

**ANATOMO-POLITICS AND CONSUMERIST
IDENTITY: A POSTMODERN READING OF
LAUREN WEISBERGER'S *THE DEVIL WEARS
PRADA* AND DON DELILLO'S *WHITE NOISE***

BY

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Wears Prada* and Don DeLillo's *White Noise***

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Anatomo-politics and Consumerist Identity: A Postmodern Reading of Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* and Don DeLillo's *White Noise*** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Anato-politics and Consumerist Identity: A Postmodern Reading of Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* and Don DeLillo's *White Noise*

In this study, I examine Lauren Wiesberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* and Don DeLillo's *White Noise* in order to explore the perpetuation of anatomo-politics of the human body. Anatomo-politics is one of the two techniques of bio-power that permeates human life up to the extent of controlling micro processes of its existence. The strategies of postmodern consumerism arguably sustain anatomo-politics of the human body. The study argues that the characters depicted in the selected novels become self-disciplining under the influence of knowledge that normalizes fit and thin body in the name of beauty and health. In this way, the selected novels explorably manifest the disciplines of the human body and the controlled management of their energies and forces. I substantiate this argument by drawing upon Foucault's notion of anatomo-politics that helps me highlight administration of the individual bodies in the selected texts. Moreover, this project reveals the consumerist strategies embedded in the chosen texts that make consumer products desirable for such bodies and, hence, enhance their subjugation in the contemporary age of postmodern consumerism. I draw upon Jameson's concept of late capitalism and Baudrillard's theorizing of simulation with the specific focus on their hegemonic aspect that provide me with the proper conceptual framework to probe the texts for such consumerist strategies. In this regard, I employ Catherine Belsey's idea of textual analysis as a research method in analyzing the selected texts. Since it is relatively an untapped area, the anatomo-politics perspective of the human body examined in the primary texts highlights the significance of my intervention and is likely to be a contribution in the production of knowledge in the contemporary critical corpus.

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DEDICATION

To My Parents Mr. and Mrs. Muhammad Akram

(You both are my sole emotional support and I owe you everything)

And

To my mentor Dr. Sibghatullah Khan

(You are my biggest inspiration)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this study, I explore perpetuation of anatomo-politics of the human body in the context of postmodern society depicted in the selected primary texts, Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) and Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985). Pertaining to this, my project argues that administration of the human body takes place through endorsement of the fit and thin body concept by two different means. One of them is the association of beauty with it, while the other one is the connection of health with it. I claim with the help of the selected novels that the knowledge that associates fit and thin body with the concepts of beauty and health acts as a disciplining technique. It standardizes excellence for the human body which practices a kind of self-surveillance to meet that criterion. This process produces docile human bodies. Moreover, I argue that consumerism ensures the usefulness of fit and thin human bodies in the contemporary age through promising consumer products that provide them the opportunities of better self-expression. That is how consumerist identities are created.

It is instructive to highlight here that the way I explore administration of the human body in the novels is based on what may be called the modifications that have come to shape contemporary anatomo-politics. One of the chosen texts *The Devil Wears Prada* deals with the ongoing issue such as promoting ideal of beauty by fashion industry imposing self-assessment behavior. Another text *White Noise* addresses the current issue of health as an individual responsibility that creates self-consciousness and self-discipline. I have highlighted these contemporary issues that the primary texts share in common with the world we inhabit today as the current manifestation of anatomo-politics.

I substantiate my argument with the help of Foucault's theorization of anatomo-politics given in the first volume, *An Introduction*, of *The History of Sexuality* (1978). The research also employs some other theoretical notions for

building the argument, such as the concept of simulation propounded by Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) and Jameson's idea of late capitalism in his essay "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1997) with a special focus on depthlessness, commodity fetishism and waning of affect. It is necessary to bring into light the way the main theoretical notions, anatomo-politics and late capitalism, are helpful in analyzing the selected texts to justify the above stated (the main) argument.

Anatomo-politics is one of the two techniques of power over life that is called bio-power. The concept of bio-power, according to Foucault, emerged in the 17th century. As the word 'bio-power' suggests, life is necessary for processing this kind of power. It dismantles the concept of sovereign power, the power to take life by marking death as the end of the power. It operates through its two necessary poles; anatomo-politics and bio-politics. Here, the focus is on anatomo-politics. It aims to ensure the subjugation of the human body. Since it is the disciplinary dimension of bio-power, it focuses on disciplining the human body in order to certify the practice of numerous and diverse mechanisms such as the administration of the body, its performances and controlled management of its forces. Bringing these mechanisms into function, this technique of bio-power marks the human being by its individuality. It also sets standard for the body and achieves its willing subjugation by making it conform to the set norms.

Therefore, anatomo-politics is likely to be supportive in the discussion of the standard set for a human by the knowledge of fit and thin body being associated with the concept of beauty and health. This knowledge acts as a disciplinary technique over a human body. It individualizes a human and makes an individual internalize certain norms such as beauty and health, consequently, persuading it to act within a given framework.

The concept of late capitalism provided by Jameson in his essay "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late-Capitalism" is the contemporary stage of capitalism. For Jameson, the prominent factor that differentiates this stage from the previous stages (that I have discussed in

chapter 3) is the hegemonic¹ aspect of it. In this regard, no specific class that upholds authoritative position or exercises coercive control is needed to propagate it, rather its flourishing is based on the hegemonic control of subjects.

Jameson's theoretical idea of late capitalism, therefore, helps extending the discussion of anatomo-politics embedded in the selected source texts by highlighting the enhancement of the usefulness and docility of the human bodies in the context of postmodern consumerism. By emphasizing the hegemonic aspect of consumerist strategies, it also helps talk about the construction of consumerist identities.

Since my project employs postmodern reading of the texts in hand using Foucault as one of my main theoretical contributor, it is edifying to explain some of his contributions as a major source of postmodern conception. I present this discussion as follows. It is instructive to mention that the discussion of Foucault's contribution to postmodernism would not be in order to claim that Foucault is a postmodern theorist, rather it would be in order to vindicate my stance of considering him as one of the contributors of postmodern thought. "While Foucault has decisively influenced postmodern theory, he cannot be wholly assimilated to that rubric" (Best and Kellner 41). Similarly, his work cannot be categorized under modern tradition alone. He draws from different sources "while aligning himself with no single one" (41). I support my argument with the help of the brief discussion of Foucault's rethinking of the conception of power and its relationship with knowledge on the basis of which I try to locate him as an influential figure of postmodernism.

Although postmodernism is concerned with culture, architecture and art, yet it draws various aspects from poststructuralism that is claim to be associated with philosophy, literary theory and history. Therefore, what locates Foucault at the liminal position of both poststructuralism and postmodernism is their "shared standpoint" that is the "rejection of metanarratives linked with specific notions of self, subject, and knowledge" (Shah 99). Foucault being a

¹ The word hegemony has been derived from the Greek term 'hegemonia' that means "dominance over". Hegemony, according to Gramsci, is the intellectual domination over the subordinate classes (Bates 351).

major contributor of the “philosophy of power” is considered as a poststructuralist. For Foucault “power is a purely structural activity for which subjects are anonymous conduits or by-products” (Best and Kellner 53). Pertaining to this, some of Foucault’s readers perceive that his ideas subscribe to the poststructuralist thought. Moreover, for Foucault, power doesn’t flow in one direction rather it is discrete and flows both at the macro and micro levels of society. This aspect of his conception of power is more inclined towards postmodernism than modernism because it subscribes to the idea according to which center is scattered.

In order to explicate the discussion further, I argue that by providing alternative to the concept of ideology, Michael Foucault marks a complete demarcation from Marxist (modernist) concept of ideology through presenting his idea of discourse. (C. J. Stoddart 201-205). According to him, “[d]iscourses are system of thought, or knowledge claims, which assume an existence independent of particular speaker. That means it doesn’t presuppose the concept of single autonomous body that is responsible for the creation of unified ideology to propagate its interests” (C. J. Stoddart 203). For Foucault, “[d]iscourse ... is so complex a reality that we not only can, but should, approach it at different levels with different methods” (qtd. in Best and Kellner 45). That is why he rejects referring this contribution as a theory of power because he claims that no single theory or method can grasp the complexity of the notion of discourse and that of power.

Based on the aspect of his rethinking of power, it is said that “he develops new postmodern perspectives that interpret power as dispersed, indeterminate, heteromorphous, subjectless and productive, constituting individuals’ bodies and identities”(51). Foucault believes that power is everywhere and it comes from everywhere. For him both the power and resistance go side by side and both of them are diffused, not localized (C. J. Stoddart 203-204). By doing so, “[h]e rejects all modern theories that see power to be anchored in macrostructures or ruling classes and to be repressive in nature” (Best and Kellner 51). This complex and multidimensional approach of Foucault makes him an influential figure of postmodernism which rejects every notion that takes positions, both central and marginal. That’s why

Foucault's concept of Power/knowledge is taken as "symptomatic of the postmodern suspicion of reason and the emancipatory schemes advanced in its name" (52).

Thus, the above discussion shows that Michel Foucault can be considered as one of the major contributors of postmodernism and without taking into consideration his concept of power, "the stakes of power today would become difficult to understand" (Koopman). His concept of power deals with the changing orders of control under which we find ourselves today. It makes us recognize manifestation of power in its different forms that shape human's life in the contemporary age.

Since my study explores the sustenance of anatomo-politics in the context of postmodern consumerism, a brief introduction of the terms postmodernism, consumerism and the discussion of their relative importance is needed here. It is very hard to define the term postmodernism. Different critics have variously contributed in defining it. Some of the prominent theorists who have contributed to the study of postmodernism are Jean Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Frederic Jameson, and Jean Baudrillard. They are the "leading strategists" of postmodernism (Hicks 1). All of them attempt to define it in terms of culture, consumerism, fragmentation of the subject and relativism. Almost all of them consider the term representative of the present fragmented world. According to them, postmodernism is a time that is marked with chaos and perplexity.

There were humanist hierarchies before postmodern era. According to those hierarchies, man was at the center. However, postmodernism instantaneously disassembles all these orthodox standards. Postmodernism ends every open discourse on man being a center in light of the fact that it manages different viewpoints instead of sticking to just one perspective. In a postmodern society, a person does not even have any importance as an individual being. It is more of an age of mini-narratives than the grand ones. Here individuals do not have their own strong portrayal instead they have some shattered personalities.

In this age of chaos and fragmentation, consumerism came up with its deceiving strategies of creating the need in us to choose our unique identity and distinct social status. Under postmodernism, consumerism has become more influential as a process of self-identification than ever before. Postmodern critics believe that “[i]n our postmodern society, few things play the influential role in our lives consumerism does” because it is intimately tied with the concept of creating the sense of self (Todd 1). Therefore, postmodernists’ theorizings that I have discussed in the theoretical framework, such as Baudrillard’s idea of simulation and Jameson’s theorization of commodity fetishism, waning of affect and late capitalism are likely to be supportive in discussing the effect of consumerism.

Different critics have defined consumerism as “a process that has to be continually fed by buying more things to define who we are” (McGregor 11). As its appeal is based on individuality and self-expression identified by certain brands or consumer products, it controls individual’s thinking and rules the mind that results into the regulation of whole body. “Given the growth of consumerism, the current cultural focus on beauty and fitness and the increase in leisure time to pursue hobbies and interests of all kinds,” body has become significant part of self-image and “people are encouraged to develop the body’s attractiveness, health, and fitness to enhance their self-image” (Chisler and Johnston-Robledo 5). Hence, it can be seen that consumerism has extended its grip by making the consumer products desirable for those who are concerned about their self-image based on health and appearance of the body. This complements the discussion of the way I highlight the role that Foucault’s concept of *anatomo-politics* plays in highlighting the administration of the human body.

The depiction of this kind of contemporary consumer society and the regulation of the human body in the form of anatomo-politics is the key movement of the contemporary literary texts. In the following discussion I mention such type of novels in order to contextualize my project from the perspective of its selection of primary texts.

1.1 Locating the Selected Primary Texts in Contemporary Literary Scenario of Power and Consumerism

In this section, I attempt to historically locate my selected texts in the tradition of fiction writing that address contemporary issue of hegemonic control of individuals' lives and the issue of consumerism. Such type of literature substantiates the selection of my primary texts and justifies their analysis through Foucault's notion of anatomo-politics of the human body and Jameson's theoretical conception of late capitalism as a framework together. Therefore, for the purpose of contextualizing my chosen primary texts, I mention some of the novels here. Each of the selected novels that I discuss here relates to some significant aspects of my study.

The first novel that relates to my argument and provides a relevant perspective to my texts is *The Space Merchants* written by American writers, Frederik Pohl and C. M. Kornbluth. *The Space Merchants* portrays propagation of consumerism by illustration of the society where advertising has become hugely influential. The protagonist of the novel, Michell Courteney, works for the most popular advertising agency, Fowler Schoken Associates, running by Fowler Shocken. The whole life of the protagonist revolves around the hurdles that he faces while scheming the project of advertising a planet, Venus.

Advertising agency in the novel holds the position above all the other institutions that are controlled by government. For instance, instead of advertising consumer products the agency plans to advertise a whole planet, Venus. In spite of the fact that Venus has uncongenial climate and surface for humans to survive the protagonist uses his tricks of making the public deceived in thinking that Venus is the next suitable place to occupy through advertisement. The agency try to mold the perception of the people in believing anything which is provided to them in the form of information.

Although *The Space Merchants* is a science fiction that deals satirically with a hyper-developed consumerism yet most of the critics do not see the presentation of consumer society in this novel far from the present-day reality. Pertaining to this, MJ Ryder in his work, "Lessons from Science Fiction;

Frederik Pohl and the Robot Prosumer,” asserts that *The Space Merchants* dramatizes Packard’s depiction of real life dystopia in his book *The Hidden Persuaders* and “packages it within a fictional world” (Ryder 7). He also comments that Pohl’s work predict the merging of science fiction with science fact such that “in the twenty first century the two are now one and the same” (Ryder 16). It means that in the contemporary age consumerism has emerged up to such an extent that the hyper-consumption once depicted in the science fiction has become a reality today.

Moreover, Packard in the same book “hints at a future where scientists use ‘bio-control’ to direct human behaviour,” up to such an extent that converts human subjects into robots, MJ Ryder mentions (Ryder 7). The same idea is taken up by Pohl and Kornbluth’s in *The Space Merchants*, Ryder claims, where “consumers are also transformed into robots, to obey in unthinking fashion, and not even realize the extent to which they are being controlled” (Ryder 7). *The Space Merchants* shows the increasing and overwhelming influence of consumerism and the hegemonic control of the individuals mediated through advertising agency that contextualizes my project from the perspective of comparative literature to my primary texts. One of my Primary texts *White Noise* (1998) intervenes here in this tradition of literary fiction that presents the society overpowered by growing influence of consumerism.

The second novel that helps me situate my primary texts in the contemporary literary scenario is from Sophie Kinsella’s Shopaholic series. This series deals with highlighting the issue of consumerism that prevail in the form of excessive shopping of brands which gets fostered through the idea of fashion. It is feasible to discuss here one of the novels *Shopaholic Takes Manhattan* (2002) (that is sequel to *Confessions of a Shopaholic* in Shopaholic series) from the perspective of locating my primary texts. *Shopaholic Takes Manhattan* narrates the story of Rebecca Bloomwood a young woman who is surrounded by such a society where consumerism thrives in the form of fashion that creates obsession with consumer products such as brands.

Rebecca Bloomwood is depicted in *Shopaholic Takes Manhattan* as a presentable host of a morning show “Morning Cafe” in terms of her dressing sense and maintenance of her body image. For this reason, presentation of “Morning Cafe” in the novel can be associated with the presentation of *Runway* in *The Devil Wears Prada* in terms of the way it “maintains and perpetuate the concept of beauty to its members” (Ongi Karyanto 82). This novel contextualizes my project from the perspective of highlighting standardization of certain body image and its enhancement through consumer brands by the idea of fashion. Ruth Bunga Ongi Karyanto in her dissertation, “The Construction of Post-Feminist Women’s Identity by Consuming Lifestyles: A Study of Four Chik-Lit Novels” brings this perspective of *Shopaholic Takes Manhattan* to surface. According to her, the novel generally conveys “some of the ways through which ideal body type is achieved” such as “regulating eating portion, having diet, eating some healthy food, wearing some branded commodities, applying cosmetics, having body treatment and so on” (Ongi Karyanto 80). This perspective of body image and its achievement through regulating everyday conducts is closely related to the depiction of similar kind of control disseminated in the consumer society illustrated in my Primary texts.

Feed (2002) by MT Anderson contextualizes the primary texts of my project from the aspect of depicting individual’s control and consumerist society. In *Feed* almost all the young characters have a chip, called Feed, fixed in their head. Feed is designed to control functions of all the parts of a human body, the thinking process and, consequently, actions of the body. Providing all the information which we usually get through TV and radio in contemporary techno- world, the ‘Feed’ advertises different consumer products. Feed is capable of recording actions and saves every single information about the choices that a person make, therefore, advertises products accordingly. This type of representation of a hyper-developed consumerism and the hyper-real consumerist society categorizes *Feed* as a science fiction.

Although this novel falls in the genre of dystopic fiction yet it portrays the emerging issue of consumerism and addresses it as a symbolic

representation of the real life dystopia that makes it relevant to discuss here in order to contextualize my primary texts. *Feed* “both thematizes corporate power and consumerism,” (Bradford 128) therefore, provide relevant perspective to my texts. *Feed* being written in 2002 is chronologically closer to my source text *The Devil Wears Prada* that joins this tradition in 2003 by addressing the same contemporary issues.

Feed also addresses the “questions about human agency in a world where individuals are bombarded with information about products and services, but denied knowledge of political and ideological contexts” (Bradford 128-129). It draws attention to the way its characters get controlled and “how these characters are formed as docile subjects” (128). The depiction of this kind of consumerist society and the illustration of individual’s control up to the extent of increasing their usefulness by engineering them into active beings connect this novel with my primary texts that address the same issues. Therefore, help me contextualize my project in contemporary critical knowledge in the area of my study.

Hence, the discussion of the specific perspective provided by the selected novels rationalizes my attempt of choosing Foucault’s conception of anatomo-politics of the human body as a lens because it provides proper framework to explore the depiction of the same kind of individual’s control in my primary texts. This also vindicates my attempt of integrating the concept of late capitalism with that of the selected Foucault’s theoretical notion to build a conceptual framework for analyzing the role that consumerism play in enhancing such kind of individual’s control in my selected primary texts.

Irrespective of their genre, the above discussed novels equitably portray consumer society where individuals get controlled and their lives get manipulated. They depict a society where consumerism prevail and let power penetrate into the life processes of individuals. This adds meaning to the selection of my primary texts irrespective of their genre. Unlike *The Devil Wears Prada*, Don DeLillo’s *White Noise* is a postmodern text but both the novels being written in postmodern age provide an equal portrayal of consumer society and the power that penetrate micro processes of an individual’s life as a representation of prevailing issues in contemporary

American society. For this reason, the above discussed fiction helps me locate my study in the contemporary literary scenario. It adds weightage to my project in terms of its relevance to the present socio-political reality.

Based on the above discussion, I emphasize that contemporary novels, specifically American novels, highlight the way hegemonic control of the human subjects prevail in the contemporary consumer society leading to administration of the human body and construction of consumerist identity, but there is not much analysis available unpacking literary texts from this perspective. Therefore, this research critically approaches the novels *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) by Lauren Weisberger and *White Noise* (1985) by Don DeLillo in order to highlight the regulation and administration of the human body in the contemporary age of consumerism.

My research aims to explore how the selected novels exhibit the play of anatomo-politics of the human body by depicting the postmodern consumerist society. Highlighting this specific perspective provided by my primary texts, I provide brief introduction of the novels in hand in the following discussion.

The Devil Wears Prada (2003) has been written by an American author, Lauren Weisberger, during her job as an assistant to the Editor in Chief at Vogue. During this time, she also wrote reviews for a lifestyle magazine, *Departure*. Therefore, it may be said that the novel is based on her real-life experience. The novel depicts the transformation of the main character Andrea after joining the job as an assistant to the editor of *Runway* magazine, Miranda Priestly. Andrea appropriates her dressing sense according to the instructions given to her by the first assistant Emily and according to the environment of the company at the expense of her private life and family relations. She also starts exercise and becomes conscious about her diet routine in order to look fit and thin like the other girls at the company, revealing the constructed standard that prevail there. Similarly, Miranda who is the editor of the magazine is considered as a fashion icon in the company. Her identity is associated with different brands which she chooses to present herself as a fashion icon.

It is important to mention here that *White Noise* (1985) by Don DeLillo is more suitable for this study than the sequel of *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003), *Revenge Wears Prada: The Devil Returns* (2013). The sequel focuses more on the family life of the characters and it doesn't seem to uphold the influence (on the characters) of the consumer culture and large scale consumption based on consumer brands. The alienation of the characters from their family life and their willing contribution to the prevailing consumer culture, therefore, seems less influential in the sequel. Therefore, DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) is likely to be more suitable for this research because it represents the society where consumerism and its strategies deceive the characters in thinking that shopping is the only escape from the harsh reality of life.

White Noise (1985) is the story of Jack Gladney, and his wife, Babette, who are living with four children from their previous marriages. Whenever something odd happens to the couple or their fear of death overwhelms them, they go shopping. Jack's friend, Murry Jay Siskind, always accompanies them during shopping at the supermarket. He tells Babette about the labelled and colorful products in the market, revealing the hidden meaning. Throughout the novel, fear of death overwhelms almost all the characters and the only escape they seek is provided by the supermarket.

Moreover, the way characters seem to make choices about their lives shows that they are following certain standards that appear to them real. Both Babette and Gladney prefer to acquire discipline in their daily routine regarding their eating behavior and other bodily practices that they think can help them achieve good health and ideal body appearance.

Furthermore, they consume constant flow of information provided by the TV and the supermarket without having critical approach towards the knowledge that they receive in the form of information. Therefore, Babette is obsessed with exercise and the tablet Dylar. Jack chooses to become a professor and establishes a department of Hitler studies in spite of the fact that he doesn't know anything about the German language because he wants to have a good lifestyle.

The selected novels, therefore, show that regulation of the characters occurs through the idea of achieving beauty and health endorsed by the knowledge of fit and thin body. Both the novels *The Devil Wears Prada* and *White Noise* depict the discourses that produce this knowledge in conflation with beauty and health. Hence, both the novels help substantiate my argument that aims to show that the knowledge of fit and thin body acts as disciplinary mechanism over a human body, results into the creation of docile bodies and hence complement the discussion of anatomo-politics.

Both the novels also show that the characters identify themselves with the consumer products and their individualization occurs through the idea of self-expression based on consumer brands. Therefore, administration and regulation of the bodies of the characters and the consumer society, depicted in the novels, motivate me to analyze the texts from Foucault's notion of anatomo-politics of the human body and Jameson's notion of late capitalism.

1.2 Delimitation

I have delimited my research to the analysis of Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) and Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985). The rationale behind selecting these two texts, despite their chronological gap, is that these texts equitably depict administration of the human subjects in the present age of consumerism by supplying the Foucault's notion of anatomo-politics of the human body and Jameson's concept of late capitalism as a framework together.

1.3 Thesis Statement

Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) and Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) represent a postmodern consumerist society where hegemonic control seems to prevail through the anatomo-politics of human body and construction of its identity through consumer discourse. Michel Foucault, Frederic Jameson and Baudrillard's theorizings are likely to be supportive in reading the selected texts.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do the selected texts depict the perpetuation of anatomo-politics?
2. In what ways do commodity fetishism, depthlessness, and waning of affect reinforce the play of late capitalism in the selected texts?
3. How does the concept of simulation help promote consumerist discourse in the selected novels?

1.5 Research Plan

I have organized my thesis in six chapters. The first chapter is titled as introduction. This chapter briefly introduces the context of this study by providing brief introduction of the area. It briefly introduces the main theoretical concepts employed in the study. Along with locating my source texts in contemporary literary scenario, this chapter provides short introduction of the selected primary texts chosen for the analysis to conduct. It provides the main argument of the study that I intend to justify through my analysis of the texts in hand. It also discusses the plan to substantiate the main argument of the study by throwing light on what theoretical framework is suitable for the investigation to conduct. This chapter also includes my problem statement, research questions, delimitation and the significance of the study.

Literature Review is the second chapter of my research. It comprises of the review of related articles, books and web information. By reviewing the relevant literature, this chapter contextualizes my research in the available research repository as well as highlights the gap in it that signify the need of further research in the area. For convenience of my readers, I have divided this chapter into two parts. First part provides the review of those critical sources that are related to the theoretical perspective of my study. Second part of this chapter reviews the available research papers, articles and dissertations that explore the texts in hand from various perspectives.

Third chapter is titled as theoretical framework and research methodology. This chapter includes the detailed discussion of the theoretical

notions that provide framework for this study to conduct. It comprises of the discussion of the main theoretical concepts chosen for this study such as the notion of anatomo-politics propounded by Michael Foucault and the concept of late capitalism provided by Frederic Jameson. It also provides a brief discussion of the supporting theoretical concepts chosen for the study such as Baudrillard's concept of simulation.

Further, it includes the discussion of the research method that I have employed in my analysis. It provides introduction to the method of textual analysis provided by Catherine Belsey and also shows its significance and relevance to the type of analysis that I conduct in this research.

Chapter 4 comprises of comprehensive analysis of the novel *The Devil Wears Prada* in order to explore manipulation of the human body, drawing upon Foucault's notion of anatomo-politics. This chapter also explores the way consumerist identities are created under the influence of consumerist strategies by employing the concept of Late-Capitalism. These strategies reinforce the play of late capitalism by highlighting individual's willing contribution to the system of economic control.

Chapter 5 is concerned with comprehensive analysis of the novel *The Devil Wears Prada* in order to explore regulation and administration of the human body, drawing upon Foucault's notion of anatomo-politics. This chapter also highlights the way consumerist strategies reinforce the hegemonic aspect of late capitalism by ensuring the willing contribution of individuals to promote consumerism. This discussion in the chapter discloses the way consumerist strategies make the condition favorable for anatomo-politics to operate.

In last chapter of my study, conclusion, I conclude the findings of my research. In this chapter I also pinpoint recommendations for the future study in this area.

1.6 Significance of the Study

As this research aims to explore the embedded perpetuation of anatomo-politics of the human body in a consumerist society portrayed in the selected texts, its significance lies in the fact that it brings under scrutiny prevailing issue of consumerism. As consumerism is not confined to boundaries and its reach is transnational and multicultural, it highlights the relevance of the topic to our indigenous experiences of consumer culture. Moreover, the perspective of anatomo-politics brings novelty to the discussion of subjugation of individuals to power in a consumerist society because this is relatively untapped area. Furthermore, the analysis of literary texts has largely been ignored from the perspective of Foucault's anatomo-politics. This investigation will not only add to the research repository but also help future researchers explore the strategies of consumerism from this perspective in some other contemporary literary texts. According to my research plan, I have reviewed secondary sources in the forthcoming chapter to situate my dissertation in contemporary critical scholarship.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of literature review is to situate and contextualize this study in the contemporary scholarship. It also helps bring into light the gap therein. In order to carry out these objectives, I have based this review on the study of the available secondary literature related to my project. Keeping in view the purpose of this chapter, I present the review of the relevant material in the following order.

I have based this review on two dimensional study of the available secondary literature related to my project. The first, theoretical dimension, is related to the selected theoretical framework of my project. This aspect aims to share the review of available literature such as dissertations and research papers in which different critics and researchers employ theoretical conceptions that are somehow related to the theoretical framework of my project as an underpinning of their own critical contribution to the area of postmodern consumerism. On the basis of reviewing such type of literature I intend to invoke the need of the literal implication of these chosen theoretical conceptions in exploring literary texts.

The second dimension is the textual aspect which comprises the review of the secondary literature available on the selected novels *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) and *White Noise* (1985). Based on this aspect of my review, I pinpoint the gap that my analysis of the texts in hand aims to fill. Related to the first dimension, I have reviewed the sources from critical scholarship under the following subheading.

2.2 Critical Scholarship on Power and Consumerism

“The Power Thinker” (2017) by Colin Koopman is an important essay to review here because it focusses the significance of Foucault’s contribution in understanding and analyzing different forms of power in the contemporary world. The essay highlights the lasting importance of Foucault’s philosophical approach towards power. It gives the understanding of transformation in Foucault’s approach and marks its originality by comparing it to the other philosophers’ conception of power. Hobbesian concept The Leviathan, it says, believed in the pure and the only real form of power that is sovereign power while Foucault remained skeptical of the terms real and pure throughout his analyses of the different forms of power.

Moreover, the essay says that Foucault’s philosophy of power refuses to consider power as a real and as a homogeneous entity. It doesn’t provide any definition capturing the essential characteristics of power. Instead, it considers different forms of power that can even change in response to the efforts made to resist them. Koopman appreciates this kind of diversity of Foucault’s approach towards power by stating that “[t]he irony of a philosophy that would define power once and for all is that it would thereby delimit the essence of freedom. Such a philosophy would make freedom absolutely unfree” (Koopman). This irony foregrounds the relative approach of Foucault towards power. Foucault’s philosophy of power, therefore, dismantles the very concept of philosophy being a complete whole in itself containing all the essentials.

Koopman further highlights the importance of Foucault’s conception of power. He says that the two different kinds of demonstrations in which power manifest itself such as anatomo-politics and bio-politics are Foucault’s main subjects in his books *Discipline and Punishment* and *The History of Sexuality*. Ignoring these manifestations of power, Koopman emphasizes, stakes of power today would become difficult to understand.

The way Koopman emphasizes the relevance of Foucault’s conception of power to understand the contemporary forms of power helps contextualize my project in the contemporary critical corpus through its employment of the

notion of anatomo-politics as a theoretical lens. However, the gap here lies in the way Koopman seems to ignore highlighting the importance of these notions in exposing depiction of power in contemporary literary texts. This gap is taken up in my study. It brings to focus the significance of Foucault's conception of power through its literal implication that I have employed in my analysis of the selected texts.

While focusing on the flexibility of Foucault's philosophy of power, this essay provides the way to connect it with my research. Adaptability of Foucault's concept of anatomo-politics discussed in the essay rationalizes my attempt of adapting the concept of anatomo-politics to talk about the stakes of consumerism and its role in emphasizing control over individual bodies presented in the selected texts.

Car Yngfalk's research paper, "Bio politicizing consumption: neo-liberal consumerism and disembodiment in the food marketplace" (2016), is reasonably significant to discuss because it bio-politicizes consumerism by exploring its controlling influence on the lives of people. Exploring the proliferation of consumerism through consumerist discourse, this paper draws on Foucault's notions of bio-power and governmentality in order to conduct the discourse analysis of the food date labelling parameters. This paper relies on documents (about the policies of regulating date labelling of the consumer products) from different state regulatory authorities in Canada and on the interviews of managers of different Super markets there.

Yngfalk argues that labelling temporalizes and standardizes consumption, hence promises health and life of people by individualizing and totalizing them. According to him, this is "neo-liberal consumerism" that "actualizes bio-politics that lies at the heart of date-labelling and which furthermore, seeks to connect with the everyday lives of people through a rather explicit focus on consumer health and safety" (Yngfalk 282). Yngfalk further argues that individualization occurs when the date labelled products provide information about the quality of food. They make a person deny his own ability of assessing the quality using the sense of smell or taste. Totalizing effect of consumerism, the paper argues, can be seen in controlling the consumers' choices and their consuming behaviour as they prefer to buy the

products with short span of expiry dates believing that such products are not only having a good quality but also having large rate of consumption. The expiry dates on the consumer products are fixed and regulated by different state organization like National Food Authority, the paper analysis, controlling the aimed consuming behavior of the whole population (Yngfalk 291-292).

The above reviewed paper relates to different aspects of my project such as the critical analysis of consumerist strategies in controlling life-processes of individuals and evaluation of their role in manipulating individuals' behaviors. In this regard the research paper situates my project in contemporary critical study related to the area of my study. Moreover, the above discussed paper also signifies the need of research based on the analysis of the literary texts that offer such social issues to interpret. My thesis attempts to meet the need of filling this gap. It offers the analysis of the selected literary texts in order to highlight the willing subjugation of individuals to power. It also pinpoints the contemporary issue of consumerism by discussing its influence on individual's everyday-conducts. My project focusses more specifically on the identity construction and body regulation of the characters depicted in the chosen primary texts that further marks the difference of my perspective.

Ron Wagler in his article, "Foucault, The Consumer Culture and Environmental Degradation" (2009), talks about the relevance of Foucault's theoretical ideas to consumer culture and environmental degradation. This review of Wagler's article focuses only on the way he argues about bio-power and its importance regarding the discussion of current consumer society. Focusing on the subjugation of bodies and the hegemonic aspects of power, he claims that power operates through knowledgeable discourses and practices. According to him these discourses and practices create efficient useful and docile citizens. He specifically highlights advertising as one of the technologies of power. He is critical of the way advertising is used to convey truth. 'This 'truth', generated within the power/knowledge paradigm, informs the subject what is acceptable behavior, concerning product purchasing within the given society' (Wagler 333). Hence, the article highlights the significance

of Foucault's theorizing in the current postmodern society where power manifest itself in its evolving variations.

Wagler's article is related to my study because it views consumerism from the perspective of Foucault's concept of power/knowledge and bio-power. Reviewing this article, therefore, helps me locate my project in the contemporary critical study that attempts to discuss the offshoots of consumerism. Although this article establishes a link between consumerism and bio-power focusing on the aspect of creating docile citizens yet it lacks proper discussion to substantiate this linkage properly. This gap signifies my study because it pinpoints the need of further research in this area. My study intends to fill this gap by exploring the selected literary texts with a specific focus on one of the poles of bio-power called anatomo-politics of the human body in order to highlight the creation of docile bodies emphasized by the influence of consumerism properly.

In the following discussion, I review some of the available essays and articles in which critics use Baudrillard's theoretical conception as an underpinning of their own critical contribution towards understanding the stakes of consumerism. For example, Danielle Todd's essay, "You Are What You Buy: Postmodern Consumerism and the Construction of Self" (2011), is closely related to my study because this essay highlights the overwhelming influence of consumerism in the contemporary postmodern society. Daniel Todd in this article incorporates Baudrillard's idea of 'simulation' and 'hyperreal' in order to strengthen his argument. He argues that when we purchase a product it's not only a product rather it carries a piece of 'language' which helps in creating our psychological self (Todd 48). According to him the consumer products creates in us the sense of who we are as a person.

Moreover, Todd contends that consumerism provides us with a variety of choices to determine our position and status in society as well as to choose distinct identity by buying right products. He highlights the example of women magazines which advertise makeover and compares it with the makeover transformation of 'Cinderella', done by the fairy godmother (49). He is critical of the way makeover advertisements promise us the same transformation which was done to Cinderella through magic. Todd concludes that

consumerism is a prevailing issue which is not “only an economic system; it is the way our society functions”. He also claims that consumerism imparts the sense of liberation and emancipation by making us believe that “this is what I am because I chose it” (50). The paper highlights the way this interpellation occurs through false-consciousness created by the promising consumer products.

The emphasis on the consumer society and the construction of self through consumer goods makes Todd’s essay relevant to my study and, hence, helps me locate my study in the area. At the same time his essay highlights the space for further discussion about what sort of consumerist strategies are involved in making the condition favorable for power to operate. My study approaches to address this gap (with the help of the chosen primary texts) by providing the analysis of the way consumerist strategies favor the promotion of anatomo-politics of the human body.

Another article, “Culture and Consumerism in Jean Baudrillard: A Postmodern Perspective” (2018), by Munther Mohd. Habib is significantly related to my project. The researcher in this article talks about postmodern society from the perspective of consumerism with the help of Baudrillard’s theorization given in different articles. According to him, Baudrillard’s semiotic and structuralists study of culture gets combined with the neo-Marxist approach in his works such as ‘The Society of Consumption’, ‘the System of Objects’ and ‘For a critique of the Political Economy of the Sign’ (Habib 44). He argues that Baudrillard’s study of semiotics and symbols emphasizes the symbolic value of the consumer object rather than the use or the exchange value as once discussed by Marx. This symbolic value of an object stands for social status, rank and prestige. This value determines the importance of an object by foregrounding the social status and ignoring the utility of an object. Moreover, he argues that *simulacra and Simulation* is one of the important contributions of Baudrillard to the field of postmodern consumerism for it talks about the permanent eradication of truth and reality. He contends that the postmodern consumerist culture which comprises of no truth or reality but only copies ‘is nothing but an incarnation of Capitalism’ (44).

The above discussed article uses Baudrillard's theoretical contribution to understand the stakes of consumerism in a postmodern society. This perspective of the paper relates it with one of the aspect of my theoretical approach towards understanding the strategies of consumerism at play in postmodern consumerist society depicted in my primary texts. For this reason, Habib's article contextualizes my study in the contemporary critical knowledge regarding the area of my study. My dissertation seeks to provide the detailed discussion of the matter that this paper lacks by specifically focusing on the way *simulation* helps talk about propagation of consumerism.

Thus, the above reviewed theory based articles reveal that the gap here lies in the fact that the use of these theoretical ideas have largely been ignored in analyzing literary texts. This research seeks to fill the gap by bringing literary texts under analysis based on the above theoretical concepts. Through my analysis of the texts in hand, I show how the contemporary postmodern texts address this matter. Pertaining to the second dimension of this literature review, I present the review of the critical scholarship available on the selected literary texts under the following subheading.

2.3 Critical Scholarship on the Selected Novels

In this section, I have taken into consideration some of the sources that explore the texts under analysis from different perspectives. Although there are many researchers who have approached the texts from various perspectives yet I have chosen to focus on those aspects that are closely related to my topic. The purpose of this selection that is based on the closely relevant subjects to my topic is to highlight the research gap properly that my thesis intends to fill.

There are research papers that give inspiration in analyzing *The Devil Wears Prada* from the perspective of consumerism. One of the papers is "Material Inclination to Indicate Social Status in Lauren Weinberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003)" (2013) written by Rinaldo Cesar in collaboration with Kurnia Ningsih and Delvi Wahyuni. Drawing upon the theoretical concepts of Baudrillard and Veenhoven, this paper deals with the concept of consumerism and hedonism as the two main characteristics of material

inclination. The paper claims that the notion of life-style that is based on consumption of material goods becomes the source of pleasure and happiness because most of the people with materialistic mind-set, promoted by consumerism, not only buy things for gaining the social status attached to them but also for pleasure-seeking. The study reveals the motive behind the obsession of Miranda, one of the main characters of *The Devil Wears Prada*, with the luxury goods. It explores material inclination in Miranda's character, arguing that she spends a lot of money on branded things, therefore, possesses goods that are not needed in her life but are necessary for maintaining her social status.

Exposing the influence of consumerism as an extension of Baudrillard's idea of hyperreal, this paper brings to the surface the material inclination in the life-style of Miranda. Moreover, the paper asserts that her habit of being surrounded by luxurious goods and wealthy people divulges the concept of hedonism. The paper concludes that now a days, consumption is the possible way to reach pleasure of hedonism that is represented in the novel *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) (Cesar , Ningsih and Wahyuni 213-217).

Another research paper, "Material Inclination to Indicate Social Status in Lauren Weinberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003)" (2013), written by Cesar, Kurnia and Delvi locates my project from various aspects by focusing critical attention to the area of my study. Firstly, this paper focuses on the possible factors involved in the propagation of consumerism that links it with one of the broader aspects of my study such as focusing the influence of consumerism. Secondly, the paper is associated with my project from the aspect of the selection of primary text. The writers of this paper have chosen one of the primary texts of my project in order to conduct their study. In this way, the article shares different aspects of my study but it signifies the difference of my perspective.

The theoretical dimension of my dissertation, anatomo-politics of the human body and Late-Capitalism, is quite different from the lens that the paper uses to interpret the text. Hence, the paper helps me identify the difference of my perspective of exploring the text that in turn pinpoints the gap in the area. This paper leaves a gap to fill by narrowing down the discussion to the effect

of consumerism on the character of Miranda and her obsession with material goods. Therefore, this paper lacks the discussion of the way *The Devil Wears Prada* provides consumerist society in such a way that it offers the opportunity to talk about the way consumerism enhances individual's control and the way it reinforces the regulation of their lives. This aspect is taken up in my project to address the gap properly.

Another researcher has taken the movie adaptation of the same novel *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) for interpretation. Lilian Calles Barger compares two films *Nine to Five* and *The Devil Wears Prada* in his essay, "Backlash: From *Nine To Five* to *The Devil Wears Prada*" (2011). While looking for the representation of women in the films, he contends that unlike *Nine to Five* which portrays that women's empowerment lies in the liberation from patriarchal society, *The Devil Wears Prada* shows liberal women in the smokescreen of consumerism. The researcher reasons that:

The Devil Wears Prada as a postfeminist film nods to liberal feminism while re-establishing old ideas about women, power, and love. It rewrites the history of women in that there is no patriarchy to overcome and no political battle to wage. Instead of female solidarity, one sees narcissistic individualism, woman pitted against woman in a field of unlimited opportunities. (Barger 345)

The way researcher in this paper identifies the role of consumerism illustrated in *The Devil Wears Prada*, therefore, helps locate my research in the area related to the study. However, the paper marks the difference of my perspective. Focusing only on the women depicted in the novel to see the effect of consumerism, this paper ignores to incorporate its effect irrespective of gender. This gap signifies the need of further research. My study intends to fill the gap by exploring reinforcement of anatomo-politics through consumerism embedded in the text. Hence, it focuses on the power that takes the individuals' lives under control regardless of their gender.

Erliska in her research article, "Power and Gender Oppression in Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* and Seth Graham Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*" (2017), approaches the text *The Devil Wears*

Prada (2003) from Marxist-feminist perspective with the help of Young's theorization of gender oppression and Marx's Engle's and Linen's theorization of liberation. She explores the double oppression of women in the novel. She argues that women in the novel *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) suffer double oppression based on the class difference which results from economic inequality and the gender difference. According to her, the character of Andrea is the representation of those women who belong to lower class, therefore, she gets marginalized by the people like Miranda whose character stands for the upper class. Miranda being the representation of upper class people sets cultural standards for others to follow (Erliska). The researcher perceives the cultural dominance of the upper class presented in the novel as an accepted norm to follow, therefore, she concludes that the text depict the effect of cultural imperialism.

This article relates to my project because it approaches one of my source texts *The Devil Wears Prada* from the analytical perspective provided by Marxist theorists. Thus, focusing critical attention to the area of my study it situates my research in the relevant critical knowledge. Moreover, Erliska's research paper pinpoints the space for further discussion because it approaches the text from Marxist-feminist position and unfolds the perception of cultural imperialism in the text that is one possible perspective. I seek to focus on the other possible perspective such as the Foucault's concept of anatomo-politics depicted in the text that not only differentiates my study from this research but also brings novelty to my research.

Although the second novel under analysis DeLillo's *White Noise* has been explored from different perspectives yet Foucault's concept of anatomo-politics has largely been ignored in analyzing this novel. Examining *White Noise* by Don DeLillo, critics have employed different perspectives and have reached various interpretations and conclusions. Some of them have chosen to focus on the effects of consumerism portrayed in the novel using different postmodern theoretical notions, while some explored various other perspectives provided by the text. To mark the difference of my perspective in exploring the text, I review some of the papers as follows.

Unlike the critics, who have analyzed *White Noise* from the theoretical perspective of Baudrillard, Jameson and Lyotard, Cornel Bonca in his essay, "Don DeLillo's *White Noise*: The Natural Language of the Species," claims that there is something else operating in the novel. He focuses on the language as the main concern of the author, DeLillo. Continuously referring to the title "White Noise", Bonca contends that the fear of death is communicated through a natural language that is common among all the characters, throughout the novel. He emphasizes the use of language, arguing that what all the "phenomena share is a passion for utterance to "bridge the lonely distances," to "establish a structure against the terror of our souls" (Bonca 32). He refers to different voices and noises heard by different characters and relate them with the incidents in the novel and the feeling of the characters.

This paper is relevant to my project from the perspective of exploring one of my primary texts *White Noise*. It intricately probes the text by focusing on the novel's babble of voices, while commenting on the way author discovers a purer speech within them. Therefore, this paper not only provide situatedness to my project but also indicates the difference of my perspective.

Sompatu Vungthong in his research paper "Postmodern Consumerist Condition and Its Effects on People in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*," focuses on the mental and physical threats to humans living in the consumerist society. Referring to Jameson and Lacan's concept of Schizophrenia, Vungthong argues that the characters in the novel are schizophrenic because they are unable to recognize the boundary between signifier and signified. Quoting an incident from the novel, he argues that Willie Mink, one of the character in the novel who is obsessed with TV, is schizophrenic because he blankly sits in front of the TV and unconsciously acts in such a way as if he were really being shot when Jack says "hail of bullets" and "fusillade" (qtd. in Vungthong 33). Therefore, media and consumerism, Vungthong claims, condition people and make them schizophrenic in such a way that they don't believe their own perspectives but they believe in the floating signifiers of the media in the form of information.

Vungthong's paper focuses on the effect of media in creating schizophrenic identities that is somehow related to one of the aspect of my

dissertation such as focusing on the creation of consumerist identities. This paper also relates to my project from perspective of exploring one of my primary texts, *White Noise*, therefore, situates my project in the present research repository related to the area of my study. This paper helps me highlight the difference of my perspective of approaching DeLillo's *White Noise* by employing theoretical notions such as anatomo-politics of the human body and late capitalism that bring novelty to the discussion of the individual's control and consumerist society depicted in the novel. However, the paper's main discussion revolves around the hazardous effects of consumerist society on individuals' mentality and lacks the detailed discussion of the way novel presents the control of individuals' daily activities. My study fills the gap by exploring the propagation of anatomo-politics in the novel that focuses on controlling individuals' life processes.

The study, "Body Control in American Cyberspace: A Study on Don DeLillo's *White Noise*" (2014), presented by Ruzbeh Babae, Wan Roselezam Bt Wan Yahya and Ida Baizura Binti Bahar is concerned with the influence of technology on the human beings in the contemporary world presented in the novel *White Noise*. It argues that the cyberspace is responsible to disembody the human body of the very being, the human essence, and to make it mere material shell of carrying information. The paper supports this argument with help of Katherine Hayles's conception of the split between information and the material form in which it is embedded and Baudrillard's concept of the split between simulation and reality.

The study states that "DeLillo's *White Noise* illustrates that technology disembodies human beings from their physical bodies, and instead human beings embody data and information" (Babae, Bt Wan Yahya and Binti Bahar 290). Justifying this statement the writers argue that Jack Gladney becomes the part of the system when he follows different steps at the ATM machine. During his engagement with the machine, data passes both through his body and the machine that gives him the sense of immortality because he fears death. Moreover, he confronts the fear of death when he gets to know from the computer technology at SIMUVAC and Autumn Harvest Farms that death has entered his body. He embodies the information of the technology and denies

the reality that death already embodies every human body, consequently, believes in the simulated reality of what technology tells him. Based on Jack's experiences and his confrontation with computer technology, this study claims that "cyberspace attempts to control the human body through the idea of death" (288). The paper, "Body Control in American Cyberspace: A Study on Don DeLillo's *White Noise*," concludes that "cyberspace is a control system that manipulates human beings through their bodies in the contemporary world" (Babae, Bt Wan Yahya and Binti Bahar 288). This main argument presents one of the most closely related subjects to the perspective of anatomo politics of the human body that my thesis intends to explore in the novel, therefore, help contextualize my project in the critical knowledge related to the area of my study.

The above reviewed paper helps me contextualize my project from various perspectives. Firstly, its selection of primary text such as Don DeLillo's *White Noise* relates it to my project based on the selection of my primary texts. Secondly, it focuses on the control of individual bodies that is one of the aspect of my project. Therefore, this study locates my project in the existing critical knowledge related to the area of my study.

While the study "Body Control in American Cyberspace: A Study on Don DeLillo's *White Noise*," focuses on the control of individual bodies through technology, it marks the difference of my aspect of exploring the text and, hence, signify the analytical dimension of my project. The focus of my analysis is based on the knowledge of fit and thin body promoted by the idea of beauty and health as a technique of bio-power that manipulates and controls the human body. My study further extends the discussion by incorporating the argument of the way consumerism enhances such type of control depicted in the novel.

Moreover, some other critics have also analyzed the novel *White Noise* from the perspective of overwhelming influence of technology in the present-day world. Susan S. Martins in his essay, "White Noise and Everyday Technologies" (2005), sees *White Noise* as the representation of high-tech America. According to him, the "airborne toxic event" in the novel is the depiction of ecological threat that is the result of the rising technology. He also

focuses on the aspect of identity arguing that the techno-world creates “schizophrenic subjects who struggle to assert their authentic selves against a network of shifting and fragmented representations” (Martins 93). Referring to an incident in the novel when Jack uses ATM machine, he claims that Jack has to prove his identity and being totally dependent on the machine, he fears rejection from it. He concludes this argument by commenting that *White Noise* presents “a vision of everyday living with a technological, consumer-oriented world” (97).

The above review of the available research that approaches *White Noise* from the postmodern perspective such as the influence of overwhelming technology is relevant to my study because it contextualizes my project by discussing different incidences in the text from the view point of postmodern techno-world. The review of this paper helps pinpoint the difference of my perspective that is the administration of the human body through the discourses that create knowledge about body depicted in the novel.

John N. Duvall’s essay, “The (Super) Marketplace of Images: Television as Unmediated Mediation in DeLillo’s *White Noise*” (1994), is one of the analysis of the text that is based on Baudrillard’s paradigms. Duvall argues that *White Noise* is “an extended gloss on Baudrillard’s notion of consumer society” (Duvall 136). According to him, the free choices provided by consumer society that pretends to foster individual freedom, actually hinders it in the form of social control. This forged emancipation, Duvall claims by referring to the character of Jack as a professor of the Hitler Studies, leads to the totalitarianism that is no more different than the fascist totalitarianism. Focusing on television in the novel, he concludes that it overturns the relationship between mediated and immediate experiences, so that only that knowledge seems real which is broadcast by the media in the form of information.

Since the above reviewed paper approaches one of my primary texts *White Noise* from Baudrillard’s paradigms, the analytical approach of the paper partially overlaps with the theoretical framework of my project. It also relates to my study because of its selection of the source text to develop argument that is one of the chosen texts of my project. Therefore, Duvall’s

study contextualizes my project in the available critical scholarship by focusing critical attention to the area of my study.

However, the study provides analytical discussion of *White Noise* in a more general way by referring it as a fictional representation of Baudrillard's paradigms regarding consumer society. It doesn't probe the text thoroughly to talk about the control of individual bodies, rather focuses its attention more on the aspect of totalitarianism. This gap in the paper signifies the need for further research. The gap is taken up in my project that focuses on the individual bodies' control and discuss the grip of power on the micro-processes of their existence. The discussion of consumer society in my project moves from micro to macro level, providing the overall effect of the power and consumer society depicted in the novel. In the following discussion I conclude the findings of the literature review.

Reviewing above critical sources facilitates me to reach the conclusion that there is, largely, no significant analysis of literary texts available from the perspective of Foucault's anomo-politics. It highlights the requirement and vindicates my analysis of the novels *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) and *White Noise* (1985). I have kept in view different aspects of my theoretical framework while selecting the secondary sources to be reviewed so that each review relates to some dimension of my project and leads to some significant findings. Consequently, from the above review it has become clear that some critics have used the concept of Foucault's bio-power to bio-politicize consumption in the postmodern world of consumerism. Similarly, some other critics have adopted Baudrillard's conception of simulation and Jameson's theoretical idea of late capitalism to contribute the theorization that help talks about the effect of media, technology and strategies of consumerism in the postmodern world. Hence, reviewing such papers can be seen helpful in justifying the adaptability of these specific theoretical concepts. Review of these papers have also helped me invoke the need to explore the literal implication of the selected theoretical notions in exploring literary texts and, hence, helped me highlight the gap in the contemporary literary scholarship that my project fills.

I have also provided review of the previously done research on the selected novels under analysis. My attempt of reviewing such sources helped me pinpoint the gap of exploring the texts from the perspective of anatomopolitics of the human body. Therefore, in the first place, the review of various secondary sources that are related to different aspects of my project helped me contextualize my project in the existing scholarship. Secondly, this review has provided me the direction to select my theoretical framework and research methodology that I discuss in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the detailed discussion of the theoretical Framework that I employ in analyzing the texts in hand such as Michael Foucault's notion of anatomo-politics of the human body, Jameson's conception of late capitalism and Baudrillard theoretical idea of simulation. I also provide the discussion of the way I have merged the notions of Michael Foucault, Frederic Jameson and Juan Baudrillard in order to build a conceptual framework to conduct my analysis of the selected primary texts. Furthermore, I provide the detailed discussion of Belsey's Textual Analysis as a suitable research method chosen for my study to conduct. Under the following subheading I present the discussion of the selected theoretical notions of my project.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

In order to explore anatomo-politics embedded in the selected texts, I have built my argument on the notions of anatomo-politics of human body and late capitalism put forth by Michel Foucault and Frederic Jameson respectively as the main theoretical lenses for this inquest. Michel Foucault, the French theorist, theorizes the concept of anatomo-politics in the first volume, *An Introduction, of The History of Sexuality* (1978). Frederic Jameson, an American literary critic, presents the idea of late capitalism in his essay "Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1991). I have also utilized some other conceptions such as commodity fetishism, depthlessness and waning of affect provided by Jameson in the same book. I have used the concept of simulation propounded by Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) as a supporting lens.

A discussion of anatomo-politics and its emergence would be in order to explain my principal theoretical position with a focus on Foucault's

argument in the first volume of his book *The History of Sexuality* (1978). *Anatomo-politics* of the human body is disciplinary dimension of the two-fold power called bio-power which deals with the management of individuals. Since I want to use Foucault as my principal theorist, the following quote provides me the required lens. The second pole of the bio-power, according to Foucault (1978), is

centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines: an *anatomo-politics* of the human body. (Foucault 139, stress added)

In his book, Foucault argues that along with a swift development in the various disciplines such as secondary schools, universities and workshops, during the classical period, the fields of political practices and economic surveillance of public health, problems related with birth rate and housing, also started emerging and “[h]ence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of bio-power” (Foucault 136).

According to Foucault, since the 17th century, a new approach can be witnessed in the operation of power based on managing and controlling individuals and population. Unlike the traditional concept of sovereign power which manifested itself through a forced control on the lives such as the punishment of death, the function of this newly evolved power called bio-power, “was no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through” (Foucault 139). This form of power, according to Foucault, is bi-polar. These two poles serve as “techniques of power present at every level of the social body” (Foucault 141). *Anatomo-politics* makes one of the poles which is the disciplinary dimension, the other one is called *bio-politics* which regulates population.

In order to talk about the hegemonic control of subjects, while analyzing the willing subjugation of the characters portrayed in the selected

novels, I have used the theoretical concepts presented by Fredric Jameson in his essay “Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late-Capitalism” (1991). I have used his concepts of depthlessness, waning of affect, commodity fetishism and late capitalism in order to explore how their implication leads to favor anatomo-politics of the human body.

Being a Marxist critic, Jameson has expanded upon Karl Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism theorized in the first chapter of his book *Capital. Critique of Political Economy* (1867). Jameson in his essay, “Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late-Capitalism,” explores postmodernism from the angle of capitalism and uses the concept of commodity fetishism in order to show the influence that capitalism has on the people’s lives in the contemporary world.

Although, Jameson proposes periodizing hypothesis in order to trace the emergence of postmodernism yet he remains flexible in his approach because he restricts the periodization of postmodernism to the notion of culture dominant that is an unbinding notion. Presenting the notion of culture dominant, Jameson ties culture with economic and political condition of society, therefore, stays true to Marxist tradition. He believes in the possibility of restricting cultural modes to specific timeline. According to him, culture has been going through mutation all the time and the current cultural modes can be taken as cultural dominant at the present time. Moreover, in order to bring his stance of periodization of postmodernism to clarity, he relies on Earnest Mandel’s categorization of capitalism into three different stages.

Here I need to refer to the three stages of capitalism presented by Earnest Mandel in his book *Late Capitalism* to talk about the relevance of the third stage, late-capitalism, to postmodernism that Jameson provides. According to Mandel, the evolution of Capitalism has gone through three stages. The first stage was confined to the borders of the nation state called the market economy stage. In the second stage it took the form of imperialism in which markets were expanded. The current phase, according to Mandel, is late capitalism that is “multinational capitalism”, according to Jameson (Jameson 265).

Coming back to the point of highlighting Jameson's theorization of postmodernism in relation to late-capitalism, I proceed my discussion further. Drawing upon Mandel's model of evolution of capitalism, Jameson, traces the development of cultural production. He proposes that postmodernism is a form of culture that has gone through mutation and took the current form in the wake of present day late-capitalism. According to him, "late capitalism" is the third stage of Capitalism in which there is no forced control of subjects. They are rather the victims of hegemonic control (Jameson 268). I have focused on this specific aspect of hegemonic control that prevails in the present phase of capitalism in analyzing the willing subjugation of the characters to the controlling strategies of consumerism, in my primary texts.

According to Jameson, postmodern society and culture are manifestations of the control of capitalist forces over the lives of people; they cannot evade it at any point between their birth and death on this planet. The process of commodification has become an intrinsic part of the market forces and, as a result of that, there is no limit of the exploitation or the profit-mongering. Two other postmodernist concepts presented by Jameson are the *waning of affect* and *depthlessness*. He contends that *depthlessness* is a 'new kind of superficiality' (that prevail in the contemporary time) where everything is scattered, and therefore, leads to multiple surfaces that obstruct the way to depth (Jameson 272). In postmodern age, Jameson argues there is this *waning of affect* where nothing is personal, subjective or unique rather everything is "free-floating and impersonal" (274).

It would be instructive to explain the concept of 'hegemony' here to vindicate Foucault's notion. During initial stages of development, its usage was confined to discuss the relation between city-states. But the context of its utility expanded when the term was taken up by different Italian politicians and political philosophers like Antonio Gramsci. He has done "one of the most significant contribution to twentieth-century Marxist thought, the theory of hegemony" (Bates 351). Being Marxist philosopher Gramsci used the term hegemony while attempting to understand the survival of capitalist-state. He

used it to discuss the supremacy of a class that was achieved not through coercive² way but through consensual means, in advanced capitalist societies.

The expanded application of the term can be seen in the way Gramsci discusses hegemonic class, hegemonic power and hegemonic ideas. According to him, the consent of mass required for the rule of the dominant class is achieved through the means of hegemonic power and the dissemination of hegemonic ideas. Being relevant to the discussion, here the main focus is to talk about Gramsci's idea of hegemony that "involves an analysis of the ways in which capitalist ideas are disseminated and accepted as normal" (Rosamond). Hence, in Gramsci's terms, hegemony is "the ideological predominance of bourgeois values and norms over the subordinate classes which accept them as "normal"(qtd. in Daldal 157).

Gramsci presents the concept of hegemony to talk about the distinction between two alternative mechanism of social power, coercion and consent. According to him, coercion is the forced control of the subjects who resist contribution to the capitalist relations of production while consent is achieved through hegemonic power that seeks willing contribution. Hegemony "is a form of social power that relies on voluntarism and participation, rather than the threat of punishment and disobedience" (C. J. Stoddart 201).

Although, unlike Gramsci, Foucault doesn't believe that mental enslavement of people can lead to the operation of power in contemporary age yet hegemony complements Foucault's idea of power when it stresses consent rather than preferring force. Focusing on the way ruling class employs ideological power, brainwashes and manipulates the rest of the society, Gramsci introduces his own concept of hegemony. Ruling class achieve the consent of the subordinate group by persuading them to accept their view of the world and believe their cultural, moral and political values. The basic premise of his theory of hegemony is that "man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas" (Bates 351). In this way, Gramsci's concept of hegemony complement Foucault's concept of power.

² Coercive control, according to Gramsci, is the forced control of masses exerted through "political society" i.e. the Government, Army, Police, Courts, Prisons" (Daldal 159).

I have also invoked the concept of *simulation* by Jean Baudrillard, theorized in his book *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) in order to explain the reinforcement of consumerist discourse and perpetuation of anatomo-politics portrayed in the selected primary texts. This concept is a significant contribution towards the evolution of postmodernism. In his book, Baudrillard is not merely supporting the view that postmodern culture is based on artificiality because such concept of falsity or artificiality presupposes truth or originality against which the artifice is identified. His view is based on the assumption that we have lost aptitude to make distinction between real and the copy. He argues that a copy is more real than the real. According to Baudrillard, when it comes to postmodern “simulacra and simulation,” “[i]t is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real” (Baudrillard 4).

In order to elucidate it further, Baudrillard contends that there are three “orders of simulacra” (Baudrillard 8). In the first order, which he links with the pre-modern period, the copy is the true representation of reality. Baudrillard associates the second order of simulacra with the industrial revolution that took place in the nineteenth century. He argues that, at this stage, the distinction between the real and the copy evades because of the proliferation of copies and mass production. This production perverts, masks and misrepresents an underlying reality by reproducing and duplicating it so well, thus, intimidating to replace it. But at this stage the belief of approaching the concealed fact is still there through an effective political action or through critique. However, in the third order of simulacra which Baudrillard associates with the postmodern age, there is no longer any distinction between reality and its representation; “there is only the simulacrum” (Baudrillard 79). This third order is relevant to my investigation.

Moreover, explaining this third stage of simulation, Baudrillard refers to various phenomena. Discussing the loss of differences between the copy and the real, he reasons that one of the phenomena that is responsible for the loss is a present-day media such as television, film, magazines and other such sources which provide us not only information about the world around us but also make us perceive ourselves according to the “media messages”

(Baudrillard 53). Therefore, the activity of buying goods is not based on our needs but on the desires that are induced in us by the images offered by media “[t]he hyperreality of communication and of meaning. More real than the real, that is how the real is abolished” (Baudrillard 56). These images deceive us in perceiving the reality about ourselves and about the world around us.

Furthermore, it is important to mention here that I have adapted Foucault’s concept of anatomo-politics for exploring individual’s administration through discourses that create knowledge about human body. Specifically, the discourses that create knowledge of fit and thin body in conflation with health and beauty. In order to explicate the theoretical framework further and to justify this adaptation, I need to make a nexus and a triangular connection. This triangular connection may be built by elucidating how Baudrillard’s concept of simulation helps discuss the reinforcement of consumerist discourse. It further focuses on how Jameson’s concepts of commodity fetishism and depthlessness help talk about augmentation of the same effect by stressing the influence of Late-Capitalism. Lastly, it encompasses how the selected notions when brought together help talk about the administration of human body, therefore, complement the discussion of anatomo-politics.

Baudrillard’s concept of simulation may help understand the reinforcement of consumerist discourse. The consumerist discourse including brands constructs the standard of lifestyle based on the conception of beauty and health. This standard serves as a reality or “truth that hides the fact that there is none: simulacrum” (Baudrillard 1). In order to conform to this constructed standard, consumers construct their identities. They also regulate their lives and appropriate their consuming behaviors according to the constructed standard set by consumerist discourse in the form of brands.

The theoretical ideas presented by Jameson such as commodity fetishism, depthlessness and waning of affect, with their focus on the fact that “there is this new kind of superficiality” (Jameson 272) favour the understanding of the position of brands in regulating lifestyle that is superficial. In the same manner, Jameson’s theoretical idea of late capitalism

complements Foucault's concept of anatomo-politics with its emphasis on the hegemonic control of subject rather than the coercive control.

Thus, Baudrillard's concept of simulation, Jameson's concepts such as Late-Capitalism, commodity fetishism and depthlessness ensure reinforcement of consumerist discourse that consequently leads to reinforcement of the perpetuation of anatomo-politics. . This triangular connection has helped me analyze the texts while exploring anatomo-politics at play. Under the next subheading I offer the comprehensive discussion of the research methodology and specifically, of the research method that help me conduct analysis of my chosen literary texts.

Since I have adapted Foucault's idea of anatomo-politics, it would be instructive to emphasize it further that the concept is used as a prop to support my own argument of managing individual human's life through establishing the ideal of beauty and that of health. I have developed this argument by bringing theoretical conceptions related to my argument as secondary sources, while keeping Foucault's theorizing of anatomo-politics as a background support to my analysis.

I would like to mention here that I have referred to secondary sources in my analysis that may be considered as contemporary approaches towards anatomo-politics. I have provided brief introduction to such sources in my analysis.

3.3 Research Methodology

Since I want to explore the selected texts from the perspective of Foucault's anatomo-politics, this research is interpretive and exploratory in its nature. Its approach is qualitative towards the analysis of the primary texts. Qualitative approach is used by many researchers as an appropriate method for understanding and gaining information about how human beings function. It is also helpful in the examination of the way people perceive and understand the world around them. With this focus on the human's behavior, Gabriele

Griffin's book presents that qualitative research is the "study and interpretation of cultural behavior" (Alsop 113).

Keeping this in mind, I have tried to justify the focus of qualitative approach on human's behavior through my analysis of the primary texts with its focus on the way people identify themselves with consumer products and the way their behaviors and functions are controlled in the consumer society that surrounds them. Qualitative approach being subjective and inductive in its nature have provided me enough space to give my own interpretation of the texts in hand but in order to avoid being unifocal, I rely on the secondary sources as well. Furthermore, qualitative research offers the opportunity to choose different methods of analysis that complement the qualitative approach. According to Gabriele Griffin "the choice of method will depend on the kind of research one wants to conduct" because it is "concerned with how you carry out your research" (Griffin 5).

I have employed Catherine Belsey's Textual Analysis as my research method. Before providing Belsey's conception of textual analysis in detail, I provide general overview of the method. There are many research methods available to be used by researchers working in the field of humanities. But the most common of all is textual analysis that "helps to study the text in its cultural, social and historical context by interpreting it" (Arya 173). The main concern of the textual analysis is to produce sense of the text. Therefore, Mckee in his essay "Textual Analysis" defines the premises of what can be called text. According to Mckee, Arya quotes, "[w]henver we produce an interpretation of something's meaning - a book, television program, film, magazine, T-shirt or kilt, piece of furniture or ornament - we treat it as a text. A text is something that we make meaning from" (qtd, in Arya 174).

According to Arya, Mckee also clarifies that finding meaning out of a text doesn't mean to confine it to only one possible interpretation. Quoting Mckee, in her essay "An Overview of Textual Analysis as a Research Method for Cultural Studie" Aneri futher says that according to the difference between text and work provided by Barthes "a work can be a text, only when it is scrutable to the readers" (qtd. in Arya 174). She says, for Barthes, text is something that demands its readers to participate in it while interpreting it. But

this participation is supposed to be objective not subjective because the reader is required to avoid biasness during interpreting a given text.

Since my research is exploratory and interpretive in its nature, I have used the method of textual analysis provided by Catherine Belsey in her essay, "Textual Analysis as a Research Method". According to Belsey, textual analysis doesn't favour free association or interpretation of a text by its reader without considering constraints that the text itself provides. Belsey insists that bringing something completely new to the text may lead to distort it. Hence, establishing a relationship between a reader and a text, Belsey's method of textual analysis marks the responsibility on the part of the reader to avoid distorting the text by trying to impose meaning on it that according to her, results into pure subjectivism.

I want to elucidate here that by avoiding free association, Belsey doesn't mean that the reader should look for the embedded meanings in the text, in other words, the essence of the text. She explicates this thing by referring to Barth's argument in his essay, "The Death of the Author" that the reader must not look for the author's intention of writing the text. Otherwise, the reader will resist all other ways to approach the text and will mark "destination of the text" (Belsey 161). Seeking the hidden essence of any text, therefore, confines its meaning to a single truth and hinders other attempts of exploring it from different perspectives.

As Belsey argues that textual analysis doesn't favour pure interpretation, it shows that she believes in several interpretations of a text but at the same time she clarifies that a reader is not fully authoritative in interpreting a text. She highlights this point with the help of Barth's essay "The Death of an Author". She claims that Barth, in this essay, is "certainly not proposing that we simply shift authority from the head of the author to the head of the reader" (Belsey 162). For Belsey, a text itself defines the limit of its possible interpretations when it engages in a dialogue with reader but it doesn't mean that "the text alone determines its own reading" (162). Therefore, she suggests that textual analysis has to be done by understanding the process of interpretation as "the effect of a relation between a reader and a text" (162). This quotation complements my study that focuses on the

postmodern reading of the text and hence prefers no end, while concluding the findings.

She also argues that only those questions should be focused during analysis that the text itself poses to its readers. Therefore, depending on what the texts in hand appeal to me, I have concentrated on only those questions that the texts under analysis pose and have tried to justify my answer to those questions with the help of secondary sources to avoid “free association” (Belsey 161). Belsey’s proposition, “interpretation always involves extra-textual knowledge,” favors my stance of drawing upon the framework of anatomo-politics of the human body provided by Michel Foucault in analyzing the primary texts of my project. This extra-textual knowledge that I brought to the texts under analysis helped me talk about the distinctive perspective “that emerges as its difference from all the others” previously explored aspects of the texts (Belsey 164). I may say that approaching the text in order to explore something different is one the objectives of textual analysis, according to Belsey, that my thesis aims to achieve by utilizing this method in analyzing the selected texts.

She also highlights the role that the text plays in the process of its interpretation with reference to Jacques Derrida, a French theorist. Believing that signifier is always there but it is difficult to tell what it exactly signifies, she states that “[t]he text, as a tissue of signifiers, makes certain demands on the textual analyst, and provides the material for analysis” (163). While sticking to a single perspective or believing in the true meaning of the text is not permissible in analyzing the text, Belsey states. She says that Foucault calls this “the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning” (Belsey 162). It means that according to Belsey’s textual analysis the reader has the authority to interpret the text within the limits of the possible meanings of what the text is composed of.

Thus, the method of textual analysis provided by Belsey not only helped me consider the impositions of the texts in hand, but it also helped me bring material from the outside for interpretation. It provided me the flexibility to develop a dialogue between what I bring to the selected texts from the outside and what I find in the texts, in order to make it admissible as an

interpretation, “not free association,” and to avoid “vague subjectivism” in Belsey’s words (162).

For the sake of clarity, specifications of Catherine Belsey’s Textual analysis that guide my study are as follows:

1. Textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism, where cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on the text. (157)
2. It is textual analysis that poses the questions which research sets out to answer. (167).
3. No text can ever compel its readers to view it in a particular way. Textual analysis invite certain readings and ‘offer’ specific positions to its addressee (163).
4. A textual analyst doesn’t have to make up his mind for a final meaning (173).
5. The text, as a tissue of signifiers, makes certain demands on the textual analyst, and provides the material for analysis. The material is by no means an empty space, a vacancy into which we pour whatever we like; instead, the text itself participates in the process of significations (168).
6. Text has priority, ideally, the text sets the agenda (171).
7. The text itself poses the questions that scholarship may be able to answer, and not the other way round (169).
8. While addressing questions posed by the text, we start from a problem (170).
9. Ideas do not come first and cast around for means of expression (163).
10. Research is expected to make a contribution to knowledge; it uncovers something new...It doesn’t have to be original in much more daunting sense...On contrary, in fact: it is much more likely to involve assembling ideas that have not been brought together in quite that way before (160).

The thorough discussion of the selected theoretical framework of my project shows that Foucault’s notion of anatomo-politics, Jameson theorization of late capitalism and Baudrillard’s concept of simulation when get merged they provide proper lens to conduct the analysis of my study. These core concepts of my theoretical framework together make matrix that needs a coherent and unified approach in textual analysis. It is also evident from the

above discussion that the selected theoretical conceptions are complex and flexible terms that may not be exhausted fully from the theoretical framework of a single project.

Moreover, the discussion of Belsey's textual analysis as a research method from the perspective of its relevance to the type of analysis that I conduct in my study has shown that this method is an appropriate method to analyze the texts in hand. Employing the selected theoretical framework and research method I analyze one of my primary texts *The Devil Wears Prada* in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

REGULATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE HUMAN BODY: AN ANALYSIS OF WEISBERGER'S *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA*

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* from the perspective of anatomo-politics of the human body and late capitalism as a framework together. I also employ Baudrillard's conception of *simulation* that complement my analysis. This chapter deals with the discussion of the way *The Devil Wears Prada* depicts the propagation of the knowledge of fit and thin body in conflation with the concept of beauty and health. This knowledge, I argue, acts as a disciplinary mechanism over the characters' bodies presented in the novel. It demands self-surveillance on their behalf, and hence, leads to the construction of docile bodies and, consequently, to the propagation of anatomo-politics. Hence, my main argument of bio-control through the concepts beauty and health uses Foucault's theorizing as a background support.

I also claim that consumerist strategies serve to enhance their usefulness in the contemporary age of postmodern consumerism by providing the opportunities of better self-expression and self-identification to fit and thin bodies, in the form of desirable consumer products. Therefore, referring to the construction of consumerist identity, I emphasize the role of postmodern consumerism in making the condition favorable for anatomo-politics to operate.

I have divided this chapter into two parts. The first part addresses the first question of my thesis highlighting the persistence of anatomo-politics of the human body in the consumerist society depicted in the novel. The second part extends the discussion by referring to the second question of my thesis that deals with the construction of consumerist identities. It is instructive to

mention here that I have incorporated my discussion of the third question in both the parts under various subheadings in chapter 4 and chapter 5. The first part of my discussion on *The Devil Wears Prada* follows in the following pages.

(I)

In this part of the analysis, I have addressed the first question of my thesis. I have focused on anatomo-politics of the human body discussing the character's self-controlling and self-disciplining behavior that results into the creation of active beings. With regard to this, I develop my argument addressing some sub questions that how the norm of fit and thin body gets attached with the concept of beauty and health in the novel. How it takes body as a site of operation of disciplinary mechanism that produces docile bodies and, consequently, paves path for anatomo-politics of the human body to operate.

Keeping in view the order of my research questions, I have addressed the first question in this part of the chapter under the following subheadings.

- Normalization of Fit and Thin Body
- Self-Administration
- Docile Bodies

4.2 Normalization of fit and thin body

In this section, I argue that *The Devil Wears Prada* presents the characters who are assigned the responsibility to bring themselves to care through self-surveillance. For this purpose, the notion of fitness and the fit body has been made the ultimate goal to achieve as a standard of beauty for all the workers and models at Elias Clark, the fashion magazine company, presented in the novel. This imposes the requirement of self-regulation in two possible ways that I embark upon later in my discussion.

Before going into the detailed discussion of the self-regulatory mechanisms that the characters impose onto themselves, I need to discuss the depiction of fit and thin body as an ideal of beauty in the novel. Pylypa's assertion provide me the basis to start my discussion. According to him, the discourse that portrays "the fit and thin body as not only healthy, but also beautiful and sexy" is the "product of the media and advertising industry" (Pylypa 25). Based on this assertion, I claim that such type of ideal is constructed in *The Devil Wears Prada* that demands the correction of behavior with the focus on improving life-style based on the appearance of body. This type of discourse is created in the novel through advertising company that promotes fashion magazine, Runway.

I initiate this discussion with analysis of the way Andrea, one of the main characters, develops sense of her own self and the way she tries to appropriate herself under the influence of this discourse. The discourse that prevails in the advertising company, where Andrea works, excludes certain ways of appearance, therefore, what Andrea looks like seems inappropriate to her while she considers other characters' dressing sense and their out-look as stylish and beautiful. Through Andrea's exposure to the world of fashion, the author gets the opportunity of presenting contemporary consumerist society in which human beings are transformed into reified subjects. The text depicts her as a victim of the society that uses a human subject in the most valuable way.

Andrea's perception about herself that completely changes when she joins advertising company (that promotes fashion magazine) can be understood with the help of Baudrillard's concept of simulation. Drawing upon the concept of simulation, I argue that excluding some styles and limiting others, the discourse sets ideal of beauty and of lifestyle and hence constructs a reality that is "more real than the real, that is how the real is abolished" (Baudrillard 56). The belief in this reality prompts Andrea to think odd of her own outlook. She seems unsatisfactory about her own getup at the day of her interview when she says that "[m]y clothes and hair were wrong for sure, but more glaringly out of place was my attitude" (Wiesberger 22). The concept of wrong presupposes the concept of right. In this case, when she thinks of her

appearance and her behaviour as a wrong one shows that she has developed the concept of right behaviour that is a construct of the discourse.

Moreover, Andrea's first visit to her office makes her realize that everyone at the company is following certain trends. Comparing her outlook to those trends, she recalls that "how very, very awkward I was among the most toned and stylish women in New York City" (Wiesberger 20). This shows that she starts believing in certain "constructed reality" in the form of the standard of beauty "concealing the fact that the real is no longer real" (Baudrillard 7).

Thus, Andrea starts working on her out-look. She narrates the way she gets ready for her job, "I had to allot an hour for travel time and a half hour to make myself beautiful" (Wiesberger 36). Here, the simulation of reality that beauty has a standard leads to the conception that to be beautiful is to meet certain ideals. The ideals are based on the simulated reality rather than the reality itself. This concept of beauty is totally superficial because it is all about the way one looks or the way one dresses up oneself. The idea of associating out-look with beauty gets infused in Andrea's thinking giving way to "a new kind of superficiality" where appearance of a person matters more than anything else (Jameson 267). This discussion help us proceed our analysis to reveal the constructed standard of beauty evident in the novel that is the norm of fit and thin body.

Andrea observes:

The women, or rather girls, were individually beautiful...it seemed impossible that any had actually given birth yet-or ever would....All weighed less than 110 pounds. (Wiesberger 189)

This observation has an impact on Andrea's self-perception. She starts thinking that she is not thin enough to be called beautiful. Therefore, when she receives the comments that "“Oh, Andy, be serious. I am fat. You're thin and gorgeous!”" she is unable to believe that complement. Rather, she remains doubtful about the presentation of her body stating that

Of course, as much as I tried to keep it at bay, to remind myself over and over that I was normal and they weren't...“Not until starting work at this

delusional place did I know what it was like to feel short and fat, all day, every day. (Wiesberger 189)

Calling the Elias-Clark, her working place, as ‘delusional place’, Andrea confirms that everyone working there, including her, can’t resist consuming the knowledge that prevails there. The knowledge of normalizing thin body through the association of beauty with it. Therefore, she confesses that no matter how strongly she tries to make herself feel normal, she can’t. This shows the influence of the information that she gets at Elias-Clark that the proper and the normal way to present yourself is to seem slim.

Moreover, at her working place, Andrea “was constantly called on to assure various Runway employees that they weren’t fat” (Wiesberger 189). Not even that but everyone prattles on success stories related to the health of body in front of her in an effort to convince her. It makes Andrea conscious of her own body and the care that is needed on behalf of her to alter her eating behaviour. But she finds it difficult to believe that one can achieve the beauty through the efforts of controlling their diet up to the extent of starvation. According to Andrea, Jessica, one of the employee at work, states:

‘Dr. Eisenberg said that the Zone only works if you swear off fruits, too, you know...she is right I have lost at least another ten pounds since my last fitting’. (Wiesberger 190)

Jessica justifies her argument using her doctor’s guidance that helped reducing her weight for her upcoming wedding. This shows as if she is trying to justify that the starvation that she imposes on herself is not unhealthy rather it is in accordance with her doctor’s recommendations. The involvement of doctor’s instruction, I claim, brings the discussion of the body-appearance into a connection with the concept of health. Here it can be seen that “the healthiness of the body has become associated with its appearance, and it is possible to buy into bewildering array of products and services that trade upon the importance of the cultural values of youth and beauty” (Watson 56). The appearance that Jessica desires for her upcoming “society wedding” is not only healthy according to her but also promising. It promises her the ideal body shape to fit into the ideal wedding outfit.

I emphasize that the characters in the novel believe in taking care of their bodies thinking that it would ensure their health too. But at the same time, the aim that they intend from training themselves regarding their eating habits is to fit into the branded clothes. Therefore, I claim that it is the ideal body image and its conflation with the conception of beauty and health that reinforce the constant surveillance through correcting the characters in their behavior. The novel in this way shares much in common with the current situation in the world where people are blinded by the artificial pomp of consumer products. It depicts that the contemporary world is no more concerned with human essence, rather it is the utilization of the human that matters.

The above discussion, in a nut shell, shows that the Runway magazine in the novel, centralizing the lifestyle of the characters, depicts the creation of fit and thin body knowledge in association with beauty and health. This creates a discourse that constitutes a form of regulation and control of the bodies of characters. My discussion of self-surveillance followed by the discussion of docile bodies would be in order to highlight the way this knowledge acts on body “as a machine” in order to increase its “capabilities”, “usefulness” and controlled management of “its forces” (Foucault 139).

4.3 Self-Administration

Discussing the self-regulation and self-administration of the characters in the novel followed by the creation of docile bodies, I argue that there is no direct supervision of the characters in the novel rather they are controlled through indirect intervention into their life processes. Developing this argument, I take help of Foucault’s model of panopticon³ given in his book *Discipline and*

³ In his book *The “Panopticon”* Bentham presents the model of modern prison in the form of panoptic building. According to him, it would be designed in such a way where prisoners in each cell would be confronted to the panoptic tower and they would not be able to see each other nor would they be able to know that whether they are under constant observation or it is just an illusion. Believing that they are under constant supervision, the prisoners would impose self-disciplining behaviour onto themselves.

Referring to the disciplinary power operated in the modern society, Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison (1977)* gives the extended implication of the term ‘panopticon’ propounded, initially, by Jeremy Bentham. Foucault argues that “The panoptic schema, without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, was destined to spread throughout the social body,” he explains; “its vocation was to become a generalized function”

Punishment (1995). The concept of panoptic gaze complements my discussion of the norm of fit and thin body as disciplinary mechanism, demonstrated in the novel. Referring to the notion of panoptic model, I argue that at first the ideal of fit and thin body in conflation with beauty and health is constructed, as I have discussed earlier, then the characters are exposed to the environment where they are under constant observation to make them act according to the standard. To have the knowledge of being under observation, imposes on them the responsibility of self-regulation. Where they “become the principle of their own subjection” (Foucault 143).

The characters’ performances are not controlled forcefully. Rather, the exercise of disciplining the bodies is carried out through subjecting them to the “field of visibility” (Foucault 143). This kind of field is created in the contemporary technological age through the use of technological surveillance (Sheridan 44-53). I, therefore, use Foucault’s theorizing as a background support, while arguing that disciplining power can be seen operating at Elias-Clark in the novel through the use of modern technology such as cameras and debit cards. The characters are under constant inspection because the cameras and debit cards track the performances of the subjected bodies, the employees at work.

Being new at Elia-Clark, Andrea gets guidance from Emily (the first assistant to Miranda) regarding the use of the ID card. Assigning her the much needed ID card, Emily informs her that she has to use it everywhere at the building, to get past through the security counter, to pay the food bills, to buy the magazines and even at the gym. But what Emily adds to the information surprises her, she tells her that “between the cameras and the cards, they kind of know what everyone is doing” (Wiesberger 63).

Therefore, referring to the Foucauldian concept of panoptic gaze, I claim that the examination of the character’s behaviour and their activities that is carried out at Elias-Clark through cameras and debit cards is a “metaphoric panoptic model” (Sheridan 23). Hence, it aims “to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals” just by putting them in the field where they are under

(Foucault 146). He also implies that if a number of individuals are required to act or behave in a certain way, panoptic schema may be used to impose on them any desired task (Foucault 205).

supervision (Foucault 144). We can see in the novel the presence of the panoptic gaze, as Emily tells Andrea about the cameras that “[t]hey are everywhere around here, just so you know” (Weisberger 62). This makes Andrea conscious about her own eating behaviour and she asks Emily, “Do they care what you eat?” Emily responds “Um, I’m not sure. Maybe? I just know they can tell” (Weisberger 62). Moreover, Andrea says:

I was working for a company who defined good ‘organization’ as knowing which floor each employee visited, whether they preferred onion soup or Caesar salad for lunch, and just how many minutes they could tolerate the elliptical machine? I was a lucky, lucky girl. (Weisberger 63)

This quotation shows Andrea’s perception of the way she and her colleagues are subjected to constant judgement shows that how the company normalizes the intervention into the life processes of the workers, including their diet and exercise, referring it as good organization.

Based on this indirect intervention and supervision, the employees are as organized as they are supposed to be at their working place. The presence of the panoptic gaze can be seen “creating and sustaining the power relation independent of the person who exercises it” (Foucault 146). Therefore, even when Miranda, the editor in chief, is not there to correct her workers in their behaviour, the presence of the panoptic gaze ensures and imposes the responsibility of self-regulation on them. It can be seen in the novel as Andrea wonders about the way everyone looks perfect and behaves in an appropriate manner, she says:

It’s a weird place, hard to explain. It’s like, everyone’s beautiful and thin and wearing gorgeous clothes. And they really do seem nice enough-everybody’s been really friendly. Almost like they are all on serious prescription drugs. I don’t know.... (Weisberger 81)

The novel can be seen reflecting the contemporary situation in the world at large where people are exposed to constant surveillance at their workplaces, shopping malls and at many other such places where they internalize the supervision and no longer resist it. For example, we can see the politics

behind the governmental restrictions regarding the current pandemic situation. The outbreak of Covid-19 and the restrictions imposed by governments all over the world expose the ways in which human lives have become the subject of governance. The strict monitoring of individuals' behaviours and their movement through the enforcement of quarantine and self-isolation indicates such bio-political measures. Through these measures the state maintains control over the physical bodies of individuals. We can see "panopticism which perfectly resonates with our current experience of quarantine" (Lorenzini 41-42).

Under the next subheading I discuss the creation of docile bodies⁴ that results from self-disciplining behavior.

4.4 Docile Bodies

In order to highlight the docility of the characters, I emphasize that the characters (the employees) under the constant supervision that is carried out through debit cards and cameras at Elias Clark impose onto themselves self-regulation and are referred as "usual robots"(213). They regulate their behavior under the influence of the discourse that normalizes fit and thin body in two possible ways. The first one is to control diet by ensuring the intake of low-fat food and the second one is to workout. Both the targets are aimed to achieve the ultimate goal of having a fit and thin body.

With regard to governance of character's bodies through diet control, I argue that the discourse that rationalizes fit and thin body as a norm centralizes the presentation of the "body" and uses it to construct the idea of consuming right food. As it focuses on self-expression of the characters through shaping and molding their bodies to make them look slim and thin, it makes them conscious about the intake of food accordingly. Almost all of them prefer to take low-fat food as Andrea observes in the dining room at Elias-Clark.

The chefs at the dining room, according to Andrea, are supposed to offer food with "low fat, reduced fat, fat-free, low sodium, or low carb"

⁴ The "bodies that do what they are told in as expedient a manner as possible" (Sheridan 2).

(Wiesberger 67). The one with a soup stall completely refuses to provide any of them and therefore his is the only table without a line. Andrea prefers buying from his stall but that shows her carelessness and her lack of knowledge about the right food. This makes her the target of scolding comments from the people around. Even the cashier in cafeteria asks her:

Do you have any idea how many calories are in that? Do you have any idea how fattening that little cup of soup is? I'm just saying, someone could put on ten pounds from just looking at it- *And you are not one who could afford ten pounds*, she implied. (Wiesberger 68)

Through these comments, Andrea gets to know that the right food to prefer is the fat-free food. She becomes aware of how much it is important to bring one's body to its ideal shape and work on it to maintain it.

Moreover, avoiding being the subject of gaze Andrea grabs a diet coke for herself although she doesn't want to take that. The "looks" that she tries to escape can be seen influential in directing her actions. It seems to be the same kind of look that Foucault echoes in his discourse on gaze and that according to Sartre "has the same purpose of disciplinary power, to reduce the subject to a body" (qtd. in Sheridan 30). Andrea says:

I grabbed a Diet Coke for Emily and a can of Pepsi for me, but on second thought, I took a Diet for myself as well. The difference in taste and enjoyment wasn't worth the disapproving looks and/or comments I was sure to receive during the walk from reception to my desk. (Wiesberger 266)

The above quotation shows that the gaze reduces her to a body in order to control it. That makes her prefer avoiding coke at the expense of her liberty that she is unaware of. She thinks that by giving up her own choice she would be able to avoid the gaze but she seems unaware that by doing so she would be subjecting herself to control.

Hence, Andrea's self-awareness regarding her eating behaviour that she develops at Elia-Clark chases her everywhere. She can't avoid thinking about being watched while eating at her apartment. Excited to see the burgers her boyfriend brings her, she states, "I clapped I was so excited, although a

quick visual of the imagined disappointment on Miranda's face appeared, one that said, *You? You're eating a burger?*" (Wiesberger 74). Here, it can be seen that one of the disciplines of the body that the knowledge of fit and thin body in the novel intends to exercise is that of diet control. The discourse also performs the function of assisting the characters in their responsibilities to take care of their bodies by creating the knowledge that slim and fit body is ideal and can be achieved through exercise. Defining exercise as the right activity that needs to be incorporated in daily routine, it controls characters' activities as well. Hence, not only the eating behaviour of the characters is controlled but also their daily activities get controlled. This knowledge put emphasis on the point that it is the devotion of their time to right activities such as exercise that would help achieving attractive looks and fit body.

All the employees at Andrea's working place are encouraged to dedicate their leisure time to exercise. Andrea when goes on to observe the building, Elias Clark, she comes to know that different sections are allocated to provide the employees different facilities. One of the section is assigned to gym. According to Andrea:

There was a free, state-of-the-art gym on the second floor for employees, complete with a full Nautilus circuit and at least a hundred Stairmasters, treadmills, and elliptical machines. (Wiesberger 137)

The availability of the free of cost gym service plays an important role in informing the employees about the importance of exercise. Keeping them focused on the maintenance of slim bodies, it ensures the self-regulation of the characters.

Since anatomo-politics of the human body is gender blind ⁵and takes life of a body under its controlling gaze regardless of its gender, therefore, I also quote textual evidences that shows male characters' subjugation. It is evident in the novel as Andrea says:

I had never laid eyes on such beautiful men. They were perfectly toned – not too muscular because *'that's not sexy'*- and they showed off their

⁵ Foucault's analysis of power is considered curiously gender-neutral (King 29-30)

lifelong dedication to gymwork in finely ribbed turtlenecks and tight leather pants. (9)

This quotation shows the way males, depicted in the novel, participate in daily bodily practices in order to achieve the desired body shape and in order to subscribe to the standard of fitness. To Andrea all the men seem beautiful because they had achieved the perfection through working on their bodies.

Another textual evidence from the novel is that according to Andrea, “Even James complained that his ass had looked so big that morning when he got out of the shower that he’d ‘contemplated calling in fat to work’” (Weisberger 189). Moreover, Andrea observes that James, one of her male colleague, “looked very, very skinny in black suede pants...” (123). These indications from the text help justify my argument regarding males’ participation in regulating their actions to achieve fit and thin body.

I conclude the above discussion emphasizing that the “controlled management” of an individual’s “forces” occurs by controlling the way it participates in daily bodily practices (Foucault 141). Hence, the findings of the above detailed discussion shows the sustenance of anatomo-politics of the human depicted in the novel through the creation of knowledge that standardize fit and thin body in the name of health and beauty. These, the novel seems to suggest, are the signs and manifestation of behavior which contemporary consumer society desire to inculcate, altering individual from human subjects to pleasure seeking consumers. I extend this discussion further addressing the second question of my thesis under the following section, the second part of this chapter.

(II)

This part of the analysis extends the discussion of propagation of anatomo-politics illustrated in the novel. For this purpose, It deals with highlighting the strategies of consumerism depicted in the novel that are responsible for enhancing the usefulness of fit and thin bodies by making them use the desirable consumer products. Since my thesis also aims to show construction

of consumerist identities, so, this part of the chapter also deals with the discussion of the ways through which the characters (the docile bodies) in the novel identify themselves with the consumer products and seek to have the opportunity of better self-expression through consumer brands. To justify this argument I use the concepts like; commodity fetishism, depthlessness, waning of effect and late capitalism to analyze the relevant textual quotes from the novel.

4.5 Consumerist Identity as an Embodiment of Beauty

The Devil Wears Prada depicts the role of postmodern consumerism in the self-conception of people by illustrating American consumerist society. Runway magazine in the novel provides all the information about fashion in the form of advertisements which we usually get through TV and radio in contemporary techno- world. The fashion magazine, Runway, is responsible for providing information in the form of knowledge that creates “a fashion discourse in the context of American society” (Adam 4). This discourse is grounded in consumerism, I claim, because the magazine advertises different consumer brands in the name of fashion. To show the strategies of consumerism that emphasize the appearance of a human body for promoting consumer products, I take help of Jameson’s notions of commodity fetishism, depthlessness, waning of effect, and Late-Capitalism.

In his essay, “Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late-Capitalism,” Jameson argues that in contemporary age of late capitalism there is no concept of personal or subjective feeling. He calls it “waning of effect” and states that it results into depthlessness (Jameson 274). With the help of Jameson’s notions selected for interpreting the strategies of consumerism, I argue that consumers in the novel get compelled to believe in the lack of individuality and depthlessness directing their focus towards superficiality transmitted by advertisements that promote consumer products known for enhancing bodily appearance such as branded clothes. Referring to the hegemonic aspect of late capitalism, I argue that commodity fetishism, depthlessness and waning of effect make the characters in the novel willingly

contribute to promote consumerism. In order to justify this argument I analyze relevant textual evidences from the novel. Andrea hears Miranda talking about the type of models that she wants for her magazine. Andrea says:

I could tell from her tone she was talking to Lucia, the fashion director who'd be in charge of the upcoming Brazil shoot, about how the models should appear. 'Happy, lots of teeth, clean healthy girls. No brooding, no anger, no frowning, no dark makeup. I want them shining. I mean it, Lucia: I will accept nothing less.'(151)

Here, the appearance has been emphasized to such an extent that the human feelings gets waned. When Miranda, the editor in chief of the magazine *Runway*, chooses models for her magazine she wants them with no human essence such as feelings rather she wants them to be human figures only. The figures just like objects that could be used to display the clothes. The type of models that Miranda wants breaks the traditional concept of inner and outside world. As expression presupposes the existence of inner world, Miranda's choice of expressionless models doesn't portray any embedded meaning rather it shows lack of meaning.

Therefore, I argue that commodity fetishism foregrounded by Miranda's choice of the models seem to obstruct the way of believing in human essence. It can be seen as the same "flatness or depthlessness" that Jameson sees in Andy Warhol's "Diamond Dust Shoes" saying that they provide "no way to complete the hermeneutic gesture" (Jameson 272). Similarly, the selection of the models seems to present no space for finding out the hidden meaning or the human essence. The models that are needed for the magazine don't seem to offer possibility to interpret them and addresses nothing which is beyond them. Rather, the lack of meaning seemingly direct the addressees of the magazine towards commodity fetish.

I claim that the aim of using such type of models is to address the audience of the magazine, in other words, the consumers, to believe that humans' appearance is more important than their essence. It also seems to convey the message that what people wear really matters in shaping their identity. Moreover, the standardized appearance of human body can be seen

associated with health as well. Miranda refers to the type of models that she wants as healthy girls.

Furthermore, another example from the text that help me explore the consumerist strategies is that Andrea reads Anita's letter, young follower of their magazine, to Miranda:

I am so ashamed of my body even though everyone tells me I am not fat. I want to look like the models you have in your magazine... Miranda, I know you are a wonderful person and fashion editor and you could transform me into a new person, and trust me, I would be forever grateful. My favourite designers are Prada (#1), Versace (#2), John Paul Gotier (#3)... I don't own any of their clothes and I haven't even seen them in a store...but I have seen their clothes in Runway and I have to say that I really, really love them. (264-265)

On one hand, this quotation helps me argue that the advertising company and the magazine seem to propagate the idea that those who are having fit and thin bodies are likely to avail the opportunity of wearing branded clothes that in turn help them express themselves in more acceptable way. As it is said that media plays crucial role in making people "internalize a very slender body type as ideal or beautiful" (Mills, Shannon and Hogue 145), the same effect can be seen here.

On the other hand, it helps me argue that the way Anita wants to mold herself to look like the models shows the uncertainty that overwhelms her identity, with no belief in a unified identity. It also highlights the meaninglessness attached to her identity. Which shows that through the magazine she comes to know that there is no essence rather there prevails a sort of 'superficiality' which leads to 'depthlessness' (Jameson 272). This believe in depthlessness makes her unsatisfied with her own identity.

The human figures in the advertisements in the form of models demonstrate the images that are more real than the reality. The information that Anita gets through the magazine can be seen consumed by her without having any critical approach towards that. It can be seen that her mind gets captured by making her believe in the standard of beauty through simulation.

The simulated reality finds way into her thinking that in turn makes up her self-perception. It makes her think that she is useless if she doesn't look like the models as she writes, "I ask myself if this is the way I wanna live my life and I answer NO!!!" (265). The depthlessness portrayed by Runway compels her believe in nothingness. She seems to have no meaning in her life because she compares her appearance with the presentation of the models.

The information that Anita seems to receive in the form of knowledge about fashion through the images of the models in the magazine makes her believe in superficiality. As a result, she becomes unable to find herself meaningful without the branded outfits too. The ads in the magazine prompts her to mold herself in order to look beautiful according to the standard. It can be seen that body dissatisfaction results from the impact of "exposure to thin ideal media images" that also influence behaviors (Mills, Shannon and Hogue 149-154). Through these examples, the author gets a chance to depict detrimental impact of the contemporary world where people's perverted desires get nourished by their unrestricted exposure to advertisements promoting fashion and consumer brands in the name of fashion.

As Runway is considered as a source "which maintains and perpetuate the concept of beauty to its members," (Ongi Karyanto 82) Anita wants to subscribe to the standard of beauty set by the consumerist discourse promoted by the magazine. It shows that the constant flow of the information that promote consumerism has made her deluded to such an extent that the sole aim of her life is to ensure her existence through consuming different goods. She gets deceived in believing that by molding her body appearance and by wearing branded clothes, consequently, would secure her a good and satisfied life, consequently, a desired identity. Hence, it can be seen that consumerism promises her an opportunity to find herself an expression of her own choice based on body appearance and the branded outfits.

It is enlightening to mention here that Catherine Belsey in her approach towards textual analysis stresses that specific analysis is made at a specific moment in history, therefore, it is new in that sense. According to Belsey:

Any specific textual analysis is made at a particular historical moment and from within a specific culture in that sense the analysis is not exhaustive. It doesn't embrace all possible readings, past and future, at the same time it is able to be new. (166)

This aspect of textual analysis can be seen helpful in approaching *The Devil Wears Prada* that spurs critical exploration of consumerism as a contemporary social and cultural issue. Focusing on the effect of present-day media in enhancing consumerism, therefore, can be seen complemented by textual analysis.

Continuing my discussion further, I argue that the reinforcement of fit and thin body as an ideal through consumer products and the consequential consumption of those products leading to the construction of consumerist identity can also be seen in case of Andrea. Once, Nigel whom she knows as the 'fashion authority' comments on her dressing saying that it makes her look like a "jersey mall-rat" (58) and offers her the chance to mold her out-look by telling her, "I CAN WORK WITH NOT FAT" (59). She ignores the mocking comments of Nigel and desperately wants him to mold her looks she states that "I wasn't offended by what he said and was excited that he wanted to redo me" (59).

Based on the above evidence from the novel, I argue that many of the designer-made clothes at Runway closet are available only in small sizes and therefore, put the demand on models to be too slim in order to fit into the clothes. Therefore, the models and the workers who are supposed to wear the clothes from the Runway closet in order to represent the magazine are conscious about their body appearance. Andrea, according to James is 'NOT FAT' that makes her eligible for availing the opportunity to represent herself in the most acceptable way through the branded clothes that Nigel is going to offer her.

The quotation also shows that Andrea looks forward to have the consumer products in such a way as if they would define her and present her in a better way. Thus, her identity is just a 'simulation' of reality rather than the reality itself, for she tries to conform to certain constructed norms rather than

accepting her own identity. To identify herself with the branded outfit and to subscribe to the standard of beauty, Andrea willingly offers herself for a change.

It is important to highlight here that Andrea develops critical thinking towards her submission too, the novel depicts. This can be taken as ideological resistance that I talk about with the help of Foucault's conception of resistance. According to him "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (qtd. in Hartmann 3). Throughout the novel, Andrea's conscious effort of making sense of all her actions that her job demands on her and her willingness to continue with that are going, simultaneously, in the novel.

There are some instances in the novel that shows Andrea's resistance. Assuming that someone is baiting her, once she encounters Judith on call, she pretends as if her job is worth dying for because it remained a great learning experience for her. Judith gets surprised and asks Andrea "you're brainwashed enough to actually say shit like that?" Andrea desperately wants to agree with her and wants to tell her that "I am a prisoner, more than you can imagine – please, oh, please, come and rescue me from this brainwash hell" (Weisberger 213). The way she calls her working place a 'brainwash hell' shows that she is not only a passive consumer of the information in the form of knowledge about fashion and beauty that prevails there rather her approach towards that is based on her critical observation.

Moreover, Andrea wonders when everyone else tells her that her job is worth dying for because she thinks it too tiresome but her thoughts and her actions seem to contradict each other. Although she gets tired of her job as she says, "And so after three months, I surrendered. I just got too tired. Emotionally, physically, mentally, the daily ordeal had sapped me of all energy," yet she surrenders willingly when she chooses not to question anything, "Why fight it?" she says (Weisberger 131), looking at herself in the mirror and accepting the fact that she should definitely work on her outlook that is too odd to look like the Runway girls. Hence, on one hand, she denies that she is no longer different than the other girls at Runway as she thinks, "but I am different," (Weisberger 213) on the other hand, she starts finding

everything related to fashion so attractive that she wishes to subscribe to that. Her resistance remains embedded in her thoughts and gets overwhelmed by the influence of her willingness to do away with that, therefore, I refer to it as ideological resistance.

Coming back to the point of discussing reinforcement of fit and thin body through consumerist strategies promoted by Runway, I further argue that the clothes being available only in small sizes at Runway offer the individual bodies the opportunity to represent themselves according to their own will. Everyone at Elias-Clark has this fear that intake of fat would result into a fat-body that would make their bodies unfit for the clothes at Runway and would deprive them of choosing the better self-expression through the branded and designed clothes. As Andrea is comparatively fat, she can't wear the designer-made clothes that Miranda chooses to replace with the new ones after wearing them once or twice. Andrea wishes to pick up some of Miranda's clothes but she realizes that "everything was in a zero size was a bit of a problem" (Weisberger 239).

Based on the bodily perfection that Miranda has achieved as she can wear zero size too she is "the most powerful person in fashion" and is considered as the fashion icon (Weisberger 147). This position of Miranda makes her avail the opportunity of having "capacity to spend in order to find expression for an aspirational lifestyle" (postmodernism and lifestyle 56). Miranda being able to wear zero size clothes can avail this opportunity provided by consumer brands and can choose the way she wants to represent herself. She also identifies herself with what she wears. Hence, her identity is not unified rather it is scattered on the surface and changes with the changing trends in fashion. This is evident in the novel when Miranda wears branded clothes according to the new trends. Andrea tells the way Miranda chooses her own outfits:

Four times a year, like clockwork, she flipped through look-books like they were her own personal catalogs and selected Alexander McQueen suits and Balenciaga pants ...on and on it went, until she had selected a full season's wardrobe directly from the runway, clothes that had most likely not yet even been made. (Weisberger 238)

Here it is evident that regulation of her identity takes place through the process of making self-conscious effort comprises of selective choices that she makes in choosing her clothes from the look-books of different designers.

Nigel Watson in his essay, “Postmodernism and Lifestyles (or: You Are What You Buy)” emphasizes this point that the concept of ‘lifestyle’ in the postmodern consumerist culture stands for ‘individuality and self-expression in advertising and designer culture (Watson 64). Associating the concept of beauty with the changing trends in fashion, the consumerist discourse can be seen giving way to foster superficiality of the character’s self-perception. Emphasizing superficiality, consumerist discourse directs Miranda to choose expression for herself based on the branded clothes.

Moreover, the above quotation also helps me argue that designers like Alexander McQueen and Balenciaga gets commodified when their names become attached to the products that Miranda uses. According to Jameson, commodification is not confined to the objects only but humans also “get commodified and transformed into their own images” (Jameson 272). This idea shows that “If at a given moment, the commodity was its own publicity, today publicity has become its own commodity” (Baudrillard 62). Over here, the publicity in the name of the designers has become its own commodity.

Thus, we can say that the consumer brands comprise “The hyperreality of communication and of meaning. More real than the real, that is how the real is abolished” (Baudrillard 56). Thus, over here, my discussion of the information and meaning attached to the name of the brand that promise the protagonist certain effects. It also sets the standard norm of beauty for her in the names of the popular designers. It asks her, if she wants to meet the standard of beauty, she needs to use the dresses designed by the most famous designers. As the outfits carry the whole message of providing the high social identity, therefore, she gets deceived and willingly becomes the subject.

It is important to highlight here that apparently, it seems that Miranda has the authority to set standards for her workers because she is the editor in chief of the Runway magazine. But probing deep into Miranda’s choice of self-expression shows that in reality she is mere subject to the authority that is

responsible for promoting different fashion magazines making up the whole system that promotes the consumerist discourse in the name of fashion. The first example from the novel that comes to justify my argument is Miranda's obsession with reading fashion magazines. According to Andrea, she always needs the magazine *Women's Daily Wear* "to be placed in the middle of her desk" (Wiesberger 111). Another example that helps in providing evidence about Miranda's subjugation is the moment in the novel when it reveals to Andrea's surprise that her authoritative boss is also submissive. Andrea narrates that she could listen Negel, pointing out her boss's dress, telling her, "that dress makes you look like a slut! A common whore!" (Weisberger 238). Miranda removes her dress according to the instructions that Negel provides her, Andrea observes.

Moreover, it seems as if she had the liberty to achieve this status in society because she chooses her own path to liberate herself from the previous old fashioned life as Andrea reads about the way she got rid of that life. Andrea gets to know about Miranda's transformation from Miriam Princhek to Miranda Priestly, on google. She finds out that for the sake of changing societal status Miranda left her family because "she was embarrassed by their old fashion piety and overwhelming lack of sophistication" (Weisberger 40). She then joined the fashion industry in order to achieve the high status in society.

It seems as if she is not bound to follow any rules rather she makes her own rules to be followed by her workers. Although she seems free to choose her own path, but in reality she is not. She has emancipated and liberated herself by engaging into social activity of her own choice, a job that she prefers more than anything else in her life. Baudrillard calls this strategy of emancipation a 'wrong strategy'. According to him it deceives and people "do not see that they are going in the direction of the system" (Baudrillard 56).

The above discussion helps me conclude that consumerism, depicted in the novel through the fashion magazine promoting consumer brands, can be seen emphasizing the life-style based on body appearance by providing branded clothes for fit and thin bodies to enhance their usefulness. Hence, consumerism can be seen influential in making the condition favorable for

anatomy-politics to operate. Another finding of the above discussion helps me emphasize that fashion magazine (promoting consumerism) in the novel creates the need in consumers to express themselves in the best possible way through the use of branded clothes, consequently, makes them possess consumerist identities. Hence, it can be seen that the novel throws light on the influence of consumerist society which, through powerful instruments like advertising and other such means, have weakened human ability to think and perceive rationally.

The Devil Wears Prada depicts the propagation of the discourse (through illustration of advertising company) that creates the knowledge of fit and thin body in conflation with health and beauty. The analysis facilitates me conclude that this knowledge acts as a disciplinary technique by taking individual bodies as a site of operation. It has become clear from the above discussion that under the impact of this knowledge the employees at Elias Clark impose onto themselves self-surveillance by correcting their eating behavior and by managing their daily activities. This shows that the knowledge considers the individual bodies like ‘machine’ and acts on them to “increase their capabilities” (Foucault 139). Moreover, the self-disciplining behavior under the influence of the knowledge about body results into creation of docile beings, and hence, is responsible for the propagation of anatomy-politics.

The analysis further helps me conclude that the reduction of human subjects to bodies can be seen influential in the novel where the characters are distributed “in the domain of value and utility” (Foucault 144). Therefore, fit and thin bodies can be seen utilized in the most valuable way by enhancing their contribution to present age of consumerism.

I also conclude that different characters of the novel under the influence of commodity fetishism and waning of effect promoted by media through simulation can be seen developing their self-perception based on depthlessness. They start believing in depthlessness and, consequently, start considering that they are free to choose any expression for themselves through the available consumer products such as branded clothes. This simulated perception betrays them in believing their liberation from all constraints related to their identities.

This type of self-image that is based on the process of simulation prompts them to willingly contribute to consumerism, highlighting the hegemonic aspect of Late-Capitalism. Their attempt to choose self-expression and self-identification for themselves using consumer products such as branded clothes leads to the construction of consumerist identities. In order to strengthen my argument further I present the analysis of *White Noise* in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

ECONOMY OF ENERGIES: AN ANALYSIS OF DON DELILLO'S *WHITE NOISE*

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to approach *White Noise* from the perspective of Foucault's theorizing of anatomo-politics of the human body and Jameson's conception of Late-Capitalism. I also invoke Baudrillard's theorizing of simulation that complement my discussion. Analyzing the novel, I argue that the hegemonic control of the characters in the novel is ensured through discourse that establishes the norm of fit and thin body in the name of health and beauty. For this purpose, I focus on the effect of the health discourse that centralizes the health of the body and creates the knowledge of healthy and unhealthy food and activities in the novel to maintain fit, thin and healthy bodies. I also consider the way fit and thin body gets associated with the concept of beauty that imposes the need on the characters presented in the novel to undergo self-surveillance in order to achieve the ideal shape of body. Therefore, the knowledge that standardize fit and thin body in the name of health and beauty is responsible for controlling life processes of the human subjects, the characters, making them docile bodies by establishing ideals for them to achieve and, hence, ensure the propagation of anatomo-politics.

In this regard, I have divided my discussion into two parts. In the first part that deals with the discussion of health discourse and the conception of beauty in the novel, the focal point of my discussion is the perpetuation of anatomo-politics depicted in the novel. In the second part, I intend to highlight the identity construction of the characters based on the consumption of consumer products presented in the novel and the reinforcement of anatomo-politics through consumerism. My argument, therefore, may be seen highlighting the contemporary manifestation of anatomo-politics such as managing the lifestyle of consumers individually and shaping the consumer into a docile body by constructing it as an object of the knowledge based on

improving its lifestyle. Regarding this, I would like to emphasize that I test my argument against Foucault's theorizing of anatomo-politics in order to have a background support.

In order to justify my argument, I discuss two characters from the novel that support my discussion. One of the characters is Jack Gladney, the protagonist, while the other one is his wife, Babette. Referring to these characters, I extract and quote the textual evidences from the novel in order to strengthen my argument. I also refer to Murry Jay's remarks and comments from the novel that validate my argument. Keeping in view the order of my research questions while analyzing *White Noise*, I present the discussion of the first as follows.

(I)

White Noise is a postmodern text in which DeLillo "neither judges, spells out his message, nor provides a tidy conclusion" (Osteen 6). It doesn't revolve around a single theme or subject rather it addresses many contemporary issues, simultaneously. It is instructive to mention that my discussion of the creation of truth about human body through medical profession and the transmission of health information through media depicted in the novel would be in order to bring to surface their impact in the form of characters' self-surveillance and their docility. This argument would in turn complement my discussion of anatomo-politics of the human body embedded in the novel. I present this argument in the following subheadings.

- Conquering Human Body through Knowledge
- Docile Bodies

5.2 Conquering Human Body through Knowledge

I need to bring into light different sources that are responsible for promoting the health information in the novel because I argue that such information is responsible for making individuals conscious about bringing their bodies to care through self-surveillance. Talking about medical profession depicted in the novel as the source of creating and promoting such information, I take help of Jen Pylypa's assertion regarding the creation of knowledge about body. In his work, "Power and Bodily Practice Applying the Work of Foucault to Anthropology of the Body" he states that one of the discourses that is responsible for creating obsession with the fit, thin, and healthy body "includes both knowledge produced by the medical profession and the popular discourse of health which takes on a scientific tone" (Pylypa 25). This help me develop my argument of the way medical profession in the novel establishes truth about human body by employing scientific knowledge that makes the individuals bring their bodies to care in order to conform to the constructed truth or standard of health.

Throughout the novel we can see that Jack Gladney and his wife, Babette, are afraid of death as "[t]he fear of death lies at the center of *White Noise*" (Amutha 24). Therefore, I argue that any action that these two characters perform is an attempt to do away with this fear. By claiming that their fear of death is a construct based on the facts in the form of information about the health of their bodies, I argue that these facts are established by the health discourse that emphasizes the need to take care of body. According to Asli Daldal, Foucault is of the view that "[t]he production of the knowledge of the body is more of a mastery for conquering the individual" (Daldal 166). Therefore, I argue that health information constructs knowledge of the characters' bodies in the novel. This knowledge makes both Gladney and Babette seek fit thin and healthy body through employing self-monitoring behavior in their everyday conducts.

In order to justify the above argument, I take help of different critical sources. In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault describes how the medical profession gained prestige by employing "scientific" knowledge, which gave it

considerable power in defining reality (qtd. in Pylypa 23). It wouldn't be wrong to refer the 'scientific knowledge', in this postmodern age, as techno-scientific knowledge because in postmodern societies, science has become linked with technology and play a crucial role in providing information and hence in establishing truth (Grant 76). Capitalist techno-science is "changing the stakes from maximization of profit to the maximization of information," (Grant 76). My discussion revolves around the same premises where medical profession enjoys an authoritative position by employing techno-scientific knowledge in producing truth regarding an individual's body. This truth then serves as a standard that demands conformation on behalf of the characters in the form of self-surveillance that I embark upon later in my discussion with the specific emphasis on the way it allows the "procedures of power" to work that characterized the disciplines of the body: an anatomo-politics of the human body"(Foucault 139).

I substantiate my argument by analyzing relevant textual evidences from the novel. Don DeLillo's *White Noise* is a postmodernist work and "it reveals the hectic life of the commercialized America" (Bhardwaj 103). The Postmodern American society, hence, depicted in the novel shows the overwhelming influence of the scientific knowledge that imparts medical profession a place of authority in establishing truth. Murry's remarks in the novel support my argument. According to Gladney, Murry says, "In New York, people ask if you have a good internist. This is where true power lies" (DeLillo 96).

This comment helps me develop my argument. I claim that this power that the internist enjoy is based on the creation of truth. The truth through which the individuals articulate their everyday conducts in order to conform to it. For example, Babette, the protagonist's wife, goes through examination by Mr. Gray who establishes truth about her body by telling her that she is not normal with regard to the most intricate problem that she faces in her life, the fear of death. When Gladney tries to console her regarding the fear, she continues to insist that her situation is different which makes her abnormal according to the medical tests that she has been through. She reveals, "But Mr.

Gray said I was extra sensitive to the terror of death. He gave me a battery of tests” (DeLillo 87).

By constructing the conception of normality and deviance, this information based on the scientific knowledge that she comes to know through the medical tests terms her deviant. She is able to identify her condition with what is categorized as deviant. That makes her consider herself different from others and hence deviant. Therefore, Babette is obsessed with the tablet called Dylar that is said to be effective in controlling the fear.

The discussion shows the willing subjugation of Babette who is not enforced to go through the tests, rather she herself wishes to talk about her problem and to find the way out of that situation. When Gladney tells her that the only possible way, according to Murry, is to repress her fear of death to get rid of it, she refuses saying that repression is no longer valid in this age:

I thought repression was outdated. They have been telling us for years not to repress our fears and desires. Repression causes tension, anxiety, unhappiness, a hundred diseases and conditions. (DeLillo 128)

Although Babette denies repression yet she unknowingly submit herself to power that lies in the construction of knowledge. To clarify this point and to highlight Babette’s willing subjugation, it is important to refer here to Foucault’s perspective of power as a ‘productive network’. Foucault (1980) in his essay, “Truth and Power” insists that it “traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault 119).

Unaware of the power that lies in the construction of knowledge and discourse, Babette willingly submit to it by following the way to subscribe to the truth that the knowledge about her body’s health establishes as normal. By willingly joining the experiment and using the tablet Dylar that is supposed to be taken in order to move towards normal from the deviant’s position shows her willing submission to the power of knowledge that creates truth about her body’s health.

There is another evidence from the novel that shows the contribution of medical profession and scientific knowledge in producing the truth about the characters’ bodies. According to Gladney, “pshychobiologists” are involved in

conducting the experiment on the tablet called Dylar that is said to prevent someone from the fear of death. Since ‘psychobiologist’ is portmanteau made up of two words, psychologist and biologist, it shows the overlapping nature of medical field and science, illustrated in the novel. Hence, it is the health discourse based on the scientific knowledge that establishes truth and demands conformation to the constructed truth on behalf of the individuals, the characters.

In order to explicate the discussion further, it is important to refer here to Foucault’s concept of medical gaze. According to Foucault, the “medical gaze”⁶ is not supposed to explore the hidden essence of the body rather it is concrete aiming to seep into the body to reveal its concealed truth. It seeks to produce knowledge and establishes truth by examination of the object before it (qtd. in Hancock 444). This helps us understand the examination of the Gladney’s body at the clinic, regarding health. As he says, “they were trying to help me, to save me,” (DeLillo 120) he submissively presents his body for examination that makes him a passive object to be examined in order to reveal the secrets of his body and in order to inform him about his health. He says:

Instruments were strapped to my thighs, electrodes planted on my chest. They inserted me in an imaging block, some kind of computerized scanner. Someone sat typing at a console, transmitting a message to the machine that would make my body transparent. (DeLillo 120)

After the examination, Gladney gets to know that his body has been through the most advanced tests devices and the resulted data is going to be analyzed through sophisticated computers that help physicians “see more deeply, more accurately” (DeLillo 120). At the end he is supposed to take the results to his doctor, the person tells him “Your doctor knows the symbols” (DeLillo 122).

⁶ In *The Birth of The Clinic* (1973), Foucault discusses the growth of medical industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, linking its growth directly to the expansion of medical knowledge. Central to the accumulation of medical knowledge was what Foucault referred to as “the medical gaze,” the medical separation between a patient body and his identity. Modern medicine deployed a specific way of seeing, a medical gaze which could penetrate illusion and see the hidden reality, the hidden truth of the body that could only be understood by the medical expert (qtd. in Hancock 443).

Moreover, the health of a body has been associated with life up to such an extent that it can be taken as a substitute of life. Therefore, whatever Gladney comes to know about his health makes him conscious about his death. Jack himself says that “fear is self-awareness raised to a higher level” (DeLillo 101). Murry also tells him about the growing fear of death in his life. Murry says:

We study it [death] objectively. We can predict its appearance, trace its path in the body. We can take cross-section pictures of it, tape its tremors and waves....The more we learn the more it grows. (69)

He also adds to his remarks saying that “this is the nature of the modern death” (69). Here, on one hand, we see the objectification of Gladney’s body that has been probed, examined, analyzed and classified. His body can be seen subjected to the medical gaze where the detachment of the patient’s body from his identity takes place. This stratification that is the consequence of medical gaze can be seen in the way Murry talks about tracing death in a body. Where condition of the body is treated like a separate entity from it. This separation in turn leads to “dehumanization of the body” (Hancock 443). When the body is objectified by the gaze it no more retains the value of having a human essence.

On the other hand, the above observation also help justify my argument that it is the ‘maximization of private information’ with which capitalist techno-science empowers the medical profession to enjoy the authoritative position of constructing truths because “the gaze defines both the object of knowledge and the subject knowing that object,” the medical expert (qtd. in Hancock 443). The gaze becomes a way of access to the life of the body by centralizing its health. In turn, it let one of the modern technologies of power to operate, anatomo-politics that takes life of a body as its objective.

Based on the above detailed discussion, it wouldn’t be wrong to say that the novel provides clear illustration of the production of truth by the medical profession based on scientific knowledge about health. This truth creates health discourse and centralizes health of the bodies (the characters) up to such an extent that it becomes the sole aim to achieve in order to live.

Concluding the discussion, I accentuate that one of the main reason behind the creation of the “medical-scientific truths” is concern for the body. Hence, it is considered as “the plant for the production of truths, finding its raw material in the health of the body” (Cunha da Silva). This truth is in turn based on health information that is “an instrument of control” and the way doctors inform “is a strategy to regulate the lives of individuals” (Cunha da Silva). This observation shows the involvement of scientific knowledge in handing the doctors an authority of establishing truth about the health of the body. Consequently, the conformation to this truth rely on the demand for individual disciplines and constraints. The characters depicted in the novel, therefore, intend to subscribe to the truth by showing discipline in their life-conducts (that I embark upon later in my discussion of ‘docile bodies’). Hence, the established truth about the body’s health finds its way to regulate the body and correct it in a more precise way, hence, gets “tied to the disciplines of the body: the harnessing, intensification and distribution of forces, the adjustment and economy of energies” (Foucault 145).

Moreover, the endorsement of health information is not only confined to the medical institutions because, these days, print and electronic news media are major sources of health information (Wallack and Winet 173). Henceforth, it is not necessary to consult doctor regarding maintenance of heath, since the information is mediated through radio, TV and the media in general, in the contemporary media society. Based on this justification, I support my argument stressing that media acts as a mediator between the subjected body and the information that is meant to be consumed by them. *White Noise* reflects the contemporary world where media plays an important role in transmitting information.

The novel *White Noise* shows the importance of media as a mediator between the targeted individuals and the health information that is meant to be consumed by them. This is evident in the novel when Babette reveals that what makes her participate in the secret research (the research that aimed to help people get rid of the fear of death) is an ad in the magazine, *National Examiner*. According to her, the ad says, “Volunteers wanted for secret research. This is all you have to know” (DeLillo 85). This is followed by

another ad that she comes across in the tabloid, “Mr Gray’s ad”, she also says that finally, “the headline hit home. FEAR OF DEATH, it said” (DeLillo 87). As a result, Babette joins the secret research voluntarily and comes to know after she has been through different tests that she is “extra sensitive to the fear of death” (DeLillo 87). But it remains unclear whether Babette is actually having this fear or she is getting deceived by the “media messages” that creates “hyper reality of communication” that is “more real than the reality” (Baudrillard 53).

The information that Babette receives through ads about the research makes her responsible for taking care of her health. She associates her condition and the fear that haunts her with the headline. Therefore, she becomes willing for submitting her body to be examined and to be probed for exploring the truth about her health.

Another media source that is responsible for promoting health information in the novel is radio. Radio plays an important role in broadcasting health information in the novel. It broadcast hazardous effects of the toxic element that looms over population in the form of clouds when the ‘toxic event’ occurs in the novel. At first, Gladney’s family comes to know through the radio that the symptoms that results from the exposure to the toxic event include “nausea, vomiting and shortness of breath” (DeLillo 54). Later on, the radio changes its verdict saying that the new symptoms are palpitations and a sense of *déjà vu*” (DeLillo 55). Lastly, the previous symptoms are said to be outdated and are soon replaced by “convulsion, coma and miscarriage” (DeLillo 56) as the major symptoms that results from the exposure to the Nyodine D, the toxic element that makes up the cloud during the toxic event.

The involvement of state institutions in controlling individuals during the toxic event (as depicted in the novel) is relatable with their management since the outbreak of Covid-19. In the contemporary situation of Covid-19, we are constantly receiving information about the protective behaviours that need to be adopted such as maintaining social distancing, wearing masks etc. State power structures, including medical institutions, are playing an important role in convincing people to get themselves vaccinated. Government is calling on citizens, through the use of media, to prevent themselves from catching the

virus by adapting the protective measures. These examples demonstrate the level of intrusiveness control that the state institutions have on individuals' lives in the contemporary society.

Here, it is important to mention Baudrillard's concept of simulation in order to understand the simulation of reality that takes place during the transmission of information. Uncertainty that rises from the way radio make changes while reporting the detail of potential symptoms blurs the difference between the real and the copy. Jack's family receives this information through radio, and the children develop the symptoms, accordingly. The children suffer from sweaty palms but it remains unknown that whether they develop these symptoms as a result of their exposure to Nyodine D or their bodies are responding to the information on the radio "only when they are broadcast on radio"(DeLillo 62). This information about health helps them develop self-awareness that in turn makes them conscious and responsible about their health.

The above detailed discussion of creation and transmission of health information shows that there are different factors responsible for promoting health discourse in the contemporary postmodern age, represented in the novel. This health discourse in turn prompts the individuals to undergo self-surveillance and makes them behave in a particular way without implementing any enforced control on their everyday-conducts. "The surveillance of body weight and fitness comes from oneself, others, the medical profession, and the media" (Pylypa 27). Therefore, the involvement of media in transmitting the health information shows the hegemonic control mediated through "media messages" (Baudrillard 52) without any need of intervention of authorities in controlling individual's actions. It can be seen that the propagation of health information through different mediums makes consumers of the information, Babette and Gladney, responsible for their health. Health information in turn gets associated with appearance of characters' bodies and, therefore, is responsible for their self-surveillance aimed at achieving ideal body that I am going to argue in the following discussion.

5.3 Self-assessment through Health Discourse

White Noise shows evidences of the way health gets associated with the appearance of the body that is responsible for creating docile beings. I initiate the discussion of docile bodies by focusing on the character of Babette and her self-monitoring attitude towards her routine life based on the knowledge in the form of “health discourse” that is said to create “obsession with fit, thin and healthy body” (Pylypa).

Babette has a lot of information about what helps in improving and maintaining a good health. This information, I claim, is responsible for foregrounding the appearance of body and hence, regulates her life-style. Based on this information, Babette can be seen doing exercises most of the time, in the novel. Gladney says “Babette was running up the stadium steps...and did some kind of neck stretching exercises” (DeLillo 13). Moreover, she not only performs exercises herself rather her job is to teach others about the disciplined life-style. Gladney says:

Two nights a week Babette goes to the Congregational church at the other end of town and lectures to adults in the basement on correct posture. Basically she is teaching them how to stand sit and walk. (DeLillo 18)

The way Babette delivers lectures on good grooming shows that Babette’s obsession with exercise is the result of the knowledge that she has about what activities are good to maintain healthy life-style. It is actually her fear of death that instils in her the need to perform different exercises to achieve fit and thin body. She thinks it will ensure maintenance of her health.

Babette’s another disciplining behavior is related to her eating habits. She chews a ‘sugarless’ gum in order to control her appetite of smoking that is considered hazardous to health. Chewing a sugarless gum shows her preference of avoiding food with sugar that can be hurdle in achieving fit and thin body. But her daughter tells her that the gum is encrypted with the information that it can be hazardous to health too (DeLillo 25). This leaves her indecisive about what to do if not to take either one. This shows that this kind

of information that comprises of health discourse surrounds her all the time. This knowledge about healthy and unhealthy food makes it difficult for her to live her life according to her own will. It can be seen that she can't make her own choices regarding what to eat rather it is the information that controls her decision-making regarding eating. Once she says "my life is either/or" (24) because every single thing is said to be either good or bad based on its relevance to health of the body and its appearance.

The discourse that is said to be linked with the techniques of power that are seemingly repressive, Foucault (1980) says, "serves to make possible a whole series of interventions, tactical and positive intervention of surveillance, circulation, control, and so forth" (Foucault 120). In this context, I argue, power lies in identifying one's actions with the constructed categorizing of the things to be done and the things to be avoided. Therefore, Babbet's whole life is only the matter of doing something and avoiding other and hence ensuring subjugation by conforming to what is said to be good for achieving fit and thin body and hence a healthy life-style.

Moreover, she also delivers lectures on what she calls, "Eating and Drinking: Basic Parameters". These parameters, according to her, includes what to do and what to avoid before and after eating. She believes that "[p]eople need to be reassured by someone in a position of authority that a certain way to do something is the right way or the wrong way" (DeLillo 77). She also devises and plans things to teach in the same way. Believing that dividing activities into categories help people avoid those that can be dangerous to health. Furthermore, "[s]elf-monitoring is achieved on two interacting levels: practice and discourse. Individuals feel compelled to regulate their bodies to conform to norms, but also to talk about what they "should" and "should not" do and to "confess" any deviation from these norms" (Pylypa 24). Hence, the above discussion that brings into light Babette's conducts of her own routine life and the way she teaches others about it ensures her achievement of self-monitoring.

It is instructive to mention here Preston's account of such type of self-accountability. Drawing upon Crawford's idea of Healthism⁷, he says that 'Healthism' (being rooted in the economic concept of neoliberalism) "has operated under the guise of empowering people through a sense of autonomy and agency associated with responsibility" (Preston 27).

Hence, the self-surveillance and the self-responsibility that Babette imposes onto herself regarding her body is supposed to guarantee her health. Therefore, when she reveals her fear of death Gladney consoles her and tells her, "You are still young, you get plenty of exercise. This is not a reasonable fear" (DeLillo 87). Babette's subjugation is, therefore, not only ensured through consumption of the tablet (that I have discussed earlier) but also through her self-disciplining behavior regarding her actions and consumptions that are based on the goal of achieving fit and thin body to ensure health.

Similarly, Gladney's response during answering some of the questions posed by his medical consultant reveals the way he undergoes self-administrative behavior in his everyday conducts, especially, regarding his eating behavior. Gladney feels happy sharing his disciplined diet routine with him. He says that I "[h]aven't touched milk since I was a kid. Haven't touched heavy cream. Eat bland foods. Rarely touched hard liquor" (DeLillo 121). For this reason, he needs rewarding words in response saying, "I waited for him to tell me I was adding years to my life" (DeLillo 121). Here, the healthiness of the body can be seen associated with the avoidance of fatty food that results into a fit body.

It is enlightening to refer here to Preston's account of the above mentioned discipline aiming to achieve fit body. According to him, Healthism being rooted in neoliberal economic conditions conflates discipline with autonomy. In this way, the so called autonomous individuals consider themselves liberated to constitute their own identity by acquiring discipline in daily life, nurturing a continually self-evaluative state of mind. Fostering this

⁷ "Healthism" is a movement that started in 1970s. Redefinition of the pursuit of health in relation to lifestyle and the solution of health problem linked with individual responsibility for ideological purposes occurred during this period. Talking about the metaphors that health came to encompass during this time, Crawford asserts, people started using words like "self-control self-discipline self-denial and will power" when they talked about achievement of health (Crawford 412).

kind of self-assessment approach in order to meet the ideal of health leads to ‘body consciousness’, hence, “the body is seen as a symbolic metaphor of healthism” (Preston 23).

Gladney’s discipline regarding diet is based on avoiding fatty foods. Therefore, I assert that the responsibility on the part of the characters to maintain good health by acquiring discipline in their routine-life is aimed to achieve fit and thin bodies. Hence, centralizing the health of the body, the actions and activities that are said to be healthy and unhealthy controls the actions of the characters by imposing on them the responsibility of bringing their bodies to care by achieving the goal of having fit and thin bodies.

The notion of health as individual responsibility, in the economic context of neoliberalism, avoids securing health as a human right by endorsing the impression that a human’s own choice of achieving health determines its destiny. It gives the impression that health is not something that should be demanded rather it is something that must be achieved by considering it much needed responsibility. It individualizes a person in this sense by stressing that “you as an individual, have the responsibility to change your own body for your own health” (Preston 5).

Moreover, there are evidences in the novel that emphasize fit and thin body as a sign of beauty. Watson also emphasizes this aspect saying that “the drive for us to achieve fitness is related as much to the desire for surface attractiveness as it is to the protective dimensions of health promotion” (Watson 57). For example, one of the reason of Babette’s obsession with exercise shows her desire to attain the ideal shape of body, to enhance her appearance and her looks. Gladney says, “I reminded her how much I liked the way she looked. I suggested there was an honesty inherent in bulkiness if it is just the right amount” (DeLillo 11). But according to Gladney, Babette takes his compliment as if it is meant to make “virtues of her flaws” because she is “not happy with her hips and thighs, walked at a rapid clip, ran up the stadium steps at the neoclassical high school” (11). This also dismantles Gladney’s description of his wife, Babette, the way he calls her an ‘ample woman’ and says that such women “lack the guile for conspiracies of the body”. Looking at the way she is obsessed with exercise, it doesn’t seem that she is not concerned

about her body's appearance rather it shows that she dedicates her time to work on her body to bring it to the ideal shape.

Gladney also shows concern about his own body appearance too when he consoles Babette about her out-look and her body-appearance saying that she doesn't need to be disciplined regarding her diet. He stresses his suggestion, saying, "I was the one who needed to show discipline in matters of diet" (11). This shows standardization of fit and thin body as an ideal body-appearance for both Babette and Gladney.

Moreover, when Gladney describes the sight of unstocking of 'station wagons' enjoyed by everyone he calls the women around there as "crisp and alert in diet trim" who represent the women of his city (DeLillo 9). Contrary to those women, according to Gladney, his wife is "tall and fairly ample" and has got hair that "used to be called dirty blond" (DeLillo 10). He says "if she were a petite woman, the hair would be too cute, too mischievous and contrived" (10). Gladney's remarks shows the normalization of fit and thin body in the name of beauty that can be seen influential in changing the perception of a body's appearance as a whole. It also shows the way slim and thin body is conceived as beautiful. It shows the conflation of fit and thin body with the concept of beauty as a norm.

Therefore, it can be seen that the characters' everyday activities are articulated by the aim of achieving fit and thin body that in turn is supposed to guarantee them health and beauty. The characters depicted in the novel show their lifelong dedication to gain and maintain a good health and an ideal body appearance. Their needs, desires and their actions are directed and guided towards how to have a healthy life and ideal body presentation. This discussion helps me assert that the extinction of their (characters') forces occurs when their activities and their needs are confined to the prescribed space defined by the discourse that normalize fit and thin body. The way Babette and Gladney subjugate themselves by employing self-disciplining behavior and by becoming active beings supports my argument of sustaining the anatomo-politics.

The above observation shows that the manifestation of anatomo-politics takes place through the creation of ‘docile bodies’ under the influence of fit and thin body knowledge in conflation with the concept of health and beauty. This knowledge acts as a disciplinary mechanism over a human body. The characters in the novel, therefore, operate in accordance with the constructed truth about their health and beauty that the knowledge establishes. Therefore, we may say that in Don DeLillo’s *White Noise* anatomo-politics as a technique of power manifest itself through the mechanisms of discipline, “the disciplines of the human body” (Foucault 121, 145). This modality of bio-power that is operated through disciplinary mechanism is said to be more efficient than the techniques of power employed previously (Foucault 119). In order to proceed this analysis further by incorporating the discussion of the second question, I present the second part of this chapter as follows.

(II)

5.4 Consumerist Identity as an Embodiment of Health

In this part of the chapter, I argue that consumerist strategies make the consumer products desirable for those who articulate their actions in order to achieve fitness. I argue that the consumption of desirable consumer products by the characters depicted in *White Noise* shows the characters’ utility in the contemporary age of consumerism. Therefore, this chapter deals with the discussion of the way consumerism favours propagation of anatomo-politics of the human body.

Since my thesis also aims to highlight identity construction of the characters based on the consumption of consumer goods, so, in this part of the second chapter I also address the second question arguing how does commodity fetishism, depthlessness and waning of effect reinforce the play of late capitalism that consequently leads to the construction of consumerist identity. It is important to mention that I address these two aspects of the role of consumerism, simultaneously, because their discussion is overlapping and correlated.

DeLillo's presentation of supermarket, in the novel, shows that in contemporary time people live only for the act of shopping. They don't need the things they shop rather it is the effect of commodity fetishism that encourages them to shop. In fact they buy things just to justify their existence through shopping. Therefore, I argue that one of the prominent factors that persuade the characters in the novel to buy right food and hence to ensure their existence through shopping is the promise of maintaining health. Justifying this argument, I refer to different textual evidences as follows.

For Instance, Babette being conscious about her health, as discussed earlier, is obsessed with buying food that promises health even when she doesn't want to eat it. Once when Jack observes that their table is full of food, wrapped in attractive packaging, he hears Babette saying that she didn't plan for this lunch rather she was thinking about 'yogurt and wheat germ' (DeLillo 11). Although she doesn't want to eat the diet food that she mentions but she still buys it as Gladney says, "She keeps buying that stuff. But she never eats it" (11). Moreover, Gladney says, according to Steffi, Babette "feels guilty if she doesn't buy it, she feels guilty if she buys it and doesn't eat it, she feels guilty when she sees it in the fridge, she feels guilty when she throws it away" (11). Therefore, it wouldn't be wrong to say that what keeps her buying this stuff is the association of health with it. The process of buying deceives her in thinking that she is showing discipline in matters of diet that would result in shaping her body to maintain her fitness and health.

Moreover, *White Noise* provides the evidence that the present-day consumerism promotes through taking up the responsibility of proving health information. "A woman identified as consumer affairs editor began a discussion of the medical problems" resulting from the toxic event (DeLillo 56). Therefore, the other way to look at the effect of commodity fetishism is to consider the way consumer products promise health in the form of brands. The characters are motivated to buy different brands that seem to take up the idea of health by promising them higher quality food. For instance, when the toxic event happens and the people are asked to leave the affected area, according to Gladney, Babette "began gathering tins and jars with familiar life enhancing labels" (DeLillo 56). The reason of picking these labeled products

shows the effect of commodity fetishism that makes the products desirable by promising health.

Furthermore, after the toxic event has taken place, Babette thinks that this is the time to show discipline and “to cut down on fatty foods” (DeLillo 61) because she believes that discipline can help them stay safe from the hazards of the event. Her suggestion of cutting down on fatty foods shows her belief that fit and thin body can guarantee a healthy life. Meanwhile, Gladney observes the ‘brand label’ on the jar of wheat germ that seems foreign-looking to him. After he has ensured that it’s German, he tells Babette to eat it (DeLillo 61).

The above observation shows that by imparting responsibility onto herself regarding health, Babette chooses to show discipline in the matter of diet. While the way Gladney chooses to prefer foreign brand that seems to him promising regarding health, it shows that consumerism makes the consumer products desirable. As Foucault says the success of power “is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanism” (qtd. in Pylypa 24). Here, consumerist strategy such as commodity fetishism can be seen creating illusion of fulfilling the desire to sustain good health by motivating the consumers to buy the consumer products by promising them health.

According to Foucault (1978), when anatomo-politics of the human body operates it enhances the usefulness of a human body (Foucault 139). Here, Babette being conscious about her health that has been linked with having fit and thin body (as discussed earlier) can be seen persuaded towards the consumption of diet food. The attachment of the concept of health with the diet food and the consequential consumption of it shows the character’s utility in the contemporary age of consumerism. It shows the way Babette joins the system willingly by buying the food that seems promising to her in the matter of health.

The excessive use of pills also increases the utility of the health conscious characters in the contemporary age of consumerism. Consumerism can be seen providing all the needed things to consumers, including pills.

Watson refers to this as “the great strengths of the process of consumerism” saying that “it is able to harness and direct our genuine needs” (Watson 57).

For instance, according to Gladney, the consumer products that the ‘station wagons’ brings to restock the nearby supermarket also comprises of “the controlled substances, the birth control pills and devices” (DeLillo 9). He also mentions that supermarket provides everything including “[t]he miracle vitamins, the cures for cancer, the remedy for obesity” (DeLillo 141). This shows that pills are mere consumer products and their need is enhanced by consumerist strategies such as commodity fetishism that take up the idea of health and body appearance to promote consumerism. This ensures the willing contribution of individuals to promote consumerism by buying promising consumer products, highlighting the role of Late-Capitalism.

The individuals are informed that they need to bring themselves to care by creating the illusion that taking different pills would make it possible for them to subscribe to the normal state of health. Such as Dylar, in the case of Babette that I have discussed in the first part of this chapter. This not only puts the responsibility on the individuals to take care of their health but also make it possible to enhance their utility by making them buy the pills that ensures “the “parallel increase” of their “usefulness and docility,” (Foucault 139) in the contemporary age of postmodern consumerism. It is evident in the novel when Babette tells Gladney that she takes “Blood pressure pills, stress pills, allergy pills, eye drops, aspirin” and she calls it “Run of the mill” (DeLillo 33). She adds to her remarks, saying, “the doctor prescribed thirty pills. That was it. Run of the mill. Everybody takes something” (DeLillo 33). By referring the use of pills as ‘run of the mill’, Babette exposes the way consumerism promotes through commodity fetishism that takes up the idea of health and hence, make the products desirable for health-conscious consumers.

The above discussion helps me emphasize that it is commodity fetishism that motivate the characters in the novel to buy the consumer products, while the fear of not buying leaves them unsatisfactory. This shows that individuals’ self-perception gets attached with the products that they buy. They can be seen seeking their health in the process of buying the products. Hence, the characters seek fit body in the process of buying healthy food and

the suggested pills. This shows the way Babette identifies her ideal body-look as well as her health with the process of buying and consuming the right food and the recommended pills. This identification with the consuming products leads to the construction of consumerist identity.

Moreover, commodity fetishism as discussed by Eid in his article, “White Noise: A late-capitalist world of consumerism,” plays an important role in discussing the way Gladney gets deceived by the false hope of finding new aspects of his personality in buying consumer products. Quoting Althusser, Eid states that such individuals become “stripped of all the freedom except that of freely accepting their submission” (qtd. in Eid 216). Through Gladney’s portrayal as a consumer who develops critical thinking towards consumerism (questioning the influence of TV on his children), DeLillo offers “possibilities for ideological resistance,” Eid asserts. I argue that Gladney develops critical thinking towards the knowledge that he receives in the form of information and he is not a passive consumer of that information but he gets deceived by the consumer products that seem promising to him in the matter of achieving fullness of being. I justify this point with Foucault’s concept of resistance.

According to Foucault, resistance and power go simultaneously. Where there is power, there is resistance, he believes. Foucault argues that when power meets resistance, it asserts itself in a new form. According to him power can “re-organize its forces, invest itself elsewhere... and so the battle continues” (qtd. in Pylypa 24). This help me discuss the resistance that Gladney can be seen posing towards power in the form of knowledge about health and the way he becomes the victim of the strategies of consumerism.

Gladney receives health information from many sources such as medical institution, TV, radio etc. Gladney seeks an escape from the bombardment of information that grips his life by appropriating every action of him in the name of health. Once he asks Babette to turn the radio off, telling her that their children shows the symptoms of the toxic event “only when they are broadcast,” and later on he says that “I turned it [the radio] off to help me stop thinking”(DeLillo 59). It shows Gladney’s critical thinking towards the information that he gets from radio.

Moreover, In spite of his life-long dedication towards maintaining his body's health when he is informed that death has entered his body as a result of exposure to the toxic event, it leaves him devastated. That is why when the toxic event takes place, he asks Babette:

Here it is practically the twenty-first century and you have read hundreds of books and magazines and seen a hundred TV shows about science and medicine. Could you tell those people one little crucial thing that might save a million and a half lives? (68)

By posing the question, Gladney shows ideological resistance. He unveils the deception that people can keep at bay every possible hazard to their health because they live in the time where they are surrounded by knowledge providing them health information.

This shows that being surrounded by excessive information he is not a passive consumer of it rather he develops critical thinking and shows his ideological resistance. But his resistance only makes the power assert itself in another guise that makes him find an escape in supermarket and the process of consumption. On the surface level, the supermarket in the novel seems to offer an escape from the harsh realities of life but probing deep into the effect of consumerism that the novel presents shows that it's another trap that creates an illusion of escape.

It is important to discuss here that what makes the condition favorable for power to assert itself in another guise is consumerism in this case. I refer to the concept of depthlessness and waning of effect put forth by Jameson to talk about the reinforcement and prevalence of consumerism. Gladney establishes the department of Hitler studies and he wants to be known by the name of Hitler (DeLillo 14). This shows his scattered identity that comprises of 'pile of fragments' instead of a composed and holistic one. Instead of accepting his own identity, he wants to be like Hitler. For that purpose, he changes his name and dresses up in a special way to look like him. This way of identifying himself with the superficial things shows the depthlessness that leaves his identity scattered on the surface. He himself says that "I am the false character that follows the name around" (DeLillo 14).

The above observation declares that unlike the conventional protagonists who would grow towards maturity by gaining the exposure of life and by facing the harsh realities of it, as in *Bildungsroman*⁸, Gladney seems to move backward in history. He copies Hitler in a way as if he is not the figure from the past but the reality and the need of the present day. It can be seen that by doing so, Gladney shows his scattered identity as he believes that he can gain prestige and value by copying Hitler. He also denies the concept of a holistic being by copying and adopting someone else's identity.

Therefore, when he says that he wants to "grow out into Hitler" he seems to have lost the active ability to create a sense of continuity between past and future and to organize his temporal existence into one coherent experience. This kind of depthlessness is the outcome of 'waning of affect', according to Jameson (Jameson 274).

Jameson in his essay argues that the way concept of individual monad gets rejected in the contemporary age, it gives way to 'waning of affect' that stems from late capitalism (274). Jameson believes, unlike the classical age of 'competitive capitalism' where individualism prevailed in the form of autonomous subjects (the bourgeoisie), the present age capitalism is corporate. Therefore, there is no importance of individuality, uniqueness or subjectivity in this age of Late-capitalism, according to him (Jameson 17).

Hence, the depthlessness directs Gladney towards finding the way to fill the void aspect of his personality by seeking the fullness of being that the consumer products seem to provide. Gladney starts working on his outlook in order to look like Hitler. He wears sunglasses and a gown that defines his profession as a Head of the Hitler Studies Department more accurately. As a representation of one of the characteristic of schizophrenia⁹, Gladney consumes desirable products in order to construct anticipated personality and identity (Vungthong). In other words, Jack Gladney in the novel presents the example of "self-construction" through the consumption of different products

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Bildungsroman is the combination of two German words: *Bildung*, meaning "education," and *Roman*, meaning "novel." Fittingly, a "bildungsroman" is a novel that deals with the formative years of the main character - in particular, his or her psychological development and moral growth.

⁹ Schizophrenia, in simple words, is an inability to see oneself as a unified being (Vungthong).

(Matkovic' 165, Hummer 36). Therefore, “[i]n *White Noise*, the way to gain identity in the postmodern consumerist society is to buy and display products as a representation of one’s own image” (Vungthong). The consumer society in the novel provides toxic environment, on one hand, and the false hope to escape it, on the other. Through the character of Gladney the novel portrays the prevailing issue in the postmodern consumerist world at large where the individuals are fragmented lacking the clear focus and direction towards a meaningful life and hence, seek comfort in promising consumer products.

Furthermore, once Gladney is not wearing his sunglasses and he runs into one of his colleague, Massingale, at the supermarket who tells him, “You look so harmless, Jack. A big harmless, aging, indistinct sort of guy” (41). In order to highlight the effect of this comment on Gladney’s self-perception, it is important to refer here to Watson’s assertion about aging and over-weight body. According to him, “ageing body has become a source of anxiety, and the non-exercised and overweight body a source of shame and ridicule” (Watson 56).

Therefore, I argue that when Gladney says “the encounter put me in the mood to shop” (DeLillo 41) he affirms that the comment shatters his adopted identity. He can’t do anything and that shows his helplessness. But for him the only thing that can makes him forget his pain of being a helpless human regarding his appearance and his health condition is to go shopping. Therefore, when he shops he thinks that his life is meaningful. Gladney believes that the consumer products bring to him the sense of ‘replenishment’, that of ‘well-being’, ‘security’ and ‘contentment,’ (DeLillo 15). Believing this, he gets deceived by the strategies of consumerism that guarantees him life, identity and an escape from death. He confirms that consumerism focuses our attention on superficiality up to such an extent that the whole purpose of life becomes ‘I shop therefore I am’ (Watson 72).

Gladney seems to find the purpose of his life in the process of shopping that otherwise, looks meaningless to him. He seems to believe that he has liberated himself by shedding off his fragmented and meaningless identity and by escaping the bombardment of health information and hence, the fear of death. He says, “I filled myself out, found new aspects of myself, located a

person I'd forgotten existed" (DeLillo 42). But 'this emancipation' that he thinks he has achieved by shedding off his dispersed personality through shopping and by escaping death deceives him and he doesn't see that he is "going in the direction of the system" (Baudrillard 56). Murry's remarks assures this misconception when he says that in supermarket "we don't die, we shop but the difference is less marked" (DeLillo 23). Endowing power to consumer products, the current consumerist world render the people subservient to the powerful influence of consumerism. The novel, therefore, clearly reveals the situation of the contemporary age in which people are blinded by the artificial pomp of consumer products.

It may be concluded that *White Noise* shows standardization of body's appearance and the association of health and beauty with it. The analysis helped me find that such type of discourse centralizes fit and thin body. It acts as disciplinary technique and reduces the characters, Babette and Gladney, from human beings to mere bodies who operate accordingly. Informing them about their bodies' health and ideal appearance, I have explored, the discourse indirectly controls their life processes. Establishing its grip by directing their action towards self-surveillance, it makes them docile beings.

The analysis also helped me find that commodity fetishism directs individuals' needs towards buying consumer products that promise fitness and health. The health conscious individuals, Babette and Gladney, therefore, get integrated into the system of economic control. Hence, enhancing the need of achieving health by providing relative consumer products, consumerism favours the propagation of anatomo-politics of the human body. Consumerist discourse also gets fostered by depthlessness in the form of characters' scattered identities who seek to have fullness of being through consumption. Hence, depthlessness and waning of effect can be seen influential in making the characters willingly contribute to promote consumerism, sustaining the play of late capitalism. In the next chapter, I have concluded my dissertation.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* from the perspective of anatomo-politics of the human body and late capitalism as a framework together helped me explore that hegemonic control of human subject in the contemporary age of postmodernism prevails through anatomo-politics of the human body. This control, I found, gets reinforced by the strategies of consumerism exposing the play of late capitalism and creating consumerist identities. Claiming that this area has remained relatively untapped in exploring literary texts, my study has addressed this gap in the existing research with support of the selected texts.

I drew upon the notions such as anatomo-politics of the human body propounded by Michel Foucault, late capitalism provided by Frederic Jameson and simulation given by Baudrillard. Since their models are based on the conception of power that operates through the willing contribution of the human subjects, a nexus between them helped me develop the conceptual framework for my study.

Anatomo-politics being one of the two techniques of bio-power (that takes life of a human as its objective) helped me talk about the administration of a human body by manipulating its life processes through creation of knowledge about it. While the concept of late capitalism with its emphasis on the hegemonic control of human subject complemented my discussion of anatomo-politics of the human body, highlighting the way consumerist strategies ensure the integration of individual bodies into the system of effective and economic control. Consequently, it supports the construction of consumerist identities through simulation.

The chosen primary texts helped me find that the characters presented in the texts undergo self-surveillance and self-administration under the influence of the knowledge that standardize fit and thin body in the name of beauty and health. This knowledge persuades them to employ discipline in

their everyday conducts in order to meet the set standard of beauty and health. This shows the hegemonic control that aims to regulate life processes of the individuals. Consumerism depicted in the novels served me conclude that it enhances individual's integration into the system of economic control through different consumerist strategies. Therefore, through portrayal of the characters who willingly submit their bodies by imposing self-monitoring behavior onto themselves and through the illustration of consumerist strategies involved in regulating their life-style, the novels have complemented my discussion of anatomo-politics of the human body.

The dissertation deals with two research questions. Addressing the first question, I explored the sustenance of anatomo-politics depicted in the selected texts. Addressing the second question I focused my attention on the role of consumerist strategies in integrating individuals into the system of economic control by highlighting the play of Late-Capitalism. Answering this question, therefore, not only helped me extend the discussion of propagation of anatomo-politics of the human body in the selected novels but also helped me talk about the construction of consumerist identities in the primary texts.

Addressing the questions, I divided the analysis of my project that probes the texts in hand into two chapters. First chapter of analysis, chapter 4, concerned with the discussion of the ways through which the novel *The Devil Wears Prada* portrays anatomo-politics of the human body. The characters in the novel, under the influence of the knowledge of fit and thin body promoted by fashion magazine as a standard of beauty, undergo self-surveillance in order to subscribe to the constructed ideal of beauty. For instance, workers at the company of promoting fashion magazine, Runway, including Andrea, regulate their everyday-conducts in order to meet the standard of beauty. In this chapter, I also quoted textual evidences that highlights the conception of fit and thin body as healthy. The characters show self-administrative behavior by appropriating their eating habits and attributing their leisure time to work out, hence, resulting into docile bodies. Moreover, Andrea and Miranda show life-long dedication to their job at the magazine company by preferring to uphold all the efforts that help them promote the magazine, including their effort of achieving fit and thin bodies. Hence, extinction of their forces occurs

when they put their effort and energy only in one direction and that is to meet the standard set by the norm of beauty to promote the fashion magazine.

In Chapter 4, I also explored the consumerist strategies involved in ensuring the integration of fit and thin bodies into the system of efficient and economic control. In this chapter, I argued that the novel presents advertising company that promotes consumer brands in the name of fashion providing opportunities for better self-expression based on body size. Advertisements in the fashion magazine, *Runway*, presents fit and thin models wearing branded clothes and hence, transmit the message that emphasizes the concept of beauty in association with fit and thin body, I argued. Most of the branded clothes being available in small sizes reinforce the norm of having fit and thin body to avail the opportunity of better self-expression. Hence, the characters who are having ideal body appearance avail the opportunity of wearing branded clothes, articulating their identities and leading to the construction of consumerist identities.

Getting deceived by the strategies of consumerism including commodity fetishism that is fostered through depthlessness and waning of effect, the characters willingly contribute to consumerism highlighting the play of Late-Capitalism.

In chapter 5, I explored the propagation of anatomo-politics of the human body depicted in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*. It discusses the way health information in the novel emphasizes the appearance of a human body that creates the knowledge which promote fit and thin body as a substitute of health. In this chapter, I also brought into light the instances that emphasizes the need of achieving ideal body to have a beautiful and up to the standard self-expression. Under the influence of this knowledge the characters, presented in the novel, undergo self-administration that leads to the construction of active beings, the chapter investigates. For instance, Babette and Gladney are obsessed with exercise and the intake of low-fat food in order to maintain good health (to do away with their fear of death) as well as to have better self-expression. By confining their activities into the sphere that is determined as healthy, the characters show life-long dedication towards the management of their everyday activities, the chapter explores. Hence,

controlled management of their forces occur through establishing the norm of fit and thin body, this chapter emphasized.

Referring to the second question of this study, chapter 5 also dealt with analysis of the way consumerism encourages the docile bodies depicted in the novels to use the consumer products that either guarantee them health in the form of diet food or an escape from death (that has been portrayed as condition contrary to health). Based on the consequential consumption of the desired products, this chapter not only focused on the way consumerism enhances the character's willing contribution to the system of economic control highlighting the hegemonic aspect of late capitalism but also pinpointed the construction of consumerist identities, illustrated in the novel.

I incorporated the discussion of the third question in both the chapters, 4 and 5. It helped me conclude that consumerist culture fostered by media in both the novels propagate the norm of beauty and health through simulation that not only imposes self-responsibility on the individuals but also creates false needs in them to make them use the relevant consumer brands.

After my analysis of the texts, I think that my research questions need to be presented here as affirmative statements. Therefore, these affirmative statements become my findings. My analysis highlighted the contemporary manifestation of anatomo-politics such as the management of consumer's lifestyle individually. It focused on how consumerist discourse takes up the concepts of health and beauty in order to promote the promising consumer products. It also explored that such products guarantee maintenance of fit body and ultimately results in reinforcing the knowledge that standardizes it. This knowledge takes the form of information when it gets fostered through media. In this way, simulation takes place when consumers get knowledge about the fit human body that not only ensures health but also meets the standard of beauty. Individuals, therefore, become the subject of hegemonic control when they try to meet the set-standard of ideal body-shape by buying the relevant consumer products and by adopting desired behaviours. Through this discussion, my analysis exposed the play of late capitalism that shapes the individuals into docile bodies. Hence in contemporary consumerist society, individuals get utilized, optimized and they get subjected to precise control.

Concluding my findings, I emphasize that my study helped me highlight the discourses that create the knowledge about human body paving path towards conquering the individual as a whole and leading to the propagation of anatomo-politics of the human body. Moreover, through its strategies of achieving willing contribution of the individuals, consumerism makes the condition favorable for anatomo-politics to operate.

It is revealed through my study that individual's freedom is at stake in contemporary consumerist society. As the concept of individual's freedom is likely to stay protean, it might change further in the coming times. To be precise in concluding my discussion of individual's administration in contemporary age, my thesis is a prefatory step in connecting the politics employed by consumerism in subjugating individual beings with the politics aimed at training, disciplining and optimizing them in order to enhance their efficacy and integrate them into the system of social and economic control.

My study exposes the stakes of consumerism by discussing it as an increasingly powerful economic situation under late-capitalism that plays an important role in the formation of postmodern condition where capitalism has become associated with science and technology. This amalgamation presented in my study can be seen prevalent in the present era where credibility of grand narratives has collapsed and where science, technology, politics related to bio-control no more stand distinctive to each other, rather they are interconnected. Therefore, highlighting the depiction of the current modifications that have come to shape anatomo-politics in the present consumerist world where there is no escape from science and technology shows the significance of my study in the contemporary postmodern era.

6.1 Recommendations for further Research

This research provides comprehensive analysis of the selected literary texts through anatomo-politics of the human body and late capitalism as a framework together. The future researchers may employ the same theoretical framework with a bit of nuance to explore current American fiction

highlighting the issues of contemporary forms of power and the present-day consumerism.

My dissertation focuses on the way consumerism reinforces anatomo-politics of the human body that is disciplinary dimension of bio-power. Researchers who are interested in this area may also explore consumerism in literary texts as an enhancer of bio-politics, the second modality of bio-power that focuses on the control and regulation of social population in general. For instance, the study of *The Space Merchants* (1953) and *Feed* (2002) from the perspective of bio-politics and late capitalism as a framework together can yield interesting findings. An interesting study may also be conducted by exploring *Glamorama* (1998) written by American writer Bret Easton Ellis with the objective of diagnosing the role of fashion industry in enhancing the socio-political effect of consumerism.

The theoretical framework of my study stresses the amalgamation of political strategies of consumerism with that of science and technology. Therefore, this framework may be employed to explore the current involvement of all the fields in dismantling the centrality of human in the contemporary age of postmodernism that favors the deterioration of grand narratives. The depiction of the postmodern society where human has lost its centrality is not only the subject of literary works written in the western context, rather it is the issue addressed by writers worldwide. Therefore, the play *Harvest* (2001) by Manjula Padmanabhan, an Indian playwright reflects the similar contemporary situation. The play confronts us with a futurist Bombay depicting that multinational companies need organs for their rich customers in America. The play engages with the issues such as the way modern electronic technology is used to control and govern people. It is the play about trade in human organs and commodification of the human body. By focusing such works, future researchers may focus on the manifestation of anatomo-politics depicted in its evolving variations.

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