to become happier with their life but actually they are frustrated and divested because of the influence of consumerist culture. The title word of novel "The Locust" refers to the little people who are faceless and sad and accumulate on the benches of Los Angeles, waiting for a bus that will never come. They're surrounded by the artificial glittering of Hollywood, which provides dreams that certainly are happier and sometimes seem more real than the America of the 1930s. But one day, the dreams will end and the locusts will swarm and the whole fragile society will come crashing down.

Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* tells the story of people who have come to California in search of American dream. *The Day of the Locust* is a novel about Hollywood and its corrupting touch, about the American dream turned into a sun-drenched California nightmare. Nathaniel West's Hollywood is not the glamorous "home of the stars" but a seedy world of little people, some hopeful, some despairing, all twisted by their by their own desires. They travel towards west hoping to achieve lives and pursue success in the Hollywood. The characters in this novel dream of a life of luxury, having lots of money, and living happily. They eventually come to the realization that the picture of perfect life that California represents is not as easy to attain as they once thought. The characters in the novel grow discontented and disappointed with their lives and embittered towards the world which instigates the downfall of this lower level of Hollywood society. Todd Hackett, Faye Greener, and Homer Simpson all make failed attempts to achieve the American Dream but in vain.

In this novel, Todd Hackett is the main character who lives with the continuous threat of failure, he is a young scenedesigner in the 1930s Hollywood trying to earn an honest buck and still maintain his artistic integrity. He falls in love with Faye, an aspiring actress and gets sucked into the toxic periphery of Hollywood. A causticsatire on the flipside of the 1930s dream factory while he attempts to fulfill his personal dreams among members of the lower class of Hollywood but his hopes are shattered like other lower classes dreamer. Actually he comes to California hoping for a career, designing movie scenery, but he faces many obstacles that he must overcome before he can move up to Hollywood society. Todd's life begins to go downhill as he associates more frequently with the lower level of Hollywood society. These all his struggles and rigorous practices are the symbolic representation of American people and their life struggle but their struggle is fragmented and full up artificiality.

Drawing up on Althusser's concept of ISA (ideological State apparatus- every social rules, film industry, custom, language and families are the agencies of state. through these agencies state rules over common people, sometime these state agency brake the natural desires of people. In the novel, American dream functions as an economic discourse, Because of discourse common people are compels to live under the shadow of consumerist ideology. They are facing difficulties in their lives. In the novel, all the characters are fragmented and isolated from existing social system. Their status has becoming fragmented and artificial in commercially booming era.

Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* 1939 tells the story of people, who have come to California because they are quite attracted by American Dream. These characters are severely fragmented and desolated due to booming American dream about life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. The present novel all about Hollywood and its corrupting touch about American dream turned into a sun-drenched California nightmare. Nathanael West's Hollywood is not the glamorous "home of the stars", but a seedy world of little people, some hopeful, some despairing; all are twisted by their own desires. Their desire compels them to become the victim of consumerist ideology. All the characters ultimately become conscious about the effect of consumer culture through the medium of 'class consciousness.

Nathanael West's fourth and longest novel establishes his claim to permanent attention as a first-rate literary artist and analyst of the twentieth-century American life, an achievement, which had its genesis during West's five years of close observation of Hollywood in the first decade of talking pictures. West went to Hollywood in 1933 as a screenwriter, and except for a few brief trips, he spent most of his remaining life there. He lived in a rundown apartment house, like the one described in *The Day of the Locust*, and he was a close observer of the city's varied

denizens and pretentious decor. Hollywood was becoming the nation's "dream factory," as a famous anthropologist called it years later, both through its products and the hopes, which it held out to the many, who dreamed of successfully becoming glamorous actors and actresses or juvenile stars. The surrounding city of Los Angeles also attracted people because of the California climate and the presence of celebrities, numerous bored retirees living on tight pensions; alongside this phenomenon, many religious and health cults and fads promised easy salvation, all were competing with one another for their money and loyalty. It was the decade of the Great Depression, whose poverty intensified the desperation of those, who sought riches and fame, or merely excitement.

*The Day of the Locust* is often described as the best novel ever written about Hollywood, but it is a novel, which puzzles some readers, who expect a story about glamorous and talented performers or about successful filmmakers. West, however, deliberately kept such people at the fringes of his action, where they serve only as false ideals to his characters. Rather, he portrays the seamier side of Hollywood, a world peopled by untalented would-be actors, rundown vaudeville performers, prostitutes, and émigrés from the rest of America, all who have come expecting excitement along with the California sunshine. Tod Hackett, the novel's most important character, does not quite belong to any of these types; thus, he can function as both observer of them and as an outsider, who is sucked into Hollywood's fantasy world. Tod is flanked by Homer Simpson, an inept, emotionally damaged retiree, who has aimlessly drifted to California for a rest cure. West's use of two protagonist-like figures creates problems of interpretation, which will be discussed later.

The readers should not get confused with the artist Tod Hackett, what role the author assigns him. Despite some sympathy for Tod's discomforts and much

agreement with his analysis of the Hollywood world, West is critical of Tod. In *The Day of the Locust*, his approach is more clinical. In the novel, Homer Simpson stands out because he does not fit easily into the categories that Tod has created—Homer is certainly not a performer, like Faye or Harry, but he is not a member of the crowds that Tod hopes to paint either. Nonetheless, Homer is the nearest character to these disillusioned crowds, who have come to California to die and to remain on the margins of the novel. Homer is an outsider like Tod, but from the Midwest rather than the East. Unlike Tod, however, Homer is purposeless; his only aim is to forget an awkward sexual encounter he had with a tenant in the hotel in Iowa, where he worked as a bookkeeper. Homer, successful at this repression, is a largely empty character. His liveliest features are his oversized hands, which fidget endlessly and act as an outlet for his repressed desires. A small part of the novel focuses on Homer's point of view, emphasizing the blankness of Homer's daily life and the fear and surprise that he feels when garish Hollywood intrudes upon it. Early in the novel, Tod judges that Homer is not quite one of the "starers," as Homer is shy instead of bitter. Yet, as the novel continues and Homer gives up his hope of sealing himself off from the world—away from sexual women especially—his shyness and meekness become instruments of a new bitterness. Homer victimizes others with his subservience in a passive-aggressive manner. This mutual victimization creates unresolvable tension that eventually erupts into the catastrophic violence that occurs at the end of the novel.

The narrator tells the majority of the story from the point of view of Tod Hackett—we see what Tod thinks about others, and Tod's surroundings are narrated using words that Tod would use. However, a small section of the book is written from the point of view of Homer Simpson. The passages told from Homer's point of view

seem to take Homer's words less than Tod's. Thus, even when we are presented with Homer's solitary surroundings and activities, the language can sound like Tod's.

The tone of the novel is satirical, bitter, and unsympathetic in tone. Most of the novel is told from Tod's point of view, which is largely one of intellectual and analytical detachment. There is little humor in the tone aside from occasional black humor. The conflict starts in the novel when, Tod becomes more and more attracted to Faye Greener, yet also feels a desire to hurt her or even rape her. At the same time, several other men, including Homer Simpson, become attracted to Faye as well. Additionally, the non-performing population of Hollywood—the recent, once hopeful emigrants from other parts of America—become increasingly disillusioned and furious that Hollywood has nothing of substance to offer them. They become bored and bitter and increasingly can find release only in salacious or violent spectacle.

The climax starts with the violence erupts at Miguel and Earle's campsite and Tod chases Faye through the woods; violence erupts again after the cockfight at Homer's house over the matter, who will dance with Faye. The characters in the novel are grotesques and composites, but many of them are aware of their artificiality and have accepted it as necessary to their survival. They assume that role playing is the path to success and that material success comprises of reality. In *The Day of the Locust*, most of the victims are also purveyors of the dreams that destroy. They are at the mercy of a social fabric, which they sustain by more than just their acquiescence in it. In this novel, violence and sterility replace the violence and despair and the large-scale violence is assigned to almost faceless groups of people. *The Day of the Locust* is like an animated cartoon, where the characters assault one another with impersonal violence, after which they immediately pick themselves up. Unlike the most animated cartoons, however, these sequences are filled with explicit

sexuality. *The Day of the Locust* is nonetheless intensely fascinating and demonstrates West's incisive psychological and social probings.

West's *The Day of the Locust* tells the story of people, who have come to California for American Dream has attracted them a lot. They travel to west hoping with material success in Hollywood. Tod's life begins to go downhill as he associates more frequently with the lower level of Hollywood society. These all his struggles and rigorous practices are the symbolic representation of American people and their life struggle. Regarding the main issue of present novel, Alfred Kazin remarks:

Hollywood society itself is "a regular free for all", where people find themselves swallowed up by a shallow world of hate, lies, and envy. Slowly, in one way or another, each character's hopes and dreams crumble and fall only to leave behind the ruins of what might have been. "They realize they've been tricked and burn with resentment... These people are left feeling cheated of their imaginary picture-perfect life; their American Dream. (183)

American dream is functioning as the state mechanism through which lower middle class people are ruled by the state, state distributing a popular slogan life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but is not providing any chances to uplift their life over there. That is why, American dream is a state ideology.

Drawing upon the Althusser's concept of ISA (Ideological State Apparatus): social rule, costume, human desires, languages, families and materialistic desires are the agency of state, through which state rules over common people, but these state's agencies break the natural desires of the people. In the novel, the protagonist character, Todd and other common characters are compelled to live under the shadow

of materialistic ideology that is facing difficulties due to the desires of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Similarly, American dream focuses on economic progress and physical satisfaction. Life, Liberty and Pursuit of happiness are the mottos of American dream. Despite this, economic boom has almost corrupted the ethics and the essence of American dream. All the Californians are pursuing the materialist happiness through the economic progress. Here, the protagonist, Tod, who stands around the city idly staring at the people, who have “come to California to die” (24). Even, they are to achieve their happiness exchanging their family relation with momentary relationship. Hence, money is the pivotal point of the American dream. On the same ground, the goal of Thomas Jefferson, which he had mentioned in his “The Declaration of Independence” has no value and use at all. “New consumerism” is applied to advanced modern societies, which generally suggest the organized consumption in the production of materials, goods and services. Consumerism may simply underline the distinction between the rich and the poor in the phenomenon of consumption in the interests of consumers. Similarly, in the present novel, all the lower class characters have a desire to uplift their living standard, but due to their over pressure of consumerist desires, they are becoming failure time and again.

West’s final work, *The Day of the Locust*, takes its title from the plague of locusts set upon the pharadon in the Book of Exodus. *The Day of Locust* leaves the reader with a persuasive sense of horror that civilization is being destroyed. All the characters in the novel are cheated; they warm to 1930’s Hollywood in search of cinematic dreams. When these dreams prove to be bogus, these characters mostly from the lower middle class turn violent. In the novel, the characters are unreal construction from low-budget movies. In the Hollywood “dream factory”, nothing is



what appears to be. A fat lady in a yachting cap is really a housewife going for shopping. An insurance agent is disguised by her Tyrolean hat. Women in slacks, bandannas and sneakers are office workers. Faye Greener, a main character, is a trashy imitation of the 1930's Hollywood sex goddesses. Homer Simpson, another main character, is a mid-western innocent, signified ironically by his powerful hands, which are linked not to hands of creation, building, or strength, but rather to rapists' or strangers' hands. The aspiring child star Adore Loomis is also a construction of movie imagery. His grotesque song- and- dance of sexual pain is ludicrous and painful to watch. Hence, the identities of all characters in the novel have formed by media images. The media here is functioning as agent for consumer culture.

American modernist heroes, in efforts to transform their love affair into materialistic values, treat their female counterparts as market products. Similarly, the central character in *The Day of the Locust* uses money for sexual satisfaction and cultural status at the same time. In his emphasis on money, Tod Hackett invokes the European stress on economy in such a way that the other minor characters also imbibe popular life styles of expatriates in Hollywood.

How do the modernist American heroes treat money in their relationship? West's Tod Hackett with focus on money for transitory pleasure replicates his perception of time and in that line the hero in his emotional relationships consciously tries to destroy the heroine by means of money. In that way, American modernistic heroes in *The Day of the Locust* in their emotional relationships with the heroines not only justify their masculine cultural traits, but also covet individual into non-human entities in the 1920s' American society.

Similarly, Nathanael West's heroes' love romance invokes cultural values they give to the materialistic life. Tod Hackett and Homer Simpson replicate their

perception of time that they could purchase transitory pleasures with money. Thus, both protagonists dehumanize heroine under the influence of consumer culture in the 1920s. Analyzing the hero's economic and finances in the novel contributes to intellectual debates on modernist narratives with different theoretical perspectives.

The present research work deals with hero's dehumanizing of the heroine on their treatments with money and finances. Economics becomes determinant in the novelist's careers as writer during 1930's, however, his protagonists unfold differential relationships in his treatments with money and women. The hero's treatment with money in modernist fiction retraces the US economic history between the First World War and the Second World War, a period marking American rise in the military, economy, and art sector. The critics have analyzed *The Day of the Locust* in the different point of views. Even, West argues that "Hollywood has nothing to give" (10). He further states "the immigrants to California have come to die" (12). In the pursuit of success and material prosperity, West's characters damage their shatter of life, which leads them to damage the life unexpectedly. Similarly, a *critique*, Glenn Russell asserts "If I were to pick a novel that is the Great American Novel, I think I would pick *The Day of the Locust* by Nathaniel West, why? ... Falsehood of human characters" (8). Drawing upon the Russell's ideas about American dreams, all the characters of the novel are real victim of American dreams, outwardly their dream increasingly day by day in the name of gaining prosperous dream. They are losing their own morality, culture and social assumption. Here is a huge gap between their dream and reality.

All characters are running after the capitalistic ideology as a sprinter, they are merely presented there as consumers. Theodor .Adorn further argues:

The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what are perpetually promised. The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endless prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacle consist of, is illusory all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the dreamer must be satisfied with the menu... there is no erotic situation. While insinuating and exciting, does not fail to indicate unmistakably that thinks can never go that far. (25)

It would be difficult to find a work of American fiction more plainly resonant with Adorno's culture industry thesis than *The Day of the Locust*, West's novel of Hollywood in the late 1930s.

Unique among literary treatment of Hollywood in its time, *Locust* offers a critique of the "Dream Factory" not merely as a purveyor of Kitsch or cultural inauthenticity nor even as a mechanism of ideology control, but as a mechanism of control based precisely on mass-mediated desires—"Promises" of leisure, spectacle, of sexual satisfactions—which are at once entry and wholly irresistible to the masses of "cheated" consumers. No doubts this resonance has been at least partially responsible for the novel's gradual rise in critical estimation as the Adornian analysis of mass culture itself gained acceptance in the United States—first among the New York intellectuals of the fifties and the sixties, and then among professional literary critics after the late seventies. And even though culture industry thesis now faces serious challenges within the field of contemporary cultural studies, it still appears uncontroversial to claim that what West had to say American culture in 1939 is—appropriately framed in terms drawn from Adornian critical theory. Similarly, another critic, George M. Pisk states that "If you threw yourself on her, it would be like

throwing yourself from the parapet of a skyscraper. You couldn't expect to rise again. Your teeth would be driven into your skull like nails into a pine board and your back would be broken. You wouldn't even have time to sweat or close your eyes”.

Depending upon the aforementioned extract reflects the plightful condition of American dreamers, who come to California to earn a better life-drawing West's arguments, people who come to “California to die.” Hollywood is a beautiful, but wild which has never given anything to its immigrants apart from the boredom and frustration. However, hardworking people can achieve material progress, but they are losing their cultural and social spirit. Here is a controversial relation between peoples' artificial dream and their reality. They are wandering here and there for the pursuit of happiness, but their unstable desires are converting them as a sprinter, who always runs after money and matters.

Ideology, in general is understood as a set of ideas that expresses one's certain goal aspiration and action, but in a philosophical sense, it can be taken as a comprehensive vision and outlook. Its major intension is to put either change in a society or adhere a set of ideas where a conformist claims to the statuesque through a conventional thought and ideas. Similarly, all the protagonist characters of the present novel are guided by materialistic ideology, which completes to bear hurtful situation and their daily life. The protagonist character, Todd argues that “California is a dead land and heaven” (15). Depending upon Tod's arguments, American dream provides peace, prosperity and security to American dreamer. That is why, it is presented as a heaven whereas people have to spend more time and money. Hence, it is presented as a dead land.

Ideology is a mode of language involving the subject to speak, to write or to communicate something with some purposes. It is directed or addressed to the object

to listen, to read or to understand so that subject will be able to make us supposed action to be fulfilled from the object. On this basis, we can argue that the discourse is a mode of expression, a means of communicating certain ideas or concepts on any topics or objects. Formation of subject and object to accomplish a particular goal through its target group is the intention of ideology. Similarly, in the novel material desire is a prime target of all characters. That is why, they are in one way or another trying their best to gain material prosperity in their life in the American society. Discourse is a part of ideology. Ideology is a spectacle to perceive the things. Discourse is a production within the periphery, which provides the ways for human thinking and activities. Similarly, American Dream is a material ideology, which regulates all the characters' behaviors in the novel. Regarding ideology, M.H. Abrams argues:

Human consciousness is constituted by an ideology that is, values and ways of thinking and feeling through which human beings perceive and by resource to which they explain, what they take to be reality. An ideology is, in complex way, the product of the position and interests of a particular class. In any historical era the dominant ideology embodies and serves to legitimize and perpetuate the interests of the dominant economic and social class. (148)

In the present novel, all the main characters are guided by the same complex material ideology, which is circularly disseminating material value among the people.

American dream is a discourse, which is ruling common people by distributing popular slogans like Life, Liberty and Pursuit of happiness. Michel Foucault argues "People who are in the power create a truth is commonly accepted by other people" (103). In the present novel, Hollywood film industry is functioning as a discourse and

it is distributing material attraction to common people. These common people are taking Hollywood as a real truth to earn livelihood. Here, Hollywood is a discourse and Hollywood film makers are upper classes people and protagonist characters represent consumer of modern market.

All the characters of the novel are spiritually dead because they are only running after money. In the novel, Tod falls in love with Faye Greener, an aspiring starlet who loves nearby, but Faye only loves men who are good looking or have money. Tod is simply a “good hearted man”, the kind Faye likes. He imagines that loving her would compare to jumping from the skyscraper and screaming to the ground. Tod wants to “throw himself at her, no matter what the cost”. Throughout the novel, Tod fantasizes about having sexual encounter with Faye as an act of rape. Every time he imagines raping her, reality interrupts his fantasy before he can complete the act. Scenes are interrupted prior to their climax frequently throughout the novel. In this regard, American dream is actually money centric mentality of the people. In the present novel, all the characters’ activities hover around money and matter, but their human sentiments and feelings are deteriorating in their mind day by day. Faye’s love for money and business and ignorance towards human love reflects the real nature of spiritual bankruptcy.

In the novel, the technology of self is clearly reflected in Tod’s character. Nathanael has given an insight into the character of Tod played, but Tod's first dialogue promo in Hollywood film reveals his own self individual technique and local mastery over local thoughts and feelings in regard to material value. Regarding the concept of self, Foucault mentioned that "The technologies of self permit individual to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thought conduct and way of being so as to transform

themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immorality" (327).“ All these arguments suggest the logic that an individual man gains agency through the individual style of working. These are some ways in which an individual can be free even within the discourse. Similarly, Tod challenges some of the oldest religious and spiritual discourse of the American society. The main characters like Tod and Faye have their own self style in acting performance. Tod presents different lively pictures like Los Angeles and Faye’s materialistic prey, all these qualities of the characters distinguish their acting styles from other existing Hollywood acting style. Thus, their self-style and self-mastery over acting style valorized them as a new agent of American dream. *The Day of the Locust* represents the structure agency problem. Regarding the structure agency, Anthony Giddens argues:

Structure theory centre on the way agents produce and reproduce social structure through their own actions regularized human activities is not borth into being by individual actor as such, but is... having been constituted as a man or woman by gender expectation and practices, having learned to be father or mother, we then act in accordance with those rules producing them again. (322)

The above quote analyzes the structure agency problem. The structure provides venue, time, resources and opportunities to the individual and individual performance. In the structuration theory, there is a direct relation between the people's action and structure. Similarly, in the present novel, all the characters, it provides material sense in the mind of common people, affect their common people, and it also affects their common life style, but at the same time Tod’s self-style directly affects the existing American dream. So, both Tod’s self-agency and material discourse mutually

influence each other. Therefore, human rationality provides ethic, self-fashion, and then an innovation and change is possible because of self-fashioning.

The American dream has become an inherited archetype. All the characters in the novel have common economic sentiments, which regulate their daily behaviors. Carl Gustav Jung argues, "Archetypes are inherited ideas, images, and symbols" (12). They are also the racial, religious memories and material memories and they function as an energy for artistic creation. They exist in a collective unconscious. In his own word, "Primordial image or archetype is a figure to be a demon, god, human being or process that constantly recurs in the course of history appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed". Therefore, it is a mythological figure when we examine these images closely; we find that they give form to countless type of experience of our ancestors. He further argues, archetypes functions as a persona, animal shadow and self. Persona is a mask. Human beings play different roles in their life and those roles reflect in literary art and even in their daily life. Similarly, in the present novel, American dream is a material archetype, which is circularly regulating the mind of all the characters of novel like Tod, Faye etc. are commonly guided by the same material archetype.

Depending upon this concept, Jung argues "collective unconscious is the feeling shared by all the individual of community" (5). It is a storehouse of all social memories. Here, all the characters in the novel by hook and crook, want to gain material prosperity, that is why, they are running after money as a sprinter. That is all because of social systems, which love only money and matters. American dream has been becoming collective desires of all the characters in the novel. Therefore, they are guided by the same motif in their lives. they are willing to gain material happiness by any cost.



Ideology is a means of presenting something using language related to society, politics, and religion, culture and material aspects. Ideology can be taken as a medium for understanding society and responding to it. As the means of communication, discourse designs things using signs and communicates idea to the society. In the present novel, American dream is itself functioning as social discourse. This discourse is shaping the mind of the characters in the novel. Discourse helps to interpret ways of social, political, material and cultural system prevalent in the particular society. Similarly, in the present novel, American dream has been facilitating common people to create a material thinking in their mind. Regarding the concept of discourse, Cudden writes:

Usually a learned discussion spoken or written on philosophical, political, religious and material topics [...]. Basically it is a language which is understood as an utterance and thus involves the subjects who speaks and writes which proposes listeners and readers who in a sense are objects. Discourse has an object and is directed to or at an object. Thus, in theory at any rate, discourse might include any modes of utterances as a part of social practices. (249)

Capitalism dominates the whole novel. It is actually transforming Fordism to Post-Fordism. Karl Marx had long ago predicted that capitalism would collapse in two different ways. First, it would be collapsed because of the class struggle. Second, it would be collapsed because of its own mode of operation, but as we come towards the end of the twentieth century, it has shown the different tendencies. It has neither refused to collapse nor has it been violently overthrown by the workers' revolution rather capitalism has been radically transformed. It has been radically expanding its market. Barker reminds that “capitalism has shifted from Fordism to Post-Fordism”

(7). In Fordism mode of economy, capitalism was based on the products. The labour was divided among the workers and because of the labour division, workers were becoming experts and they were hired in long term and permanent basis and some of the co-workers were given high pay.

As we came to Post-Fordism economy, the jobs became flexible, and the product industry was transformed into the service industry. Most of the workers were employed in part time basis and they required multiple skills and techniques because of the introduction of technology. Now, we entered Neo-Fordism in which manual labour was replaced by administrative labour. Similarly, all the characters of the novel are highly motivated by American dream. American dream is a product of capitalism, use of new technology in the film sector. The characters are growing their interests to be a professional actor or actress; all these things represent the transforming capitalism.

Barker argues, "The classes as envisioned by Karl Marx do not exist today" (15). Today, the categories of haves or haves not may not accurately represent us, but it does not mean that classes are no more in existence. They are repressed and hidden from the public eyes temporarily. But, what is repressed that cannot remain repressed forever. Classes have returned into existence in the form of urban inequalities. Technology, information, city facilities are creating the different forms of urban inequalities. But, whosoever we are, we have been transformed into consumers. Regarding the issue of urban inequalities in the present novel, all characters try their best to gain new change in their life and they are using different technologies for their achievement. If any person is able to properly use technology, then he is regarded as a successful man, whereas the man who has no any access to the technology is regarded as a failure one.

Consumer culture keeps us under the suppression of individuality in the mechanization of social performances. It deeply focuses on our activities. Health, educational, media and civil institutions are some of the medium through which we are concentrated. Similarly, Tod Hackett and Faye Greener are highly controlled by film ideology. Hollywood film ideology focuses on the characters' individual enterprises throughout their early career. Likewise, the suppression of individuality is highly reflected on Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*:

A Comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advance individual civilization; a token of technical progress. Indeed, what could be more rational than the suppression of individuality in the mechanization of socially necessary but painful performances; the concentration of individual enterprises in more effective, more productive corporations; the regulation of free competition among unequally economic subjects the curtailment of prerogatives and sovereignties which impede the international organization of resources. That this technological order also involves a political and intellection coordination may be a regrettable and yet promising development. (3)

Here, the suppression of individuality is ruptured in the name of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It makes common people aware in each and every step in their social life. Similarly, the present novel highly represents the capitalistic control. The characters of the present novel have social confinements and presents common peoples' mental pressure of capitalistic ideology. Either psychological pressure or oppressive pressure or both of them have the same consequences which transform people as a passive consumer in the capitalistic society. So, in this consumer culture of capitalism, human beings are not getting their personal freedom and we are highly

controlled by the capitalistic mechanism. In capitalistic culture, we are not only controlled, but our individuality has also been suppressed and dominated in the new forms of social life. We are not only being robbed, it is making us run after the brand. We are moving after the sign, value, as a result, the consumer has been transformed into a sprinter.

Borrowing the arguments from Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Barker claimsthat this culture is leading us to the poisonous consumption, and we are also being cheated in every step.It does not give us what it promises. Therefore, Adorno and Horkheimer calls this culture, “The culture of mass deception”. Barker does not mean that all the classes here have been over, nor does he mean to say that his has ended. Borrowing Fukuyama, he holds that the ideological clashes between capitalism have ended and capitalism has been victorious everywhere. We have come to the phase of history, where the capitalism is in triumph (victor). Regarding the capitalistic problem, Barker gives solution depending on:

Once we are beyond absolute material deprivation, as most people in the West are, then we can come to understand that happiness, or more precisely contentment, comes from within oneself. Of course, given the constitution of the subject in culture, then ‘within’ is also ‘without’. Thus we need to be concerned with the overall spiritual intelligence (Zohar and Marshall, 2000) of any given culture. In any case, self-awareness, being in the present, self-autonomy, exercise, relaxation, common values and meanings, community, family, positive relationships, forgiveness and constructive and inspiring ethics aimed at reducing suffering are all more likely to bring contentment and self-

worth than are consumer goods or excessive identification with work performance.(27)

Depending upon the Barker's arguments, we can argue that revolt against the capitalism is not possible because we are inside the system and we have become its part. So, instead of revolution resistance is necessary and creative consumer is only one method of fighting against capitalism. The youths today are making creative patterns of consumption and they are going against capitalism through these patterns of consumption. They have refused by some of the products of capitalism due to which in the long run, the capitalism is going to suffer.

Barker argues that "despite our struggle and creative consumption, we are not going anywhere, there is no strategy which can take us out of capitalism" (5). We can perform the bricolage activities or make creative consumption, but there is not going out of the system. Barker believes that the focus of our resistance should be changed, and the capitalism has given us the problems like obesity, depression, anxiety, crime, drug abuse, tension and many others. So, we have to resist against this problems through the medium of exercise, creativity, meditation, family life, community team work and cooperation.

Depending upon the arguments from Antonio Gramsci, Barker divides intellectual into two parts: "traditional and organic intellectual"(172). Traditional intellectuals are those intellectuals who favor the status quo: teacher, professor, nurses, actors and bureaucrats are some of the examples of traditional intellectuals, who want to keep the things as they are. For them, change is against their interest, so social transformation is not possible from them. Barker does not trust in politician. The politics and its leaders are losing the universal appeal. Therefore, there is no chance of changing the society through the hand of that politician.

In this context, Barker hopes in organic intellectual, in most of the cases they are the part of the working classes struggle and without any hope of gain they can change the society because they do not support the ruling class hegemony. There organic intellectual can become the new social movements. In case of western society, civil right movements, feminism, ecology, politics, peace movements, youth movements, politics of cultural identities and many other have come in the form of new social movements. All these new social movements do not have the emancipatory agenda, but it can change the society productively rather than it leads us to self-realization or self-actualization. In the novel, lower classes actors and actresses like Tod Hackett and Faye Greener are struggling as an agent of new social movements, but they do not have self-realization and self-actualization. Due to lack of these knowledge, they are suffering in the capitalistic market. Here, in the case of Tod Hackett, his self-desires for sex and money are creating a sort of problems in his life. Tod Hackett says "I have to sex with Faye Greener! Faye!! Faye!!! Only Faye" (20). For most of us, desire is quite a problem. The desire for property, for position, for power, for sex, for immortality, permanent, satisfying, lasting, something which is beyond time.

In the novel, all the characters are suffering from many crises and all these crises are the outcome of self-desires. Therefore, here is important to find out what desire is and whether it can be transformed? What is desire, is it not the symbol and its sensation? Desire is sensation with the object of its attainment. Is there desire without the symbol and its sensation? Obviously not. The symbol may be a picture, a person, a word, a name, an image, an idea and so forth. They all give us sensation, which makes us feel whether we like or dislike it; if the sensation is pleasurable, we want to attain, to possess, to hold on to its symbol and continue in that pleasure. From

time to time, according to our inclination and intensities, we change the picture, image, and the object. Similarly, in the case of main character of the novel, his desires take the shape of sexual desires, sometimes takes the form of desires of money and other time takes the form of desires of social reputation. All in all, desires of the character are not stable. His unstable desires lead him towards the indecisive situation in the social stamina. Sometimes, Tod Hackett has desire for sex with Faye, sometimes he has hunger for material progression. That sort of circular moving desire leads him toward fragmentation and unfulfilled condition.

Therefore, human problem is to understand desire-not how far it should go or where it should take an end, but to understand the whole process of desire, the carving, the longings, the burning appetites. Most of us think that possessing very little indicates freedom from desire-and how we worship those who have but few things! A loin cloth, a rough symbolizes our desire to be free from desire; but that again is a very superficial reaction. Why being at the superficial level is giving of outward possession when our mind is crippled with innumerable wants, innumerable desires, beliefs, struggles? Surely, it is there that the revolution must take place not in how much we possess or what clothes we wear or how many meals we eat. But, we are impressed by these things because our minds are very superficial. When our goals are unable to take any fixed shape, then there is a danger of operation, which may be from the side of people who are in the position of power. People in the position of power impose many rules and regulations as a form of social order, which creates many problems in the personal life of people.

In the present novel, the middle classes people have desires to gain success in the film sector, but social system itself is creating lots of problems in their struggles, due to materialistic values, they are unable to sustain their identity. So, war or social

disorder sometimes provides many opportunities to clever people, but common people are suffering because of their own economic condition. Common people have to suffer in the society due to their own conscious mind; if these people don't have consciousness about their life, then they don't have to suffer in such way. Hence, sometimes even ignorance can provide strength to common people to survive in the society. The relationship between higher classes and lower classes is always dilative in form. The relationship between class to discourse, ideology, knowledge, and truth shows that behaviors seen in the society are their product. Values and norms they develop are the strategy to circulate their authority. Discipline is to limit the activities and behaviors, which help to practice ideology and power. Social observers are the units to control and influence the will of dominant class. The observer develops the disciplinary gaze to keep observed disciplined. In this regard, disciplinary gaze of social observer helps to generate the argument and to justify the act of observation and what examiner does is the exercise of power.

In the novel, all characters are suffering from capitalistic ideology. The capitalistic ideology does not give any self-agency to the characters. So, they have no agency. The concept of agency has commonly been associated with notion of: freedom, free will, action, creativity, and originality. These characters can get self-agency through the action of free agent. Faye Greener is physically not appropriate to be an actress, but she is trying her best to get success in her life through the medium of her own self agency like blinking habit. The notion that agents are free in the sense of undetermined is unable for two reasons:

In what could an undetermined or uncaused human act consist? It would have to be something created spontaneously from nothing- a metaphysical and mystical form of original creation, we have to say



about ourselves and the conditions of our existence is always already from within our socially constituted selves. The best we can do is to produce another story about ourselves.(236)

In sum, agency is determined. It is the socially constructed capacity to act and nobody is free in the sense of undetermined. Similarly, in the present novel, all the characters are bound with pre-determined agency, which regulates them on the basis of the capitalistic ideology.

West's *The Day of the Locust* tells the story of some people, who came to California in search of the American Dream. They travel to west hoping with material success in Hollywood. The characters in this novel dream of a life of luxury making lots of money, and living a good life. They eventually come to the realization that the glamorous life that California represents is not as easy to attain as they once thought. The characters grow discontented and disappointed with their lives and bitter towards the world, which instigates the downfall of this lower level of Hollywood society.

Similarly, Tod Hackett is an artist, who came to Hollywood to learn and to set costume designing. After walking around Los Angeles, Tod sees people that are "of a different type"(23). Tod wants to paint these people who he believes came to California to die. Throughout the book Tod's painting, "The Burning of Los Angeles", is coming to life. In the last section of the book, West has Tod in a mob scene. Tod is painting the people he has met. He is painting Faye; "Faye ran proudly throwing her knees high. Harry stumbled along behind her, holding unto his beloved derby hat with both hands" (201). This quote shows Tod's view of Faye and her relationship with her father. Tod sees Faye as a selfish person who treats her father with little respect. In chapter 11, "Faye hits her father to stop him from laughing" (77). That scene shows that Faye is more concerned about herself than her dying father. Faye shows her

selfishness when she first meets Homer and is talking about her father's condition. Faye Greener's character represents nature, "the version of nature that is deceptive" (Sanderson 84).

Homer Simpson came to California with a different goal than the other characters in *The Day of the Locust*. "He seeks only to rest and not to be bothered by anybody"(88). Homer's downfall is inevitable as soon as he begins to associate with the lower levels of Hollywood. Homer's shyness and inability to stand up for himself makes him a good target to be a victim of Faye's arrogant ways. Simpson's love for Faye blinds him from this obvious reality, while she walks all over him. Faye constantly uses Homer when she needs help and ignores him when he has problems. This vicious cycle eventually leads to the breakdown of Homer Simpson. When a young boy throws a rock on Homer, he viciously unleashes all of his built up emotions of frustration on this poor boy. West describes "the scene in which this occurs as a regular free for all"(147). Simpson becomes yet another casualty of the effect that Hollywood can impose upon a person as well as the tragic and prevalently violent repercussions which happen.

The novel is set around two similar actions: Tod Hackett's and Homer Simpson's self-destructive pursuits of Faye Greener. However, it uses many other symbolic devices to suggest ideas, which are difficult to connect to Tod's and Homer's experiences. Unlike Homer, Tod understands much of his experiences, and he is constantly observing and analyzing Hollywood life. His point of view blends with the author's, and the critical stance is usually identifiable with Tod's. Homer, on the other hand, has little understanding of the environment and of his own motives. His responses are treated as sarcasm because he is deceived by the shoddiness around him, and thus he resorts to clumsy defenses. Both men pursue what is artificial,

shallow, and glittering, as well as the explosively sexual Faye Greener, a symbol of Hollywood's falsity and the deceptive American dream. Partly aware of this, Tod still wants her, but he knows that he can't have her and, he knows that his drive is destructive and in vain.

Faye Greener is a seventeen-year-old, platinum blonde would-be Hollywood actress and sex goddess. Shallow, heartless, and manipulative, she provides the focus of attention for most of the male characters. Faye's first name suggests fairy lightness, and her last name suggests the green freshness of nature. Her true character is a parody of these qualities. Faye possesses a mature body and plump breasts and well-rounded buttock. She often dresses childlike, accentuating her teasing offer of forbidden sex to the men who look at her. She has been trained by her father to think of herself as a theatrical performer and to act with a maximum of artificiality. Faye is in accord with the American illusion that ambition and will are the equivalent of talent. Although she has no real acting ability, she may not really be unintelligent, for in her environment, using her brain could serve no purpose. Self-criticism would only lower her defenses against the predatory Hollywood world.

*The Day of the Locust* does not look at the good things about Hollywood, it looks at the part that no one wants to see or deal with. The novel shows all the struggles and hardships that come with trying to make it the movie or acting business. The novel focuses on the despairs of the out-of-work actors trying to make a name for themselves in Hollywood. The characters in the novel feel that they have been swindled out of a perfect dream life. In turn each of them chooses to live a fake life. West's Hollywood is made up of retrogression and brothels, of failure and sexual desire, of cock-fighting and third rate boarding houses.

This novel is difficult to interpret because it utilizes various methods to convey its themes, which are not always clearly interrelated. The novel sags in some parts but picks back up at the cockfight and is superb for the rest of the story. The sexual frustrations that go on between Tod and Faye, he wants to get her in his bed, but she does not want him. There is also another man that was obsessed with Faye, which was Homer Simpson. West wanted to tell the story this way, because it was a story from his life (some of it anyway). The story could be a look at what we have to look forward to in the future. *The Day of the Locust* is in one way or another, a look at the Depression of the 1930's.

West's *The Day of the Locust* tells the story of people, who have come to California because of attraction to American Dream. They travel to west hoping with material success in Hollywood. The characters in this novel dream of a life of luxury, having lots of money, and living happily ever after. They eventually come to the realization that the seemingly picture perfect life that California represents is not as easy to attain as they once thought. In the novel, the characters grow discontented and disappointed with their lives and embittered towards the world, which instigates the downfall of this lower level of Hollywood society. Tod Hackett, Faye Greener and Homer Simpson depict their failed attempts to achieve the American Dream. Tod Hackett is a main character, who lives with the continuous threat of failure, while he attempts to fulfill his personal dreams amongst the lower classes of Hollywood. Hackett comes to California hoping with a career designing movie scenery, but he faces many obstacles that he must overcome before he can move up in the Hollywood society. Tod's life begins to go downhill as he associates more frequently with the lower levels of Hollywood society. This prevents him from climbing the ladder of fame, which he so desperately aspires to accomplish. He is shown a darker side

of Hollywood, which plays with his emotions and distracts him from high level ambition.

All in all, West uses the myth extensively with his emphasis on sea, fire, viper, and locust. Even, the final siren brings into mind the classical image of man being beckoned to his final destruction at sea. Tod's imitation of the siren in the final line gestures towards the underlying horror of the novel— the horror of people who have lost their humanity and become objects. But, the final revelation is that man is set against an unorderable chaos. Like the contemporary allegorists that Scholes discusses that West's world is "idealized but unsystematic, full of meanings but devoid of meaning" (38). Tod's final message is no message at all, merely the hysterical laughter and scream of a man who finally realizes that he is, indeed, "poised over chaos". American dream merely creates violence, boredom and disintegration in Californians' life. Thus, American dream is actually nothing at all but only chaos and mental fragmentation. This meaninglessness is promoting capitalistic ideology, due to which common people are being victims.

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