



ON THE ETHICS OF MARKETING: A READING OF ZYGMUNT BAUMAN'S
WRITINGS ON CONSUMERISM

KLAIRUNG ISO

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN PHILOSOPHY

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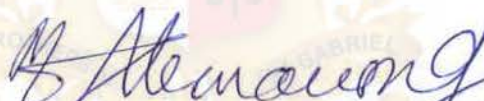
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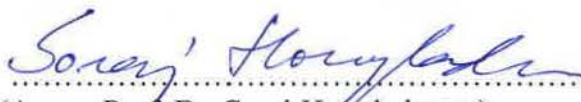
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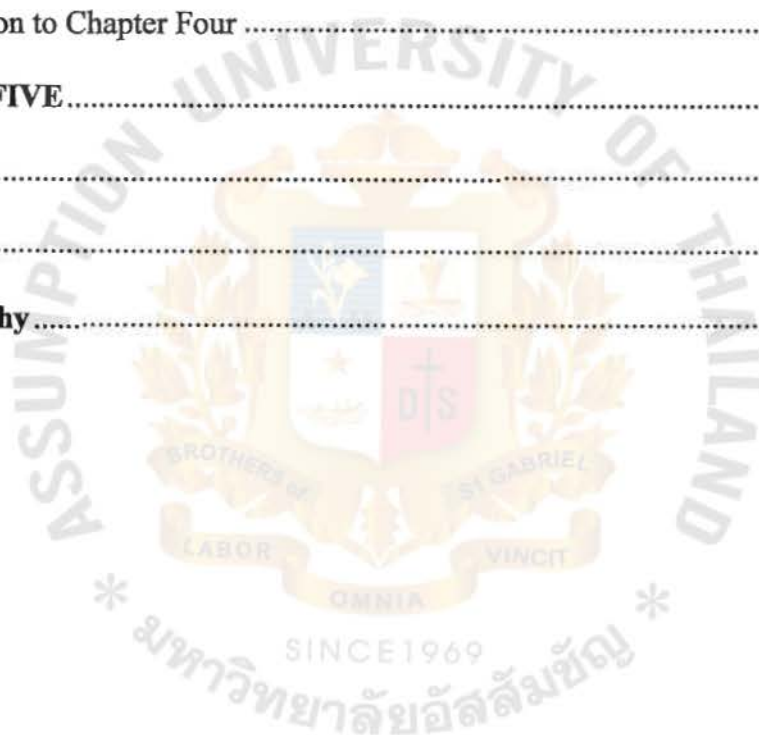
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ABSTRACT

Individuals in the era of capitalism live by and rely on their own choices, which are often influenced by marketing. This freedom of choice enables the subject to craft their own identity and pursue a range of opportunities for an improvement in their quality of life. However, marketing is criticized for its role in making people more materialistic and self-focused and creates social deskilling. Philosophically, the subject is passively transformed through capitalism, particularly that the subject has become passive, uncritical and subject to manipulation. This has reflected the subject's perception of reality. Bauman comments critically that the subject in the era of liquid modernity has to struggle with self-identification and uncertainty. He searches for an objective moral ground to stand on, saying that uncertainty is the ground for the moral development of human beings and social contact is necessary to empower this attribute. However, he sees deterritorialization, a phenomenon associated with capitalism, consumerism and globalization, as leading to isolated communities that disable the collective work of society and work against trust. I, on the other hand, propose a new platform of human contact being constructed via cyberspace. This interaction in cyberspace can produce openness in the marketing process, both for the producers and

the consumers. Bauman would undoubtedly criticize such an interaction as not constituting a “real” social bond, but I wish to argue that this interaction within cyberspace builds up a new ethical community that can satisfy what Bauman calls the “sovereign expressions of life,” thus allowing for the possibility of ethics in the consumerist society. Also, on-line interaction creates the possibility for subjects to maintain their autonomy, fosters the development of values through participation in marketing activities, and helps both consumers and producers to make informed, ethical decisions.



CHAPTER ONE

Background and Overview

1.1. Ethical Symptoms of Capitalism in Liquid Modernity

I am one who has always appreciated the creativity involved in advertising and I must admit that I have often fallen under its spell. I have always been impressed by how advertisers seem to know my problems and are ready on hand with a solution. This admiration has led me to the world of marketing as a career. However, my profession has led me to ask many ethical questions concerning marketing and consumerism. I have questioned, for instance, the waste involved in packaging, the deception involved in many marketing campaigns, the growing materialism of society, ecological problems, and so on. This has spurred me to inquire into my career as a marketer in terms of its ethical implications.

Capitalism involves economic activities whereby human beings maximize their productivity and income by making use of resources. Marketing serves capitalism by managing consumer demand so as to increase sales turnover for the supplier. Money was invented as a medium to facilitate valuation, exchange, accumulation of earning, and resources. The dictionary definition of capitalism characterizes it as “an economic and political system in which property, business, and industry are owned by private individuals and not by the state.” (Collins 2001, p. 218) In this definition we see that 'property' is owned by 'private individuals', meaning that individuals maintain the sovereignty to do what they wish with their property. Individuals in the era of capitalism live by and rely on their own choices, which are served by marketing. This freedom of choice enables the subject to craft their own identity and pursue a range of opportunities for an improvement in their quality of life. However, this focus on

prosperity and ownership makes living conditions more imbalanced and unequal, and currently the world is experiencing many negative outcomes as a result of this. Today we are looking for a sustainable economics system and searching for an objective moral ground to stand on.

In general, ethical issues facing marketing and capitalism may be divided into three levels. On the global scale, we are facing an ecological crisis resulting from our overconsumption of natural resources for commercial production. Environmental sustainability has now undeniably become a concern. At the level of society we see the disparity of incomes, economic collapse, and loss of societies' identities. At the individual level, we see lack of resources to consume and the conflict between the individual's self indulgence and their responsibility to society. Marketing is criticized for its role in making people more materialistic and self-focused. This process of individualization is leading to a situation where ethics becomes an individual choice, and the subject may even question why they should be ethical at all. Such an attitude is affecting a decline in social and moral responsibility. This dissertation will focus on the contemporary 'subject', and how they can act as a source of moral values and course of action. It explores the compatibility of ethics with life in contemporary capitalist society.

'Liquid Modernity' is a term coined by Zygmunt Bauman who is a professor of sociology at the University of Leeds. He has contributed much to the critique of contemporary consumerist society. Instead of using the word postmodern or late modernity, or second modernity, or hyper modernity, or reflexive modernity, he has named our period liquid modernity. Liquid modernity is our historical condition characterized by the state where no emergent shape is likely to solidify and survive for

long and involves a state where the world is uncontrollable. Also Bauman sees a situation where ethical codes are no longer stable.

The accelerating pace of globalization, mass-production, free-trade, privatization and real time interactive technology, have created the unique characteristics of the liquid modern subject and corresponding changes in epistemology. The subject in this era becomes more individualistic with its focus on life-politics and more skepticism about grand narratives. It seems to enjoy privatization and freedom, although this involves suffering from feelings of inadequacy involving the pressures to acquire possessions or a desired status, which are either never fulfilled or come with the burden of responsibility (Bauman, 2009, p. 51). Accordingly there have emerged new agencies that are eager to help relieve this overwhelming responsibility. In the past, this task was administrated by state agencies, but now as Bauman observes, "there is, it appears, a profusion of commercial agencies eager to take up the tasks abandoned by the 'great society' and to sell their services to the bereaved, ignorant, and perplexed consumers." (Bauman, 2009, p. 52) Becoming more individualist and consumer gadget dependent, human beings lose their social bonds and there arises a new kind of exclusion of people who have failed to bond with the consumerist society. Bauman calls these 'collateral casualties,' who he names the 'underclass.' (Bauman, 2007a, p. 122) The poignant question to be asked here is what is wrong with these agencies volunteering to help manage this responsibility. The immediately discernible answer is that these commercial agencies are not voluntary and not without costs. For this reason, there are many thinkers who criticize this kind of manipulation in that it affects to the subject's attributes and involves the exploitation of everyday life.

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There have been many critiques of the capitalist subject, and critiques of the morality of capitalism itself. The commodification of the subject was first observed by Karl Marx, who viewed the human subject as a prisoner of the capitalists. Both Marx and Bauman recognize capitalism's constraining impact on the subject, but in different ways. For Marx, the subject is comparable to a commodity whose life depends on the capitalists. This robotic dependency creates a mentally and physically dehumanized being whose understanding of reality is entirely shaped by the propaganda of the higher social class, which leads to a kind of false-consciousness. For Bauman, the modern normative regulations through management are used to cultivate and manipulate members in society. He even goes as far as calling these managers "farmers of humans" (Bauman, 2009, p. 196). Moreover, he suggests that this management then turns from normative regulation to the seduction of consumer markets (Bauman, 2009, p. 203). A similar approach is found in Adorno (1991) who calls the commercial activities that manipulate consumers or the masses as "the culture industry" (Adorno, 1991), which controls consumers through entertainment and mass deception. Hardt and Negri also criticize capitalism in *Empire* (2001), deeming it a new form of sovereignty under the model of globalization, which is driven by free flows of corporations, capital, migration, and neo-colonialism. *Empire* creates hybrid identities, the multitude, and deterritorializes the rule of frontiers (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. XII). The subject is still a prisoner of capitalism but now in a new context where the process has been restructured along the lines of the political and technological shift that capital has to confront (Hardt & Negri, 2001, pp. 268-269). In addition, Dany-Robert Dufour studies the collapse of 'the ego-ideals' of the subject in this era. The collapse of the grand narrative effected by individualization has precipitated a kind of 'desymbolization' or

in other words the collapse of the symbolic side of the superego. Taking advantage of this, advertisers are able to develop new symbolic markers that lead to a complete redefinition of the superego (Dufour, 2008, pp. 82-83). As Naomi Klein explained “the role of advertising changed from delivering product news bulletins to building an image around a particular brand-name version of a product” (Klein, 2000, p.6).

In terms of ethics, Bauman values a collective role for society (Bauman, 2000) and criticizes consumerist society and technology, specifically the internet, on the basis that they involve a considerable amount of social deskilling (Bauman, 2007, p. 16). The consumerist life turns human beings into commodities both in the sense that they are the promoters of commodities and also become the commodities of the things they promote (Bauman, 2007, p. 6). As a basic aspect of their nature, human beings desire security and the freedom to pursue well-being. Privatization and globalization accommodate freedom of choice and lead to life-politics. However, they also bring fear, a mixophobia of flows of migration, and uncertainty about possessions. At this point, it seems that 'trust' between individuals is becoming more rare, and for Bauman, trust is the only thing that can cure our suffering from uncertainty. Nevertheless, he sees the possibility of morality as stemming from uncertainty since it prompts an innate manifestation of humanity.

Outside of academia, there is an emerging trend of economic ethics and environmental sustainability movements from business practitioners. The functions of marketing also have been shifting from the serving of the mass-market, to the targeted market, to niche markets, to relationship management, and now to exclusive or one-on-one marketing. Moreover, a new platform of human contact is being constructed via cyberspace that Bauman and Løgstrup did not recognize (or recognized but not take

into account). This is the cyberspace where consumers and producers have new, unprecedented opportunities for interaction. My thesis aims to show that it is this interaction in cyberspace that produces honesty in the marketing process, both for the producers and the consumers. Bauman would undoubtedly criticize such an interaction as not constituting a “real” social bond, but I wish to argue that this interaction within cyberspace builds up the ethical community. And since it precedes the unlimited divergence of individual choice, it thereby demonstrates the possibility of ethics in marketing. Therefore this new cyber-interaction offers a possible solution to Bauman’s concerns about the deterioration of ethics in the Liquid Modern age.

1.2. Marketing and Consumerism

1.2.1. Relationship of Marketing and Consumerism

What is marketing? According to Philip Kotler, “Marketing is typically seen as the task of creating, promoting, and delivering goods and services to consumers. Marketers are skilled in stimulating demand for a company’s products” (Kotler, 2003, p. 5). According to the standard textbook definition, the function of marketing is to create customer satisfaction, but now marketers also manipulate market demand and induce desire. Desire is a key source driving modern economics and it paves the way for consumerism. Deleuze and Guattari (2008) see desire as directly corresponding to capitalism. Desire is a source of production and humans are therefore trained to become desiring machines. Several of new branches of knowledge, such as consumer behavior and market research study, have come into existence in order that the construction of desire and the totality of consumer’s decisions may be better understood. This evolution can be seen in the changed attitude towards food, one of the basic requisites

of human life. As opposed to just eating for the sake of sustaining life, marketing develops the possibility of various choices, from the wide range of fresh food stuffs found in supermarkets, to frozen packaged foods, to fast food or hi-end restaurants. This range of choice then brings about better living standards. Hanna & Wozniak state that, "in our society, marketers as agents of change have brought about the high standard of living to which we have grown accustomed. The claim is that our lives have become happier, and more varied and interesting due to their efforts" (Hanna & Wozniak, 2001, p. 27).

The complexity of human desire, from the desire for the basic necessities of life to the desire for a particular brand of lipstick, constructs a system of consumption. Throughout the course of human evolution, hunting has been developed to become agriculture, and traditional agriculture has paved the way for the modern food industry. Likewise, the basic requisite of housing has been developed into the real estate industry. Various styles of clothing, preventive medicines, anti-aging chemicals, different forms of technology and so on, are all potential objects of consumption. With the aid of marketing this system of consumption develops into full-blown consumerism, which is the driver of the phenomenon of liquid modernity. Bauman explains the difference between consumerism and consumption in his work, *Consuming Life* (2007). He states that consumption is primarily a trait and occupation of human beings for biological survival, and this trait is shared with all other living organisms. While consumption is necessary for the continuation of life, consumerism is a type of social arrangement of that consumption which helps to reveal a process of individual life policy. Consumerism therefore becomes an attribute of society. Moreover, Bauman sees that modern society's condoning of the individual capacity for

wanting, desiring and longing is similar to the labor capacity of the producers' society that alienates individuals from extraneous forces, thereby setting in motion the society of consumers. This attribute brings 'a specific form of human togetherness' and sets up specific parameters for effective individual life strategies by 'manipulating the probabilities of individual choices and conduct' (Bauman, 2007, pp. 25-28). According to Bauman, marketing strategy drives consumption. The perception is created that all outdated goods need to be replaced so as to increase the value of the commodity or the subject. However, this idea reflects only one aspect of multi-faceted marketing strategy and disregards its attempt to create better standards of living. As expressed by Kotler,

"In the popular mind, marketing is seen as the task of encoding persuasive messages to get people to buy more goods. Since most people resent persuasion attempts, marketing has picked up a negative image in the minds of many people. They forget or overlook the marketing work involved in creating values through configuration, valuation, and facilitation." (Kotler, 1972, p. 50)

Apart from the sociological view point, consumerism is defined in various ways. Louis Harris and associates defined Consumerism as, "the set of activities of government, business, independent organizations, and concerned consumers that are designed to protect the rights of consumers" (D.Hoyer & J.MacInnis, 2004, p. 507). In 1962 the American President John F. Kennedy proposed the Consumer Bill of Rights to guarantee consumers several basic rights fundamental to the effective functioning of the economic system. These included the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose, the right to be heard, and full and sympathetic consideration of consumer interests in the formation of government policy. Later additions included the right to consumer education, the right to recourse and redress, the right to fair settlement of problems encountered and the right to an environment that enhances the quality of life (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004, p. 507). With the aid of such stipulations,

consumers would be protected and the primary concern would be shifted to the rights and responsibilities of consumers towards others. Apart from this, there is also discussion about rules or codes of conduct for organizations to ensure fair play between different parties in the economic system of consumerism. The dictionary definition of consumerism has two features, one reflects the idea of an ethical code: "it is the protection of the rights and interests of consumers", and the other one is "the belief that it is good to buy and use a lot of goods" (Collins 2001, p. 323). The extensively controversial view of consumerism revolves around the second view. According to this perspective, consumerism has influenced society to such an extent that some have compared it to a religion. Kasser, a Professor and Chair of Psychology of Knox College, says; "its priests are the marketers and advertising agencies, its places of worship are the malls and Internet sales sites, and its beliefs are that happiness and success come from attaining wealth and buying the goods and services available in the marketplace" (Kasser, 2008, p. 2).

1.2.2. What Role do Ethics Play in the Market Place

Ethical philosophy and business philosophy respond to very different areas of human activity. Ethics is the ground of what is good or right for human beings while business is grounded on self-interest. Note that business practices refer to the activities and interactions of both the producer side and the consumer side. Negative consequences arising from the pursuit of gain by corporations, have led to the formulation of new attempts to promote corporate responsibility and accountability. This has become the role for social associations, for example, peer groups and public hearings. Reilly & Kyj (1990) suggest that because economics only aims at maximizing a corporation's wealth within the limits of resources, it has failed to address the issue of

human decency, justice, civility, relationships, accountability, and duty. However, a strong social network helps to influence proper practice of commercial activities both in terms of consumption and production. For instance, the study of Kaler (2000) categorizes the self-interest in business into economic and non-economic reasons, the latter of which are connected with the self-esteem of managers. This self-esteem reflects a situation among managers whereby rising public expectations of morality in business require ever increasing moral commitment by those in business. Hence, if the goal is an ethically responsible business environment, the basic principles of business and economics must be redefined. Business practitioners, including marketers, can no longer afford to be complacent, indulging their own self-interest and ignoring the voices from society.

Barclay and Smith (2003) introduced the Elkington thesis (1997) that the ordinary bottom line of profit is not enough for sustainable capitalism. Rather, what is required is a triple bottom line of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social justice. They also point out that business ethics is a social product involving the implications of risk and reflecting the uncertainty society. The realization of inadequacy in dealing with uncertainty in both theory and practice makes us try to look for the implications and consequences of business activity. The list of dos and don'ts or the code of conduct of corporations is unlikely to be well-received. The challenge is therefore to facilitate and record the development of new ethical issues and approaches to ethical practice within the corporations.

Drawing upon point of view of the east, the Buddhist laws of cause and effect and dependence of all things reveal the necessity of ethics in economics. Venerable P.A. Payutto (1989) explains that ethics obviously influences economic matters, even

though economic thinking often rejects subjective values like ethics. Unethical business practices, on the part of both the producer and the consumer, have direct economic consequences for both parties. For example, the ethical standard of workers influences industrial outputs; advertising stimulates economic activity but often at an ethically unacceptable price; and as a result of marketing people tend to buy unnecessary things at unjustifiably expensive prices. Moreover, the majority of advertising manipulates and arouses self-indulgence which in turns can lead to conflicts of interests. Hence, from the Buddhist perspective, the economists' ignorance of the workings of mental values and human desire is a major shortcoming.

At this point it is fitting to ask some questions. While marketing efforts can help consumers to experience more enjoyable lifestyles, do marketers have a right to pursue "planned obsolescence," or replace products that are still in good functioning order? Do marketers have the right to manipulate consumers' desires? Do such practices benefit society in the long run? Is it right or wrong to for companies to study human behavior, perception, and attitudes so they can take advantage of this knowledge for marketing purposes? The sophisticated rationality of consumer behavior has become a popular field of study, in which all behavior of consumers has been decoded and classified. Products are designed after determining unfulfilled needs and consumer desire is then aroused or motivated by marketing communication plans, both on the rational and emotional plane. Deceitful messages and one-sided communication extolling only the positive points of the product have become an art form. It seems that ethics is struggling for survival in an ocean of marketing. These factors shape my inquiry as to whether marketing is compatible with ethical principles?

Personally I can see the possibility of morality based upon the same individualization of the subject which Bauman criticizes. Bauman says that uncertainty is the ground for the moral development of human being and we need social contact to empower this attribute. However, a new form of human interaction is emerging which involves a new relationship between marketers and consumers, and in order to hope for ethical development in the modern age it is necessary to understand this reality.

1.3. Statement of the Problems and the Scope of the Dissertation

This dissertation explains the possibilities of the compatibility of ethics with marketing in the age of what Bauman calls “liquid modernity.” It tries to show how marketing provides possibilities through the new information technologies, which allow for the interplay between consumers and marketers and allow for the critical creation of values and ethics in the life of individuals. This is a process whereby consumers and marketers interact and exercise their responsibilities by their choices and their creation of choices. I hope to show how such interaction can satisfy what Bauman calls the “sovereign expressions of life” which allow for the possibility of ethics.

1.4. Literature Review: Movement of Ethics in Marketing

The accumulation of knowledge in liquid modernity and its application through scientific and technological innovation, and economic activity result in an awareness of the incalculability of their consequences, uncertainty and questions of morality. This is the concern voices by Bauman and this social circumstance is also reflected in the work of many renowned sociologists, for example Anthony Giddens' *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991), Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society* (1992) and Scott Lash's work on *Reflexive*

Modernization (1994). The review of Beck's Risk Society by Barclay and Smith (2003, pp. 315-317) notes that this second modernity is characterized by a growing realization of ecological crises; the increasing impact of globalization; and a questioning of traditional gender roles. There is a new focus on the individual, who is increasingly required to take responsibility for deciding what kind of life they would like to experience. Also in the work of Giddens (1998) it is noted that life-politics become more observable than the politics of inequality in the old form. This life-politics concerns the changing status of the subject, conditions of living and the relationship with society. While Bauman's critical approach looks for the ethical ground of living. This dissertation attempts to suggest the compatibility of ethics as originating from interaction between the subject and the current consumer society. In response to this, the subject is viewed from economic prospects based on the role of producers and consumers. The literature review therefore researches how both parties think about and respond to the moral grounds of capitalism, including marketing. I will firstly affirm the occurrence of a process for developing responsibility through the interaction of both parties, and secondly I will generate and construct the idea of a moral ground for individual choice in this liquid world.

Schwartz (2010) , a professor of philosophy at Randolph College, distinguishes four scenarios in which ethical concerns are related to consumer products;"(1) wrong doing during product manufacturing, (2) wrongdoing during product use,(3) wrongdoing during product marketing, (4) wrongdoing ancillary to the product itself" (Schwartz, 2010, p. 22). According to his explanation, the wrongdoing during production can be seen in various forms of exploitative labor, environmental degradation, and animal abuse. The wrongdoing in product marketing involves not just

advertising but also retail and distribution, such as the invasion of modern trades such as a chain convenience stores. Wrongdoing during product use relates to products with harmful consequences such as pesticides, which carry risks for humans, animals, and the environment. Wrongdoing ancillary to the product refers to the purchase of a product from producers that are somehow related to other problematic businesses. This may be the case even where there is some distance between the product one wants to buy and that business, but it can constitute a form of support to the problematic person or business in question. Consumers in this case are often complicit participants who buy unethical products and thereby adopt the ends of the collectivity that together commits the wrong-doing (Schwartz, 2010, pp. 22-72).

These four categories of moral concern involve every step of production and consumption. The potential of human beings to exercise their innate sense of ethics depends on the availability and accessibility of knowledge or information about a situation or a particular object of retail. Otherwise, ignorance leads to unethical behavior for one who is not well informed. The situation is similar in the commercial world. The development and efficacy of ethics in the world of consumers depends on understanding the reality of consumption. This can occur through the interaction of the various parties involved in the consumption process.

On the side of the producer, marketing academics must be responsive to ethical issues that are pressed by consumers and societies in order to survive in the market. Normative moral foundations have been introduced to provide guidance in evaluating ethical issues in marketing which prescribe what managers ought to and ought not to do. The attempt to indicate models or normative frameworks incorporates aspects of classical ethical theory, particularly utilitarianism and Kantian or other duty based,

virtue, rights and justice. While the Kantian methodology focuses on duty and intention, the utilitarian approach looks at results. The former approach claims that actions are right when the actions are performed from duty, no matter what the results (the means justify the end). The latter approach, on the other hand, proposes that action is right when the action tends to promote happiness (the end justifies the means).

Conversely, marketing searches for practical ways to make things happen. Therefore, ethical models and frameworks are likely to be solidified in order to make such abstract ethical ideas applicable and measurable in the real world. One example is a specific formulation known as “Integrative Social Contracts Theory” (Dunfee, Smith, & Ross Jr., 1999). This theory constructs a normative moral foundation for marketing going back to Hobbes and Rousseau and indicates the three elements common to most social contract theories, namely, 1) consent of the individual, 2) agreement among moral agents, and 3) a device or method by which an agreement is obtained. Its parallel in the global business world is an agreement between corporations and society to exchange benefits. The terms of the contract are based on the global contractors responding to two assumptions. Firstly, the contractors are assumed to be aware of a concern about bounded moral rationality with an extension of the well-grounded idea of bounded economic rationality to the moral sphere. Secondly, the contractors would recognize the need for a community-based moral fabric as a necessary condition for both the generation of wealth and the maintenance of an environment conducive to a good and productive life, free of war and conflict. So the application to marketing is an exchange-based model of ethics, which provides ethical guidance for a domain based on economic exchange. In such a manner the Integrative Social Contracts Theory

decision process can be used as a guide for ethical judgement (Dunfee, Smith, & Ross Jr., 1999, p. 21).

Now being aware of the struggle to set up ethical models, the spotlight turns to Gaski (1999), an associate Professor Mendoza College of Business University of Notre Dame Notre Dame, who questions and proposes that marketing ethics have nothing new nor distinctive to offer to the modern world. This is because all or most ethical guidelines, in terms of pragmatic behavioral guidance as well as conceptual content for marketers, are the reproduction of other established normative principles such as law and economic self-interest. For him marketing ethics is about “standards of conduct and moral judgment applied to marketing practice” or a “system or code of morals for the field of marketing” (Gaski, 1999, pp. 315-316). From his Marketing Ethics Literature Review, he has developed the null hypothesis and his survey result, conducted on the academic members and practitioners, shows a strong agreement to the null hypothesis that all marketing ethical guidelines are only the restatement of law and economic self-interest. For instance, the number one ethical prescription is ‘do not market harmful or dangerous products’. In this case this advice could be reduced to simply obeying the law (the already established law that prohibits and penalizes the sale of unsafe products) and recognizing, potentially on the basis of self-interest, that this action could be expected to be unprofitable in the long run.

A connection between ethical behavior and profitability is a highly relevant research topic. News about the unethical behavior of corporations and their unfortunate consequences are widely publicized and well-known. Dramatic consumer demonstrations like boycotts are recognized as significant expressions of this movement as a whole. Burton and Goldsby study the argument that "good ethics is

good business and that bad ethics is bad business" (Burton & Goldsby, 2009, p. 145). They conclude that it is difficult philosophically to support these arguments and even more difficult to support the connection between the two arguments. "But there is some possibility that a moral floor exist for actors in the economic marketplace - that they demand a certain level of moral behavior from manager and accept behavior at higher moral levels without necessarily rewarding managers who so act." (Burton & Goldsby, 2009, p. 145).

Perhaps it is the ethical potential of human beings that makes all human activities, include economics, an ethical concern. In any case, business ethics is a growing trend. The academic criticism of the self-interestedness of managers as superseding morality in the decision making process is examined by John Kaler (2000), a senior lecturer in the university of Plymouth Business School and the co-author of an Introduction of Business Ethic (Chapman & Hall, 1993) and of Essentials of Business Ethics (Mcgraw-Hill, 1996). He says that we may be witnessing a virtuous spiral of business ethics reflected in an increase of moral commitments of businesses and also an increase expectation of the ethical performance by society. Although in business practice, it is impossible to separate self-benefits of managers away from their decision making, the question is, if something is based on self-interest, does that necessarily mean that it is unethical? Kaler comments that there is no compelling ground to categorize self-interested actions as immoral. It is instead the gradations of self-interest which finally draw a dividing line between self-interest and morality. Below the dividing line, starting from the bottom and going up, refers to prudential actions that are totally self-interested, and quasi-prudential actions, where self-interest is dominant but not total. Above the dividing line, starting from the top and going down, refers to

ultra-moral actions to the extent of self-sacrificial altruism, extraordinarily moral actions that are altruistic but without self-sacrifice, ordinarily moral actions where self-interest and altruism are in equal proportion, and quasi-moral actions that involve disproportionate but not dominant self-interest. Self-benefit to managers is more complex than just economic benefit. It extends to benefits in terms of self-esteem, reputation, and other non-economic gratifications like status and power (Kaler, 2000, p. 163).

Now turning to the consumer side, there are many aspects that contribute to consumer behavior, including individual, social, and cultural forces. The classic deontological (Kantian) and teleological (utilitarian) evaluations are also relevant to the discussion at this point. These two kinds of evaluations are presented in the famous Hunt-Vitell model (2006), namely, deontological evaluation is the belief that a particular alternative is the most ethical alternative and teleological evaluation is an evaluation of the sum total of goodness versus badness likely to be provided by each alternative for all relevant stakeholders. Individuals will have to employ both of these evaluations (deontological and teleological) when faced with set of alternatives. Moreover their ethical judgments are a function of both kinds of evaluation. Individuals may select another alternative because of preferred consequences against their first intention. Also the theory suggests that when behavior and intentions are inconsistent with ethical judgments, feelings of guilt will arise, however it depends on individuals' ethical beliefs (Hunt & Vitell, 2006, p. 3). This theory has been tested empirically since it was launched in 1986. For example Vitell, Singhapakdi, and Thomas (2001) have analyzed how consumers make decisions on ethical issues by relying on ethical norms versus perceived consequences. It was found that the majority consumers do

understand the difference between right and wrong and intend to act on that basis. There is, however, a small minority who act out of concern for the outcomes, such as consumers who are happy to buy counterfeits. Since business practitioners have a notorious reputation for financial exploitation, if they desire to take an ethical leadership role they must improve their reputation, especially on the commercially oriented side.

Concerning financial implications, Carter (2009), an assistant Professor at the University of Louisville, questions whether consumers will pay a premium for ethical information. His research found that consumers were often willing to pay a modest premium in order to ensure morality. Yet if marketers want to persuade consumers to pay a premium based on ethical information, then the marketers must engage consumers in all of the steps of the consumer's decision making process. This sequence of events "starts with the need for information which, in turn, leads to socially responsible behavior and social sacrifice and, finally, to the intention to pay a premium. Importantly, this sequence is positively moderated by monetary resources available to spend in category" (Carter, 2009, p. 467). What's more, various researchers have studied the relationship between consumer behavior and ethical values that reflect the way in which they consume. This point can be illustrated by the cross-validated model proposed by Shaw and Shiu (2003). This new model of ethical consumer decision-making of fair trade grocery products consists of two meta-constructs, namely, behavioral controls (reflective of internal and external control factors) and internal reflection (reflective of internal reasoning, which is specifically ethical). This model takes into account the complexity which ethical concerns can bring to the decision-

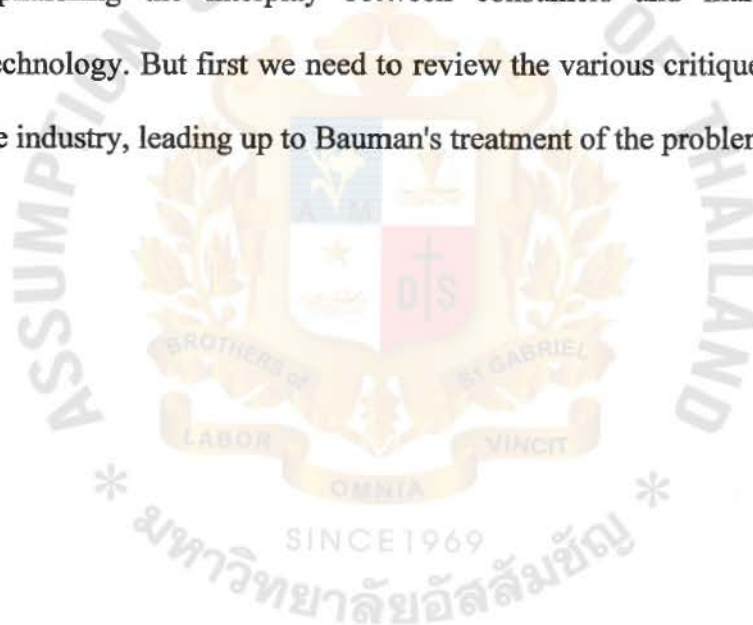
making process. It also considers the behavioral control which impacts an individual's ability to act in accordance with their ethical concerns and responsibilities.

The position of individualists and collectivists towards consumer behavior is also an important matter to be assessed. The study from Lee, Pant and Ali (2010), "Does the Individualist Consume More: The Interplay of Ethics and Beliefs that Governs Consumerism across Cultures," shows that there is a negative relationship between the individual's ethical values and consumerism. Individualists will rely on themselves more than collectivists, which influences consumerism to the extent that in satisfying their own self-interests they tend to consume more. However, the study has found that the higher work-ethics (integrity) of individualists also leads to higher consumer ethics. The consumer ethics here are defined as the degree of fairness in the shopping behavior of an individual in the market place. Integrity in work-ethics may lead to greater ethical behavior among consumers. Lacking in integrity may rationalize away their unethical behavior to enhance their self-gratification.

Ethical consumerism has pressured some significant changes in corporate behavior. In the UK there is the Ethical Consumer, a non-profit organization, with its own websites and magazines, which has been helping people challenge corporate power since 1989. Their mission is clear: "We are the UK's leading alternative consumer organization, uncovering the truth behind the brand names and supporting the growth of the ethical market" (www.ethicalconsumer.org). This is just one example of many such movements. As consumers and producers, we should remind ourselves of the importance of ethical behavior, not only in terms of business practice but as a basic ground of humanity that fosters mutual well-being for all. This is one reason why there

still remains the possibility of ethics in consumerism, and I personally believe we are progressing towards more sustainable economic activity and outcomes.

Nevertheless, in order to defend my optimism, it is necessary to respond to the major philosophers who have criticized capitalism and consumerism. In general their major objection is that capitalism and consumerism change the human subject, making it less autonomous while simultaneously burdening it with more choices. Moreover, to demonstrate the possibility of ethics in consumer society, I will show how the critical and ethical subject is still possible from an epistemological perspective. This will be done by emphasizing the interplay between consumers and marketers through information technology. But first we need to review the various critiques of capitalism and the culture industry, leading up to Bauman's treatment of the problem.



CHAPTER TWO

Philosophical Interpretation of Capitalism and Consumer Culture

2.1. Critical Theory of Capitalism

The critique of consumer culture and capitalism has a long history. The core idea involves a critique of the domination and manipulation of resources (i.e capital and knowhow) by the superior faction over the inferior faction (i.e. the worker), which results in difficulty for ordinary people to live according to their own rational principles. The subject in the capitalist era seems to be trapped and manipulated resulting in their distorted understanding of reality. For instance beginning with Karl Marx, we see that capitalism, through the process of commodification, controls and impoverishes the workers or proletariats leading to alienation from themselves and each other. This extends to the present day, where we see advertising agencies creating a cycle of never ending desires that trap consumers in what Brickman and Campbell call a 'hedonic treadmill.' This idea of never ending desire is criticized by Buddhist economics on the basis that it is without the guidance of knowledge or wisdom. In such a state humans blindly follow their desires and as a result remain perpetual slaves to craving, which in Buddhist theory is the cause of all suffering. From the view of Marx's epistemology, the concern is to overcome false consciousness and reification. As mentioned by Bewes, subjectivity has been invaded by the images of capitalist culture, reality has been displaced by representation. (Bewes, 2002, p. xii) This critique of the capitalist subject begins with Marx's understanding of commodification.

2.1.1. Karl Marx's Alienation, Commodification and False-consciousness

Marx's epistemology on this subject is linked to the objective essential powers of the nature of what a human being is, in other words, "man is corporeal, living, real, sensuous" (Marx, [1844] 1990, p. 69). Humans are posited by objects and they are objective natural beings. This objectification of the subject is a specific feature of humans that sharply distinguishes them from the animal. Humans are active toward external nature, that is, they treat it as the object of their activity, and their activity of creating objects confirms their objective natural being.

"He only creates or posits objects, because he is posited by objects – because at bottom he is nature. In the act of positing, therefore, this objective being does not fall from his state of "pure activity" into a creating of the object; on the contrary, his objective product only confirms his objective activity, his activity as the activity of an objective, natural being." (Marx, [1844] 1990, pp. 68-69)

According to Marx's theory of knowledge, man is an objective natural being and he is also the object for the other beings. For Marx, objects generate the self-consciousness of the subject. Objects in themselves contain abstract consciousness and the subject incorporates this meaning into the process of their own self-creation. In other words, the object for humans is a means for their own self-consciousness. Humans see themselves and see the others through the perception of their objects. Humans are only able to express their lives in terms of real, palpable, sensuous objects. Likewise, they themselves are also the objects for the other subjects. Now, human being's self-consciousness is also revealed via the objects. According to Marx, the real orientation of man to himself is only possible if he really brings out all his species-powers and it is only possible through the cooperative action of all mankind, as a result of historical evolution. (Marx, [1844] 1990, p. 67) In short, the subject sees reality

through objectification and that creates consciousness in their historical and social creation.

Marx divided capitalist society into two parts: the base and superstructure, the base refers to workforces and all factors related production. The superstructure of a society involves its social structure and institutions. The base determines the superstructure and this in turn determines the consciousness of the people. Marx explains that, “The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness” (Marx, [1859] 2012, pp. 11-12). If one accepts Marx’s assumption that human labour is the source of economic value, then finally this system would inevitably lead to severe crisis between the capitalists and impoverished proletariats. In other words, the base conflicts with the superstructure and this ultimately leads to revolution. Marx criticizes the selfishness of the capitalists in terms of gains and losses saying that, “The worker need not necessarily gain when the capitalist does, but he necessarily loses when the latter loses.” (Marx, [1844] 1990, p. 3) The capitalists make profits on the wages, on the raw materials and they are only motivated by their own private profits. (Marx, [1844] 1990, pp. 11-13)

The subject or the proletariat is cultured by the superstructure and that distorts their vision of reality. Capitalism causes the distortion of power by influencing the workers’ ideas. This distortion of ideas is what Marx called ‘ideology.’ On another level, this ‘ideology’ refers to the distorted beliefs that intellectuals hold about society and the power of their own ideas. He explained that, “Those who produced ideologies suffered from false consciousness” (Eyerman, 1981 (24), p. 43). Marx explained the

four types of alienation caused by capitalism. The capital owners lead all economic activities; therefore, the workers are alienated from the products of their labor, from the act of producing, from their species-essence, and from the others. Capitalism creates the mentally and physically dehumanized being. Since it creates alienated consciousness through commodification, the object which labour produces and confronts is also something alienated, that is, “the worker is related to the product of his labor as to an alien object” (Marx, [1844] 1990, p. 29). In addition, for Marx even the activity or the act of production is an alien activity, “the worker’s activity is not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self ... as an activity which is turned against him, independent of him and not belonging to him. Here we have self-estrangement” (Marx, [1844] 1990, pp. 30-31). Man is a conscious being and because his own life has become an object for him, he therefore makes his essential being a mere means for his existence (Marx, [1844] 1990, p. 31). In other words, the capitalist turns the life of man into a means not an end. Work is no longer an essential expression of human nature but it is just a necessity for maintaining life.

“Production does not simply produce man as a commodity, the human commodity, man in the role of commodity; it produces him in keeping with this role as a mentally and physically dehumanized being.” (Marx, [1844] 1990, p. 36).

For Marx, objective reality or the material forces of production are the subject’s historical and social creation, and this is what determines consciousness. But the capitalist production system reifies labor, so the subject’s consciousness becomes alienated, which Marx calls a false consciousness. With the capitalist system, the worker’s existence is comparable to a commodity, completely dependent on the will of the capitalists. Marx defines commodities as both goods and activities produced by human labor to sell in the market. The more the economy grows, the more the worker

becomes machine-like: "The devaluation of the world of men is in direct proportion to the increasing value of the world of things. Labor produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity" (Marx, [1844] 1990, pp. 28-29). The worker thus devolves spiritually and physically to the condition of a machine, robotically dependent on the capitalists and the market prices. The struggle of the working class increases the misery of the worker and leads to the overall unhappiness of society, that is, "the worker, far from being able to buy everything, must sell himself and his humanity" (Marx, [1844] 1990, p. 5). Moreover, the movement of human history involves the passion towards objects: "Passion is the essential power of man energetically bent on its object" (Marx, [1844] 1990, p. 69). As this uninterrupted cycle of desire and suffering continues, the ultimate consequence is revolution.

Marx's concept of commodification, which sees the worker reduced to a mere economic input, later influenced Bauman's description of members of consumerist societies as commodities. However, Bauman goes even further by pointing out that capitalism in the present day involves a parity of members who have their 'right to be.' Like a swarm, they move by their own desires and intentions to create their own identities (Bauman, 2009, pp. 12-18). Bauman then uses this idea to criticize the social network on internet. He claims that by communicating in cyberspace, people have even more ability to make themselves seem attractive and desirable, that is, they become promoters of commodities and the commodities they promote. They are at the same time both the merchandise and their marketing agents (Bauman, 2007, p. 6).

Based on Marx's thesis, commodification shapes human understanding of their community and their environment. It ultimately holds the subject as a prisoner to a kind of false-consciousness that is dominated by the higher social class within the system of

property relations. If there were not this false-consciousness then the underclass would overthrow the system of their domination (Marx & Engels, [1845-49] 1970). I also agree that this false-consciousness influences the subject's thinking, including their thoughts regarding ethics. Marx's understanding of commodification extends across the whole tradition of Critical Theory, and is especially evident in the work of Adorno who criticizes the 'Culture Industry'.

2.1.2. Theodor Adorno's Critique of Culture Industry

To sell products, the management from the top manipulates consumers or the masses by well-designed and well-calculated marketing campaigns, utilizing advertising tools such as mass-media, art and music as the means. Again the subject's world view is manipulated. Adorno calls this mechanism the 'culture industry' (1991), whereby control of consumers is mediated by entertainment and mass deception. In his earlier work, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which he co-wrote with Max Horkheimer (2002), the word "culture industry" is used to explain the mass culture. Horkheimer & Adorno link the definition of culture to the work of art or pure art. They defend modernist art but condemn the culture industry in that it uses art as a means to gain profit. Also, they echo Marx's criticism of the domination of society by those who hold the power of capital.

The general meaning of culture is the cumulative knowledge and activities derived by a process of development of a society from generation to generation, which also represents the uniqueness of that society. Collins Cobuild Dictionary (2001, p. 368) provides the following definition: "culture consists of activities such as the arts and philosophy, which are considered to be important for the development of civilization and people's minds". Culture is also defined as a means to build up the

identity of a state and includes prohibition, beliefs, and norms. On the contrary, Adorno posits culture specifically in terms of pure art as its ends. He says, "culture is opposed to administration. Culture would like to be higher and more pure, something untouchable which cannot be tailored according to any tactical or technical considerations" (Adorno, 1991, p. 108). In his description of liquid modernity, Adorno criticizes culture industry as a simply a means used to create belief and drive behavior. According to this principle, the commercial faction must try very hard to build beliefs, or what they call positioning, and brand promises via advertising campaigns in order to increase sales and production.

Drawing upon Adorno's idea of culture being reduced to a means, Bauman views that culture is beginning to shift from its original task of building the nation and being the tool of the educated classes, to being an agent for change, and finally to being something to be manipulated and "managed". For Bauman human beings are now artificially created. To quote his own words on the matter, "'Being human' was no longer viewed as a matter of fact, a gift of God or Nature, but as an explicitly human task...Humans were not born but made" (Bauman, 2009, p. 194). Human beings are cultivated by their leaders: "According to its original concept, 'culture' was to be an agent for change rather than for preservation of the status quo; or more precisely, it was to be a navigation tool to steer social evolution towards a universal human condition" (Bauman, 2011, p. 6). However, the transformation of modernity from its solid state to a state of liquidity caused the original meaning of the word culture' to become obsolete. Culture has now become a function of the freedom of individual choice:

"It can be said that in liquid modern times, culture ... is fashioned to fit individual freedom of choice and individual responsibility for that choice; and its function is to ensure that the choice should be and will always remain a necessity and unavoidable duty of life, while the responsibility for the choice

and its consequences remains where it has been placed by the liquid modern human condition – on the shoulders of the individual, now appointed to the position of chief manager of 'life politics' and its sole executive" (Bauman, 2011, p. 12)

For Bauman, the culture of liquid modernity has no populace to enlighten, but rather it has clients to seduce. This is similar to Adorno's idea of the culture industry wherein the corporations and their marketing campaigns were the primary cause of this transformation. In addition, culture today consists of offers not prohibitions. The function of culture is not to satisfy existing needs, but to create new ones.

To Horkheimer & Adorno, the standardization of production, or 'mass culture', is manipulation of needs. The subject plays two dichotomous roles as both producer and consumer. The subject is merely a living cell whose sole purpose is for work and leisure, which crystallizes into homogenous, well-organized complexes under the domination of one who holds capital (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, pp. 94-95). The role of production is demonstrated by the advertising campaign:

"Films and radio no longer need to present themselves as art. The truth that they are nothing but business is used as an ideology to legitimize the trash they intentionally produce. They call themselves industries, and the published figures for their director's incomes quell any doubts about the social necessity of their finished products.....In reality, a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need is unifying the system ever more tightly. What is not mentioned is that the basis on which technology is gaining power over society is the power of those whose economic position in society is strongest. Technical rationality today is the rationality of domination. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 95)

Bauman views members of the liquid society as being emancipated from solid institutional constraints (Bauman, 2007, pp. 16-22), which ironically causes an overwhelming of freedom of choice. This choice is developed under the seductive power of marketing (Bauman, 2009, pp. 201-203). Likewise, Adorno believes that capitalism impedes the development of emancipation of human beings;

“The total effect of the culture industry is one of anti-enlightenment, in which, as Horkheimer and I have noted, enlightenment, that is the progressive technical domination of nature, becomes mass deception and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness. It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves.” (Adorno, 1991, p. 106)

In resistance to the idea of ‘the customer is king’ (the mantra of the marketing industry), Adorno explains that, “the masses are not primary, but secondary, they are an object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery. The customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object” (Adorno, 1991, p. 99). In addition, consumers in culture industry are under stress from everyday productive lives and therefore look for amusement as a distraction. The effectiveness of the culture industry depends on removing thought. The entertainment industry has borrowed the charms of art, utilizing them as a stress-free pain killer that clouds over the mind, temporarily allowing people to forget their suffering (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 116). Unfortunately, they also forget how to think for themselves according to reason, which subordinates them to the control of administrators and marketers. This idea is also echoed by Hardt and Negri.

However, before discussing empire theory, it is necessary to consider another position of capitalist desire. While Adorno and Marx criticize the domination by capitalism leading to false consciousness of the subject, Deleuze and Guattari see it differently. They see within capitalism itself revolutionary possibilities for bringing the subject to the origin of desire-production.

2.1.3. Deleuze and Guattari's Desire Production and Deterritorialization

2.1.3.1. Deterritorialization and Reterritorialization

Deleuze and Guattari apply Nietzsche's ideas concerning the overcoming of nihilism to capitalism. The loss of value characteristic of nihilism is overcome by accepting the loss so that humanity will become more responsive to reality and will be in the position to create new values appropriate to the situation. Capitalism is a kind of active force which fulfills the overcoming of nihilism. Capitalism promotes a kind of freedom that breaks out from the old territorialization of the nation-state, and traditional ways of thinking about identity. It creates a deterritorialization of flows of production and flows of money and brings humans to the origin of their desire-production. However, this aspect is criticized by Bauman for the reason that deterritorialization leads to isolated communities. It disables the qualification of collective work of society which is necessary to develop harmony and common goods in the society.

Deleuze and Guattari describe capitalism as a schizophrenic system being interested only in self-benefits. The global perspective of capitalism enables the central agencies to maintain their profits but leads to the destruction of local industry (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 232). In addition, capitalism introduces innovation only when it is profitable to do so. It must subvert or deterritorialize all territorial groupings such as the church, the family, the group, and indeed any social arrangement. Nevertheless, since capitalism also requires social groupings in order to function, it must then facilitate reterritorialization, or new social groupings, new forms of the state, the family, or the group. What the state deterritorializes with one hand, it reterritorializes with the other; for example, deterritorialization of the flows of financing, but reterritorialization of purchasing power and the means of payment (the role of central banks) (Deleuze &

Guattari, 2008, pp. 258-259). These events happen at the same time. The life of any culture is always both collapsing and being restructured. The process of the construction of culture is indeed simultaneously the process of the destruction of culture.

2.1.3.2. Desire Production

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire-production is a challenge to Sigmund Freud. Freud noted that people desire something because they lack of something. It is the feeling of need or lack that stimulates desire. In contrast to this, Deleuze and Guattari understand desire as something produced, as revolutionary by nature, and capitalism is both the producer and satisfier of that desire. This means that desire is not to be identified with lack but rather with production: "Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 5). Desire-production functions as Anti-Oedipal in that it liberates flows of desire, not following Oedipal codes and neurotic territorialities.

Human beings are desiring-machines that desire production as the basic operation of the unconscious: "Hence we are all handymen: each with his little machines. For every organ-machine, an energy machines: all the time flows and interruptions" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 2). The social machine or representation is a kind of code for the desiring-machine that has been encoded via the primitive society, then feudalism, and finally capitalism. For Deleuze & Guattari, to code desire is the business of the socius (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 139). Decoding refers to the process of dismantling these traditional codes. In capitalism, the decoded flows have begun since the despotic age or the state in feudalism. Flows of producers and flows of money have played several processes of decoding and deterritorialization from the old

society. The free worker was deterritorialized to privatization and wealth was deterritorialized through the formation of industrial capital (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 225). Capitalism does not require belief in order to function, but what it does require are regulations that reterritorialize people's desires. This is the function of the state or the police, or what they call anti-production, which are still needed to regulate productivity and realize surplus values. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 251)

Desire itself is an origin, it is revolutionary force in itself, and we all are desiring machines. Under the democratic and capitalist system, desire flows as a source of production. The ethics of desire-production is on the subject's shoulders. According to Deleuze & Guattari, marketing activities are really well fit to this nature as they respond to and reflect a variety of desires. Marketing takes part in generating flows of choices that are derived from desire and at the same time influence the reproduction of desire. Marketing can help individuals to craft their identities and at the same time individuals have the ability to guide the direction in which production should go. This continuous cyclic process is responsible for the creation of narratives of which there are many examples. We shall see this later in the section of Walter Benjamin who describes the idea of metaphysical knowledge of the objective world.

2.1.4. Hardt and Negri's Empire: the Deterritorialization of Identities

In contrast to the thesis of Deleuze and Guattari, Hardt and Negri see desire production and the postmodern affirmation of difference as still being imprisoned by capitalism and marketing. The only difference is a fundamental change in the operation of biopower, a new proletariat, and new struggles. They describe the members of the 'multitude' as the multitude of hybrid identities resulting from deterritorialization of identities. In their work *Empire* (2001) they reflect that the exchange of capital across

national boundaries has lessened the economic power of the nation-state. Empire deterritorializes the rule of frontiers. It is a transformation from one form of sovereignty to another newer form with no temporal boundaries: "Sovereignty has taken a new form.... This new global form of sovereignty is what we call Empire" (Hardt & Negri, 2001, pp. XII-XV).

The subject in Empire holds its own biopolitical power, to borrow Michel Foucault's concept of biopower. This biopolitical power, which is a new paradigm of power forced by Empire, cooperates and becomes the multitude, which is a creative force that is capable of the autonomous construction of new political forms beyond Empire (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. x). It is the deterritorializing power of the multitude that sustains Empire but at the same time calls for its destruction. They predict that the multitude produced by Empire creates a greater potential for revolution now than did the proletariat in the modern era, that is, it is the singular power of a new city. They explain the change from the modern era, which Bauman referred to as solid modernity and Foucault termed as "disciplinary society". The disciplinary society is a society of customs, habits, productive practices, and institutions, which structure the parameters and limits of thought, practice and behavior. The process of progressive capitalist accumulation then further causes the change leading to 'the society of control' or the information age. This is a process of economic postmodernization, after modernization, which Bauman classifies as liquid modernity. In the society of control, mechanisms of command become ever more democratic, distributed throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens. The subject becomes the agents of its own control. It goes about social integration and exclusion by itself. Biopower is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior. Its primary task is to manage life so that life becomes an object of

power intensified through flexible and fluctuating networks. According to this idea, the subject holds its power throughout the depths of consciousness and across the social relations (Hardt & Negri, 2001, pp. 23-24).

From the perspective of Hardt and Negri, Empire establishes no center of power and does not rely on a fixed boundary emerging from capitalism or capitalist sovereignty. They explain the contradiction of principles of capital and the modern sovereignty of nation-states. Capital expands across territories but sovereignty relies on boundaries (Hardt & Negri, 2001, pp. 326-327). For example, the flows of capital, with the cybernetic intelligence of information and communication technologies, have come to play a foundational role in production processes which have effected a change in the quality and nature of labor. In addition, it makes and enables producers to be more responsive to the market decisions gearing the market toward an interactive dialogue between production and consumption (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. 289). Their idea is reflected in the shape of organizations nowadays that show an integration not only of the old style of capital, but also with the collective intelligence that connects workers with biopolitical self-organization.

Circulation, mobility, diversity, and mixture are the very conditions that open up the possibility the world market, and they also tend to deconstruct the boundaries of the nation-state. "With the decline of national boundaries, the world market is liberated from the kind of binary divisions that nation-states had imposed, and in this new free space a myriad of differences appears" (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. 151). This process is reflected and driven by marketing: "The capitalist marketing strategies have long been postmodernist" (Negri & Hardt, 2001, p. 151). Marketing theory is very agreeable both to capital and postmodernist thinking. Indeed, as stated by Hardt and Negri,

“Marketing itself is a practice based on differences, and the more differences that are given, the more marketing strategies can develop. Even more hybrid and differentiated populations present a proliferating number of “target markets” that can each be addressed by specific marketing strategies... every difference is an opportunity.” (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. 152)

The world market has established a real politics of difference which has flourished in the various fields of practice and theory appropriate to capital. Apart from marketing, there are also the forces of management organization and the organization or production. In the postmodernist organizations, new trends of multiculturalism, mobility and flexibility create an unprecedented ability to deal with differences.

Nonetheless, the deterritorialization of identities and promoting of biopower, instead of being revolutionary, does not totally mean the institution of the potential for liberation. The truth of Empire derives from the accumulative forms of the multitude.

"The real revolutionary practice refers the level of production. Truth will not make us free, but taking control of the production of truth will. Mobility and hybridity are not liberatory, but taking control of the production of mobility and stasis, purities and mixtures is. The real truth commissions of Empire will be constituent assemblies of the multitude, social factories for the production of truth." (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. 156)

Paradoxically, along with liberation from the old set of values, Empire as derived from capitalism and consumerism, continues to keep us trapped by the oppressive aspects of capitalism, in other words, "what we are faced with wields enormous powers of oppression and destruction" (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. XV). Bewes restates Hardt & Negri idea in the following manner, "Empire is a theoretical structure in which oppression and liberation, like the rivers of Lethe and Eunoë in Dante's Purgatorio, have the same source. In Empire, victory and defeat are simultaneous" (Bewes, 2002, p. 253). Empire is the process of seeking for a new possibility of liberation that will continue to adjust for well-being beyond Empire. Hardt & Negri use

the word 'corruption' to explain the status of a deontological world of Empire in which possibility is everywhere. There are no juridical and political forms which are firmly established. Also they describe corruption of Empire in metaphysical terms where the entity and essence, effectiveness and value, do not find common satisfaction (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. 20). The Ontology of Empire (and beyond Empire) is constructed by collective movements of cooperation, across the production of subjectivity, from the new proletariat as a constituent power, and there is always new struggle to contest and subvert Empire which is also the task of the multitude, the subject of biopower.

2.1.5. Dufour's Change of Subject from Kantian and Freudian to Neoliberal

Subject

The story of the destruction of the old grand narratives reflecting the change of the subject's epistemology is also stressed by Dufour. He notes the destruction of the old "grand narrative" to the ecological narrative and the promotion of a new nihilism that leads to the creation of a new subject. He quotes Lacan's idea that, "Capitalism also consumes ... human beings" (Dufour, 2008, p. 1). Dufour further develops Lacan's theory of 'Other' to construct his idea of modalities of subjectivity. What is consumed and destroyed for Dufour is the pure reason of the Kantian and Freudian subject. He compares the epistemological effects of capitalism to 'head shrinking'.

"We are currently witnessing the destruction of the double subject of modernity. I refer to the critical (Kantian) subject and the neurotic (Freudian) subject – and I do not see why I should have any hesitation about adding the Marxian subject to the list. And we are seeing the emergence of a new 'postmodern' subject" (Dufour, 2008, p. 2).

Dufour describes the subject in the postmodern age as neoliberal. This neoliberal subject needs no absolute or meta-social guarantor. The destruction of the symbolic is

equivalent to the destruction of the Kantian and Freudian subject. The destruction of the Kantian subject refers to the loss of critical reasoning, and for the Freudian subject means loss of the neurotic subject. The desymbolization of the world is accelerated by commodity exchanges, which are based on market value. The value of commodities becomes purely monetary, and so they lose their previous symbolic value. "As a result, there is nothing and no other consideration (ethical, traditional, transcendent or transcendental) to stand in the way of the free circulation of commodities" (Dufour, 2008, p. 5). This decline occurs because there is no real validity of 'the Other' (a symbol for such things like language and law) and 'the Subject' (God, Politics) in postmodernity. Auschwitz, according to him, is one example that has destroyed all possible laws of the modern age (Dufour, 2008, p. 43). Klein questions capitalism asking whether we should totally depend on the logic of economics or of a society which is market driven? She takes the September 11th disaster to be a symbol for challenging the corporate idea. She points out that the belief that, "the market can supply solutions to all of our social problems has been profoundly discredited by the experience of September 11 itself... market-driven policies are not helping to win the war on terrorism" (Klein, 2002, p. 450).

For Dufour, being is never pure because it always has a political translation. The history of the propositions of being are indeed mere political ontology. He states that, "Human is incomplete being and is dependent upon another who can compensate for the human being's incompleteness" (Dufour, 2008, p. 155). Human collectives need an ontology of the one. Dufour explains that an ontology of the one is a purely fictional construct which has the role of unifying what is heterogeneous. Therefore, "this process

needs a certain number of myths, stories and artistic creations, which are designed to prop up that fiction" (Dufour, 2008, p. 19).

In postmodernity, the soft breaking in of a series of entertainments is part of the course of the construction of a neoliberal subject. The loss of the narrative of the nation state, the grand narratives and the old subject consequently give rise to the market as the new subject and precipitate the rise of the ecological narrative. One candidate for a new subject, as discussed by Deleuze and Guattari, is Nature.

"If we want to secure reterritorialization at last, what could be better than our great mother-earth? This would mean that the myth would no longer be celebrating a cultural referent; it would be celebrating the real referent, now that we have at last found it once more. It would be celebrating our origins: Nature. Now that the great totems of history have pretty well collapsed, geography is making a comeback. And indeed, the narrative of Nature no longer celebrates the father: it celebrates the mother... This candidate great narrative can adapt to all the forms taken by the decline of father in our societies, or coexist alongside them. It is the apocalyptic forecasts it carries with it that give the ecological narrative its great strength" (Dufour, 2008, p. 52).

As stated above, Deleuze and Guattari believed that the process of deterritorialization can lead to the one true and immanent reality: Nature. But Dufour sees a problem with this.

"The only problem of this candidate Subject is the reality of human nature – it does not exist. That is why human beings had to create a second nature: culture... Basically, the discourse of Nature is not self-sufficient: that is why there will be no ecologists of our first nature without what I would call an ecology of our second nature – and that is precisely the main threat of dissolution to the ecological narrative. There is a danger that it will be absorbed into other narratives" (Dufour, 2008, p. 53).

The market, with its endless commodification seems to be a new narrative. However, Dufour thinks that it does not answer the question of origins, of foundations, of the first element, and of the infinite. Instead, it leaves the subject to his own devices,

unsatisfied with the new hope of commodities, and with the torments of self-foundation (Dufour, 2008, p. 64). He states that,

“The subject was once a subject insofar as he was referred to this God, this land or this blood. An external Being conferred being onto the subject. With democracy, that hetero-reference was transformed into an auto-reference. The subject became, in a sense, his own origin. This auto-reference raises a lot of problems. Perhaps more than it solves! It hurt when human beings discovered that they could be subjects only by being the subjects of a fiction, but it hurts even more when they discover that they have no fiction, as there is now a danger that there will be no more subjects (Dufour, 2008, p. 54).

In postmodernity, the speaking subject is no longer defined hetero-referentially but auto-referentially granting the subject his or her semiotic rights. This circumstance is caused by the democratic and economic freedom of a ‘be yourself’ concept. Juridical autonomy, economic freedom, and neoliberalism’s possibility of total freedom go well together with the self-referential definition of the subject. The problem is that the subject has no definition and there are no more presentable Others. According to Dufour, “Once we enter a period in which there are no more presentable Others, other problems begin to arise. Why? Because it is of course at the point when the subject is enjoined to be herself that it is most difficult, if not impossible, to be a self” (Dufour, 2008, pp. 69-70).

According to this, Dufour uses the concept of ‘hysterology’ (Dufour, 2008, p. 70) which means that what is ‘after’ comes ‘before’, to explain the problem of the postmodern subject. His explanation can be compared to lighting a fire while waiting to get the firewood. The democratic subject finds themselves placed under the constraint ‘Be yourself’. Democracy advances the idea of ‘be yourself,’ but, paradoxically, this self does not yet exist. As a result, the subject in postmodernism feels itself to be an

impostor, it is internally confused because at once it is half a subject and a reduplicated subject. Dufour explains the democratic subject in the following manner,

“The postmodern subject is evolving towards a subjective condition defined by a borderline neurotic-psychotic state. This subject is increasingly trapped between a latent melancholy (the depression we hear so much about), the impossibility of speaking in the first person, the illusion of omnipotence, and the temptation to adopt a false self, a borrowed personality or even the multiple personalities that are made so widely available by the market.” (Dufour, 2008, p. 71)

He points out that neoliberalism wants a desymbolized subject who is a free-floating. At this stage, all symbolic references that can validate human exchanges are challenged by the exchange of commodities against a backdrop of generalized venality and nihilism. What is in danger is the loss of our very being. Dufour himself admits that he has no answer to this problem, however based on this fact, he refers to Descartes’s capitalist Amsterdam as follows,

“Descartes, being a man who could remain calm in the most desperate of situations, is the theoretical character we need here; when everyone else feels obliged to be involved in trade, he enjoys ‘complete freedom’. It is when his doubts are greatest that he rediscovers, thanks to those very doubts, the harshest of philosophical exercise; but it was to found a new certainty” (Dufour, 2008, p. 169)

2.1.6. Walter Benjamin’s Commodities and Historical Truth

In terms of the value of commercial products, each product or to say man made material has its own history. Walter Benjamin explores the historical truth of commodities. Benjamin is one of the prominent thinkers on the topic of mass culture. Susan Buck-Morss states in her book *The Dialectics of Seeing*, which is her work on Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*, that “Benjamin’s goal was to take materialism so seriously that the historical phenomena themselves were brought to speech” (Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 4). Benjamin believed in the possibility of metaphysical knowledge of

the objective world, just as when one admires a fine painting in a gallery, the painting seems to lighten up their ideas toward it. It seems to introduce some conversation with its background, this conversation as a new friend might sound friendly, intimate, exciting, or horrifying. It does not happen only with paintings, but also when contact occurs with a variety of other objects including commercial products. According to Benjamin, the objects are mute but their expressive potential becomes legible to the attentive philosopher who by naming them brings them to speech (Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 13).

For him all artifices and all created things, including shopping products, have their own history and represent truth, which lends a certain palpability or visibility to philosophical ideas. He believed that the meaning which lay within objects most decisively included their history (Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 13).

“In the *Passagen-Werk* (Arcades Project) Benjamin was committed to a graphic, concrete representation of truth, in which historical images made visible the philosophical ideas. In them, history cut through the core of truth without providing a totalizing frame. Benjamin understood their ideas as “discontinuous”. As a result, the same conceptual elements appear in several images, in such varying configurations that their meaning cannot be fixed in the abstract. Similarly, the images themselves cannot be strung together into a coherent, non-contradictory picture of the whole. ... such a project is not best discussed in generalities. It needs to be shown” (Buck-Morss, 1991, pp. 55-56).

Benjamin also criticized the images of the nineteenth century produced by architecture versus engineering, painting versus photography, literature versus journalism, in that they were a tangle of both anticipatory and fettering elements. Neither artist nor technician was able to differentiate clearly between the two. Under this model of commodity production, quite similar to Adorno, culture was produced as manipulation rather than enlightenment, so he thought that the democratic potential of mass culture remained unrealized (Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 143). According to him,

'progress' fetishization in the nineteenth century focused on material and so would not be treated systematically by social historians (Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 56).

How does this historical truth develop? According to Benjamin, reconstructions of the past must on principle show the matter 'as it actually was.' Buck-Morss explained that. "Benjamin had not the least concern for the conventions of empathic 'appreciation.' Instead his objective was to rescue the historical objects by ripping them out of the developmental histories - of law, religion, art, etc.,- into which fictional and falsifying narratives they had been inserted in the process of their transmission" (Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 218). In order for a piece of the past to be touched by present actuality, there must exist no continuity between them. Benjamin commented that the industrial culture had generated all the mythic power for a universal symbolism, which was indeed the creativity of industrialism. The producers of the modern imagination were the photographers, graphic artists, industrial designers, engineers, and artists and architects who learned from them.

In marketing, product design is a very important as it is the core of product development. There are many steps required to produce one product, especially when introducing new marketing offerings. This process starts with the generation of an idea and confirmation that the idea is worth considering. Then the idea must be screened to determine whether or not it is compatible with company objective and resources. If the idea passes this stage, then a good concept for the products will be researched before crafting marketing strategies. Marketing is therefore a combination of art and science, which corresponds to Benjamin's suggestion that, "the objective (and progressive) tendency of industrialism is to fuse art and technology, fantasy and function,

meaningful symbol and useful too this fusing is, indeed, the very essence of socialist culture" (Buck-Morss, 1991, pp. 125-126).

Business analysis with various possibilities of assumptions and scenarios also has to be studied. If there is the probability of profitability then product development will start. Before commercialization, the products will be tested and justified. Commercialization of the product will be terminated if it performed badly on the market test reports low. A particular product might require many years of development before it can be commercialized, and even after it is launched the product may still need further improvement. The marketer measures consumer preferences for alternative product concept and design through sophisticated research methodology. On the one hand this ensures profitability, on the other hand, the history of the products begins.

2.1.7. Eastern Point of View: Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Ven. P. A. Payutto

The problem of suffering based on attachment to material objects has always caught the attention of Eastern intellectuals, particularly from the Buddhist perspective. Critiques of capitalism and consumerism from the Buddhist perspective have mainly been originated from an idea of happiness which promotes well-being, wisdom and harmony. Both Buddhism and economics agree on the fact that mankind has unlimited wants. However for Buddhism, true happiness is not derived from satisfying the boundless spectrum of desires. Instead, any attempt to satisfy this limitless desire simply creates further craving and attachment, which lead to suffering. Besides, physical or secular happiness is not true happiness, and should only be pursued to the extent necessary for basic physical well-being. Various writings concerning Buddhist political economics and capitalism display many approaches to this problem. Changkhwanyuen (2004) explains the grounds on which capitalism is unacceptable to

Buddhism. For example, Buddhist political economy is based on a kind of collectivism, not on individualism which is the root of capitalism (Changkhwanyuen, 2004, p. 255). Also, Premasiri (2011) suggests that Buddhism is sometimes considered a hindrance to economic development because it supports the abandoning of greed, craving and desire, which are in fact considered to be the motivating impulses for economic activity. What drives people to economic success is indeed delusion, which is the basic root of immorality. In a contrasting light, Gopalakrishna and Datt (2011) explain that in Buddhism spirituality and socio-economic development go together and both spiritual and materialism are balanced by the Middle Path, which allows people to live by sharing and caring for the welfare of society. Among numerous Buddhist economic studies that have appeared from the eastern and western view points, the most well-known works are those of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Ven. P. A. Payutto.

2.1.7.1. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu: Dhammic Socialism

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Thailand's leading Buddhist reformist (Puntarigvivat, 2003), interpreted Buddhism not only from a religious viewpoint, but also from social and political viewpoints. His profound work reflects on social and political structure in accordance with Buddhist doctrine and presents an alternative model of Dhammic Socialism (1986). His vision is of a kind of socialism, not communism, that involves the restraint of personal ambition and all selfish egoistic drives in order to bring balance to society (Buddhadasa, 1993, p. 77). This basic state of restraint is the normative, true, and natural state of things. However, people are far from this natural state of things, because they have allowed themselves to be dominated by selfish desires that promote personal suffering and prevents them from acting

compassionately. The balanced society is marked by the presence of peace and quiet and the absence of confusion and chaos (Buddhadasa, 1993, p. 104).

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu comments that in capitalism the owner of capital – the capitalist – keeps accumulating material wealth far beyond what he actually needs and reinvests all the profits for their own benefit while oppressing their workers. On the other hand, in the Buddhist ideal the owner of capital employs workers in a cooperative effort for the welfare of the entire community (Buddhadasa, 1993, p. 56). All living beings produce according to their own capacity and consume only what they need, without collecting surplus for themselves. Natural resources should be used only as necessary so that the rest is available for others' use. According to this model, human beings should not take or consume more than what they need and should share surplus with others who are in short supplies (Buddhadasa, 1993, p. 61). However, he does not argue against production saying that, “people have a right to produce more than they need, and it is even appropriate to do so if the surplus is shared with others” (Buddhadasa, 1993, p. 62). From my perspective, this idea seems far beyond the present state of capitalism where more production is planned with the hope of more sales.

The ideal subject in Dhammic Socialism is one who lives with wisdom and is social-centric. This is in stark contrast with the subject in individualistic society, in the liquid world, who is generally insecure and fragile. However, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's proposal at least suggests the potentiality of an innate morality, which may even be able to flourish in this liquid modern world.

2.1.7.2. Ven. P. A. Payutto: Buddhist economics

Ven. P.A. Payutto, also known by his monastic title, Phra Bhramagunabhorn, is a well-known Thai Buddhist monk and a brilliant Buddhist scholar who received UNESCO's Peace Prize for Education. He has published a number of books and articles that relate knowledge in Buddhism to contemporary social issues. One of his works is *Buddhist Economics: A Middle Way for the Market Place* (1989), aims to awaken readers to the possibility of living with integrity, wisdom, and peace in a world that is driven by economics, specialization, commercialization, and over-consumption.

Payutto views modern economic concepts based on a consistent picture of human nature. He states that human beings are born with ignorance and this lack of knowledge causes problems in life. Without the guidance of knowledge or wisdom, they simply follow their desires. In contrast to Western critiques of the modern economic system, the Buddhist concept provides a guideline for attaining true well-being. The Buddhist economic concept questions on whether or not the choice to consume leads to self-development or increased freedom of ignorance. This is contrary to modern economic thinking that tends to just encourage maximum consumption.

Ven. P.A. Payutto explained that a commodity used to satisfy the desire for pleasure is only of artificial value; it is not true value. For example, fashionable clothes, jewelry, luxury products have no true value for the individual because they do not lead to true well-being. According to the Buddhist concept, right consumption is when we consume goods and services so that to satisfy the desire for true well-being. This true well-being refers to the state of mind that is contented and free from disturbing mental states. Such contentment is reached only through the abandoning of desire. This clashes with modern economics' proposal that consumption is a way of creating satisfaction.

In terms of production, Buddhism advises a system of production that brings positive results leading to well-being and harmony with other beings. Since production is always accompanied by destruction it can only be justified if the value of the things produced outweighs the value of what is destroyed. This moral basis is applicable to the production of products which aim at destruction, such as weapons. Moreover, cooperation for Buddhism should aim to elevate true well-being. This contrast with cooperation in economics, which is driven by the artificial value of profit maximization and competitive advantages. This is called artificial cooperation.

Unlike the attitude of economics, Right livelihood in Buddhism is not determined by the amount of material wealth one accumulates. , Ven. P.A. Payutto states that;

“In opposition to contemporary urban values, Buddhism does not measure a person’s or nations’ worth by material wealth. Nor does it go to the opposite extreme, as do Marxist thinkers, and condemn the accumulation of wealth as an evil in and of itself. Instead, Buddhism judges the ethical value of wealth by the ways in which it is obtained, and the uses to which it is put.” (Payutto, 1989)

Payutto concludes the major characteristics of Buddhist Economics with the words 'Middle Way Economics'. Middle Way Economics aims to find an optimum or 'just right' point for the enhancement of true well-being for all, without causing harm to oneself or other beings. Middle Way Economics should reflect an interconnection of human beings, society, and the natural environment in harmony and mutually supporting each other. In terms of ecological concerns, there is here a greater movement towards addressing sociological and ecological issues leading to more social responsibility in business activity.

2.2. Voices of Business Practitioners

Despite all of this intense disapproval, there is so far no feasible alternative politico-economic system to replace capitalism. And it cannot be denied that capitalism has been responsible for increased human well-being, at least on the physical level. Through the influence of capitalism a greater variety of choices has been provided and individuals have the freedom to choose. More constructive movement is enabled by comprehending the reality that humanity is in a continuous process of movement. From Max Weber's view of charismatic capitalist research by Kahan (2012), in the beginning capitalism needed a leader with bureaucratic traits to efficiently manage it. Kahan notes that with the new emergence of market competition, a neo-Weberian view of modern market capitalism would be to see it as an economic system that incorporates both charismatic and bureaucratic traits. Capitalism fosters rationality, the mother of bureaucracy, and it fosters entrepreneurship, the mother of charisma. "Competition provides ever new openings for charisma, and leads to the downfall of bureaucracies that, however efficiently they may administer, produce inefficient responses to market demand" (Kahan, 2012, p. 147). This phenomena is clearly embodied by well-known capitalist success stories such as Warren Buffet or Bill Gates.

Many philosophical thinkers criticize capitalism from the spectators' view point. Many thinkers and activists who function as society watchdogs might not have any direct experience of investment, marketing, and business administration. In reality, every member in consumerist society plays the role of either consumer or producer, or both. One party produces and the other consumes. This mutual interdependence produces a complex cycle of cause and effect. Even a homeless person, who makes a living by begging, produces by exchanging his labor of begging to anyone who feels

empathy in turn. The beggar's labor stimulates an emotional response and a fee for the emotional production is then given in return.

Business practitioners, including capital owners and management, also play the role of consumers. How do they think when they act as producers? Seeing their point of view allows a more precise evaluation of reality. Peter Lynch, a successful Wall Street stock investor, and John Rothchild, a specialist in financial writings (1995) says, "Capitalism happens when people make things and sell them for money or if they don't make things, they provide services for money" (Lynch & Rothchild, 1995, p. 22). They describe the dawn of capitalism as beginning in the late 1700s tracing back to the colonialism of Western countries which searched for new lands and resources. The subsequent flourishing of democracy was also supportive to capitalism, since any person who has a stake in the property would tend to work harder, feel happier and do a better job (Lynch & Rothchild, 1995, p. 25). The invention and proliferation of machines enabling mass production, money, banking, and financial systems have all been significant ingredients leading to the growth of capitalism. Lynch and Rothchild see the money put in the bank as 'life savings' and emphasize the power of financial system: "without the financial system, the political system never would have worked" (Lynch & Rothchild, 1995, p. 35). They admire capitalism referring to Adam Smith's the Law of Accumulation:

"Smith said there was a law of accumulation that turned self-interest into a better life for everyone. When the owner of a business got richer, he or she would expand the business and hire more people, which would make everybody else richer, and some of them would start their own businesses, and so on. This is where capitalism created opportunities, unlike feudal agriculture, where a small number of big shots owned the land." (Lynch & Rothchild, 1995, p. 41)

This implies incremental production per head that drives total production. To feel happier implies a better condition of living. In capitalism people do not need to personally engage in business activities, they simply invest money, let business people grow the business, and wait for profits. Sometimes people's life savings are put at risk through the uncertainty of conditions. Both the risk and the possibility of gain depend on accuracy of information, anticipation and luck. Thus the stock market opens up the possibility of being owner of something in a way that could never be accomplished by a single individual on their own. For example, in buying stocks for a railway company, one may become the owner of tunnels in various other parts of the world. Despite these good aspects, capitalism has the pitfall of easily turning into a monopoly economy dominated by a few companies. Lynch and Rothchild cite Adam Smith's concern that such a state of monopoly again poses a threat to future prosperity, because competition between various contending parties is the key of capitalism (Lynch & Rothchild, 1995, p. 65).

However, capitalism needs more than just free competition. It also needs legal structures in well-integrated social contract. De Soto, an economist and President of the Institute for Liberty and Democracy in Lima, Peru asserts that, "I do not think Bill gates or any entrepreneur in the West could be successful without property rights systems based on a strong, well integrated social contract" (De Soto, 2000, p. 224). The legal structures can increase trust between members in society and reduce the costs of bringing things together. He admires Western legal and political structures that are the result of hundreds of years of development that combined extralegal jurisdictions and constructed the foundations for capitalism, or solid modernity (to use Bauman's phrase).

The 21st century is titled by Initiative (2012) as "the age of social influence" or a global based giant media agency. Globalization, privatization, and the online community change the sociological and political landscape of the world, and also have an impact on marketing tactics. Marketers now integrate their online and offline touch points hoping to achieve greater reach and scale and speed up the overall decision-making and purchase process, together with ensuring that consumers feel good about their choices. However, Initiative's research found that consumers are becoming the driving force powering what, when and where brand interactions occur. This opens up the suggestion to marketers that, "we can create a consumer-powered media synergy effect that is both non-linear and emotional - driving deeper engagement and trust" (2012, p. 4). Note that, social influence becomes a new source of trust binding together the various parties constituting this liquid modernity.

Though modern economic activities seem to facilitate better living conditions for human beings, there are still many concerns about its ethical drawbacks and the need for corporations to monitor performance dimensions that go beyond traditional financial measures. Despite the effectiveness of the market mechanism, George Soros, an investor, philosopher and philanthropist, while he supports a coalition of international trade and financial institutions, also emphasizes the necessity of authority of political process to ensure social justice and proper use of public goods:

"Political processes generally speaking are less efficient than the market mechanism, but we cannot do without them. Markets are amoral: They allow people to act in accordance with their interests, and they impose some rules on how those interests are expressed, but they pass on moral judgment on the interests themselves." (Soros, 2002, p. 6)

From the view point of the blooming of social responsibility corporation it appears that profit is no longer an adequate justification for action. It is increasingly

necessary that business practitioners balance the quest for productivity and profit with social commitment. Fry, Laura, and Ouimet propose a solution for the pursuit of the reconciliation of human well-being with productivity and profits through an emphasis on workplace spirituality with openness to religion and transcendence in full freedom (Fry, Matherly, & Ouimet, 2010). They offer the Spiritual Leadership Balanced Scorecard Business Model as a driver of employee well-being, organizational commitment and productivity, corporate social responsibility and ultimately financial performance, via its impact on internal processes, output quality, and customer satisfaction. The theory of spiritual leadership was developed from an intrinsic motivation model that incorporates the qualities of hope, faith, vision, and altruistic love. They refer to Kaplan and Norton (2004a) (2004b) to confirm this vision as a concrete, realistic possibility:

"In general leaders influence employee performance and high levels of employee performance result in better operations which in turn lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction. Finally, high customer satisfaction leads to better financial performance. Since the performance of the employees in an organization – from the executive level to the operational level – is central to effective and efficient internal operations, subsequent customer satisfaction and ultimately financial performance, a focus on employee performance is warranted for organizations that wish to be successful and thrive" (Fry, Matherly, & Ouimet, 2010, p. 284).

It is undeniable that business people work for profits and impossible even under socio-ecological concerns they will stop striving for profit. Even the example of the Spiritual Leadership Balanced Scorecard Business Model still supports the pursuit profit. However, it broadly considers the reality of making profit for corporations, in terms of the drawbacks of capitalism, socio and ecological concerns. Business practitioners must be alert to this, otherwise they will lose their position in the market place through an inability to respond to the market's voices. In recent times, emissions

trading has become a strong basis in neoclassical economic theory credited by Frank Stilwell, a notable political economist and current professor at the University of Sydney. Emissions trading is a system designed to control corporations' production of pollution. A limited amount of emission will be set by a central authority and so called carbon credits will be allocated to corporations and nations. Since the carbon credits can be traded on the market, Stilwell notes that, "Establishing an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) creates a new market - a market in rights to pollute". He goes on to explain that, "Those permits will then be acquired by businesses with the greatest need to pollute and the greatest ability to pay. The cost of purchasing the permits can then be expected to impact on the price of the products" (Stilwell, 2011, pp. 109-110). He suggests that the situation is much more complex in the real-world practice involving how the limits are defined and how the process is policed. The overall result is then a perhaps even more uncertain outcome in the real world. This is another example of the corporate struggle for profit. And even though the majority of people are now aware of the environment crisis, they still enjoy consuming. Producers therefore manipulate consumer feeling of business ethics while still being unethical. In other words, people consume their consumer's feeling and producers obscure their responsibility by hiding the whole process of production. The question is how the political process can ensure social justice and proper use of public goods.

2.3. Conclusion and Observations to Chapter Two

Capitalism brings benefits along with drawbacks. While it brings well-being to humanity it brings ecological problems from the over-consumption of resources in similar proportion. It accommodates freedom to select identities with infinity of choices. However, it leads to manipulation from new agencies, that is, not from state

regulations but corporations. The public is witness not only to the beauty of product development as historical truth, but also to the destructive profit orientated behavior of corporations and investors. All of these factors deserve critical consideration in order to develop a well-informed understanding of reality. An undeluded perception of reality is a crucial factor needed for the creation of the authentic subject that can properly respond to these complex circumstances.

Philosophically, the subject is passively transformed through capitalism. The following table summarizes the ideas of the major thinkers based on the scope of this thesis:



Theory	What is the subject?	How the subject sees the reality	Circumstances created by capitalism	Capitalism's effect on the subject
Marx	an objective natural being	sees reality through objectification	commodification	false consciousness
Adorno	living cells of purpose for work and leisure	the work of art or the culture is an end	culture industry	mass deception
Deleuze and Guattari	desiring-machines	coded desire by the socius	detrterritorialization reterritorialization	the revolutionary subject
Hardt and Negri	biopower	regulates social life from its interior as an object of power intensified through flexible and fluctuating networks	Empire	the multitude, the detrterritorialization of identities
Dufour	political ontological being	need an ontology of the one that is a purely fictional construct to unify what is heterogeneous	neoliberalism	the neoliberal subject, the desymbolized subject
Buddhism	consisting of body and mind	sees through wisdom as it is	ignorant, selfish, egoistic	personal suffering
Bauman	sovereign expressions of life	reality is constructed by social institutions	Liquid modernity	Individual life politics, commodity, struggle with uncertainty

Capitalism and consumerism promote liberty in making choices. But under the spell of manipulation and deception what possibility remains for real freedom of choice? For Marx, the system of capitalist production reifies labor depending upon the bourgeoisie, so the subject's consciousness becomes alienated. For Adorno, the mass culture controls consumers mediating by entertainment and it is mass deception.

Deleuze and Guattari see desire flows as a source of production and capitalism induces the innate trait of desire-production. They call this the deterritorialization of the subject, and the ethics of desire-production rests on the subject's shoulders. Meanwhile, Hardt and Negri's idea of Empire results from global capitalism and involves assemblies of the multitude that become social factories for the production of truth. Dufour would say that the subject has lost its absolute or meta-social guarantor due to the trait of the neoliberal subject. Ultimately in all of these philosophies, the danger is the loss of the subject, or in other words, a state where humans become mere prisoners of commodification. From the Buddhist point of view, capitalism leads the subject to be more materialistic. It hinders wisdom and understanding of non-attachment, and leads to suffering resulting from an immoderate proliferation of desire. I have also added Bauman's view on the subject in this table as a guideline for the discussion in next chapter.

I am quite impressed with Schumacher's idea in *Small is Beautiful* (1973), that if we have to put forth effort to reach the stage of physical satisfaction, then it is important to select a way of life that uses less effort. This idea is completely dichotomous to modern economics, which emphasizes maximization of the volume of production and consumption. Based on Schumacher's conception, the end of modern economics is consumption, so the aim is to try to maximize consumption by laying down optimal patterns of productive effort. Meanwhile, Buddhist economics tries to maximize true human satisfaction by the best possible pattern of consumption. The era of consumerism involves much stress and suffering arising from never ending efforts to increase production and consumption. In addition one is at the mercy of manipulation by corporations and seduction through marketing tactics. The teaching of the Buddha

emphasized a non-harmful attitude, not only with respect to all sentient being but also to the environment as the fundamental requisite of life. Therefore, greater care and awareness should be exercised in the use of non-renewable materials like oil and coal. Schumacher was not against modern economics, and he believed in the possibility of improvement through the idea of finding the Right Livelihood, the right path of development.

In my personal opinion, the best product is one that can satisfy physical well-being while at the same time developing the moral awareness of the user, and enabling them to exercise their social responsibility towards others. To prevent the subject from seduction, wisdom is essential. The trouble of materialism is the focus on the means as more important than the ends. It therefore destroys man's freedom and power to choose the most beneficial ends. The development of means, as it were, dictates the choice of ends (Schumacher, 1973, p. 51). As a solution to some of the aforementioned problems I would like to promote product development that contributes not only to accommodating better living standards in consumer society, but which also results in the development of wisdom, in order to fine-tune human well-being to harmonize with nature. My proposal may sound ridiculous and impossible in the commercial world, but across the course of history many 'impossible' ideas have been realized. I hope we can move forward in this direction. With this optimism I will examine Bauman's criticism of consumerist society and propose my own solution.

CHAPTER THREE

Bauman's Reflection on Consumerist Society

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. Background

Zygmunt Bauman is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Leeds. He has scrutinized and contributed much to the critique of contemporary consumerist society. He describes the moral crisis of the contemporary society in terms of the shift from solid modernity to liquid modernity. This crisis involves the movement away from the normative regulations of authoritative public institutions that derived from the assumption of the universally binding ethical principles, to the seductive power of consumer markets. The characteristic of liquid modernity is derived by the accelerating pace of globalization, free-trade, privatization and real time interactive technology. These factors contributing the state of consumerist society are used as tools of marketing management.

What drives the modern consumerist crisis is human desire for both security and freedom, which is similar to the paradoxical search for both community and individualism at the same time. In liquid world, humans enjoy having freedom to conduct the art of life and to design their own identity. Meanwhile, they look for reference groups or a sense of belonging that makes them feel comfort in the security of numbers (Bauman, 2009, pp. 16-19). In the past, humans tried to construct territories and regulations to defend their security so that freedom was assured within those territories. Humans protect themselves from strangers as explained by Bauman in his chapter on categorical murder or holocaust (Bauman, 2009). Morratta concludes that

the human condition for Bauman is intrinsically connected to strangerhood, and he reviews Bauman's idea that;

“it is through these ambivalent feelings that modern and postmodern strangers become paramount to our sense of comfort or fear. This paradox can never be resolved and, for Bauman, any attempt to resolve it has tragic consequences. Rather than resolve this paradox we need to live with it in a more humane way... we should never lose sight of our moral responsibility towards those who are ‘strange’. It is only by accepting this tension as part of the human condition that we come to accept the universal nature of strangerhood” (Marotta, 2002)

The subject in liquid modernity shifts from being cultivated by the precept, coercive patterning, supervision, and policing, to the realm of "individual life politics" (Bauman, 2009, p. 49). The subject then has to set their own limit and responsibility with relation to other humans and not the institutions. In consumerist society, individuals feel insecure among strangers despite being free from traditional constraints. The advent of freedom of consumer choice according to Bauman turns into another daily routine which produces a new kind of horror which is “the horror of responsibility.” The obligatory routines are filled with dreams of freedom and at present the obligatory choices are filled with dreams of freedom from responsibility (Bauman, 2007, p. 87). Normative regulations are superseded by individual judgement. Since these individuals are themselves striving on their insecurity, this may not be the most stable basis of judgement.

However, for Bauman crisis is the normal state of human society. There is nothing fundamentally wrong about being in crisis. Rather it opens up the sole conceivable source of self-constitution, self-reproduction and renewal (Bauman, 2000, p. 143). In today's state of crisis no emergent shape is likely to solidify and survive for long, because society is characterized by impossibility of decision and the world is

uncontrollable. Amidst these uncertainties Bauman seeks out an ethical ground for living in this liquid society. As a solution, Bauman believes that the crisis in morality in this liquid society could be remedied by Løgstrup's 'sovereign expressions of life' and prompted, not guided, by the "ethical demand" (Bauman, 2007c, p. 116). Sovereign expressions of life spontaneously occur while we interrelate with others. Bauman believes that "we are delivered to each other's care" (Bauman, 2007c, p. 116) and his idea resembles Løgstrup in that love of one's neighbour is the one and only ethical demand, "the demand is that we use our power to the greatest benefit of the other" (Fink, 2007, p. 16). The ethical demand of Løgstrup can operate without precepts or previous norms and must stay silent otherwise it will be an obstacle to the sovereign expressions of life and could easily turn into an artificial motive for conduct: "the act cannot be moral unless it is taken on the actor's own responsibility and risk" (Bauman, 2007c, p. 117). Otherwise, it risks being turned into 'moralism,' and artificial code of conduct pressuring the individual to make so-called 'good' choices regardless of their own will.

The individual or the subject in the liquid modernity of Bauman struggles with its self-identification and uncertainty. Bauman observes that for consumerist society, the strict social facts of its past limitations based on the 'reality principle' are not interesting and unprofitable when compared to the softness and flexibility of the 'pleasure principle' and the brief life expectancy of liquid-modern social facts. He refers to Pierre Bourdieu that, "coercion is being replaced by stimulation, forceful imposition of behavioral patterns by seduction, policing of conduct by PR and Advertising, and the normative regulation, as such, by the arousal of new needs and desires (Bauman, 2008, p. 50). His portrait paints marketing as a new sanctuary for

members of the consumerist society to rest their insecure lives and choose ready-on-hand solutions according to their own preference.

Human bonds tend to be mediated by the market of consumer goods. The sense of belonging is replaced by marks of belonging (Bauman, 2007, p. 83). The holocaust in the liquid modernity occurs in the new form of a group of underclass people who cannot or decide not to join in the consumer society and are thus considered as by-products of the society. Now strangers are people who cannot show their marks of belongings. This status of outsider causes resentment for both parties and leads to distrust and social alienation (Bauman, 2009, p. 65).

Consumerism in the liquid world is no longer a measurable set of articulated needs which originally precipitated the rise of marketing, but rather an unlimited myriad of desire. Consumerism represents a type of social arrangement of consumption and drives a process of individual life policy where there is no such thing as permanent demarcation between social classes. It seems that Bauman appreciates the multiplicity of values that derive from the liquidifying of society. This condition of diversity is a normal human state, a process, and such a crisis is the natural source of morality. Only in a state of crisis, where solid demarcations are dissolved, is it possible to nurture the development of true freedom, autonomy, responsibility and judgement (Bauman, 2000, p. 150). This brings to the fore the question of whether the trait of liquid modernity lessens the sense of social bonds and the sense of responsibilities to others. Bauman's answer to this is yes and in response to this view, my thesis aims to further explain how the sovereign expressions of life take their place in a fluid society and how it can be possible to make the choices of the consumer and the marketer mutually compatible and beneficial for all.

3.1.2. Critique of Deterritorialization

Bauman views liquid modernity with insecurity, uncertainty and fear. In addition, the struggle to escape from uncertainty is certainly not considered a condition of freedom (Bauman, 2000, p. 63). Bauman emphasizes the collective role of society, arguing against Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialization, a phenomena derived by capitalism and consumerism which responds to the desire production attribute and leads to isolated communities that disables the collective work of society:

"the overwhelming majority of contemporary men and women is the ultimate cause of the present-day crisis of the republic - fading of the good society as a purpose and motive of collective action in general, and of resistance against the progressive erosion of the private/public space, the sole space where human solidarities and the recognition of common causes may sprout and come to fruition." (Bauman, 2000, p. 180)

Without real community there is no real political power. Bauman argues that, "individual liberty can be only a product of collective work (can be only collectively secured and guaranteed)" and privatization, instead of being the means to assure and guarantee individual liberty, produces social redundancy and fear (Bauman, 2000, p. 7). The individualized society has developed from the society of consumers which promotes, encourages or enforces the choice of a consumerist lifestyle and life strategy (Bauman, 2007, p. 53). According to Bauman, the present society of electronic networks, up to minute of information sharing and explosion of advertising, all lead to individualization. People are sub-consciously trained to reveal their personalities in terms of objects. From the marketer's point of view, the language of advertising induces a sense of self-esteem, based on the enticement that 'it is only for you', 'it drives your power', 'it is the real luxury life for your success.' One popular model of advertising messages is a problem-solution strategy. The most shrewd advertisers can

dig down to the deepest levels of the psyche of the individual and whisper people's needs to them, but not reveal the hidden agenda so that all of the solutions have hidden costs. In addition, the even better solution keeps moving further away, updating endlessly and at even greater cost. Bauman criticizes this phenomenon as the consumerist syndrome "the consumerist syndrome is all about speed, excess and waste" (Bauman, 2007, p. 86). The uncertainty of this individualized society has led to an increase in fear and individuals have faced with the exhausting task of being responsible for their own choices. Bauman complains that, "we simply lack the tools and the skills. The dangers we fear transcend our ability to act... we find ourselves in a situation not so different from that of a confused child" (Bauman, 2006, p. 20).

In argument against deterritorialization, he alerts us to the unfeasibility of such an approach as it destroys social bonds:

"the question remains of how to bring the solitary fighters together and how to keep them together. The conditions of individualized society are inhospitable to solidary action...Individualized society is marked by a dissipation of social bonds, that foundation of solidary action. It is also notable for its resistance to a solidarity that could make social bonds durable and reliable." (Bauman, 2006, p. 21)

I will return to further discuss this idea when considering the possibility of online social networks.

3.2. Crisis of Individuality

3.2.1. Love and Resentment towards Strangers

The word "crisis" for Bauman refers to a condition where it is necessary to make decisions. Its meaning is closer to the word "criterion" than the word "disaster" (Bauman, 2000, p. 141). The crisis of individuality occurs when individuals have to

create their own reality in a liquid environment where their desires are generally dictated by the pleasure principle. It is now the responsibility of individuals to draw the line on how far they would go for themselves and how far would they sacrifice their own welfare for others to fulfill their moral responsibility (Bauman, 2007, p. 91). Bauman's idea of ethics in marketing is working on duty-based or deontological responsibility to others. He starts to explain his idea by comparing the two contradictory concepts of 'to love the neighbor as thyself' which is the fundamental ethical demand, and 'the pursuit of happiness of self' (Bauman, 2009, p. 31). The pursuit of self happiness is the basic survival instinct, whereas the high ideal of loving one's neighbor is the birth act of humanity. Bauman responds to Sigmund Freud's questioning of the point of a precept enunciated with so much solemnity if its fulfillment is not reasonable, or in my words, why should I love the other if it seems to contradict my instinct?

Taking a leap of faith, Bauman elevates the importance of this precept of morality. For him, to love one's neighbor means to respect to their uniqueness. The survival instinct or self-love seems incompatible with love of one's neighbor, but since there is the possibility of self-love then there must be something 'lovable' within each individual. What one loves when they love themselves is also able to be loved by others: "Self-love is built of the love offered to us by others" (Bauman, 2009, p. 34). Likewise the refusal of love leads to self-hatred. One can know that love is forthcoming when they interact with others and know that they are both listened to and talked to. Such attention convinces one that they are respected by others, and that their staying alive makes a difference and they are worthy of being cared for. Therefore, if one's neighbors make one a proper object of self-love, then those neighbors do indeed value

the call to love. The individual and their neighbor both desire to have the dignity of their own uniqueness recognized. Thus to love one's neighbor as one loves oneself is to respect each other's uniqueness and value differences among each other.

“The call to love thy neighbor as thyself, says Sigmund Freud, is one of the fundamental precepts of civilized life (and, according to some, one of its fundamental ethical demands)” (Bauman, 2009, p. 31).

In Bauman's view, the brighter side of living in society is the principle to love thy neighbor as oneself. On the other hand, the darker side is 'ressentiment', or in English resentment, which is a major obstacle to loving the other as thyself (Bauman, 2009, p. 35).

Bauman clarifies the writings of Nietzsche and Scheler on the subject of resentment. Nietzsche's resentment reflects the surrendering of one's self-esteem and dignity, and the accepting of their own inferiority to the self-proclaimed betters and self-established betters. It is a mixture of genuflection and surrendering, but also an act of envy and spite, resulting in a fight against inequality and pressure to level down the extant social hierarchies. As for Max Scheler, resentment is a feeling of the members of the middle class towards each other, where each party strives to lift themselves up, and push others down, which results in competition. Finally, Bauman adds a third kind of resentment, which is the obstacle to loving thy neighbor. This is namely the resentment towards strangers caused by globalization and openness of the society that brings the terrifying experience of the heteronymous. He calls this a “negative globalization,” the scope of which includes mass production of refugees, unemployable, prospectless youth, and other factions that cannot be incorporated into the framework of the capitalist society. These ‘others’ become a symbol of fear and are alienated as possible threat to the well-being of the masses.” “Market without

boundaries' is a recipe for injustice, and ultimately for a new world disorder in which, it is the politics that becomes a continuation of war by other means" (Bauman, 2006, p. 97).

3.2.2. No Delay of Gratification

Along with resentment, liquid modernity accommodates freedom for the members of the society to sculpt their own identities. The subject undergoes a makeover, as here described by Bauman:

"Consumers' subjectivity is made out of shopping choices – choices made by the subject and the subject's prospective purchasers; its description takes the form of the shopping list. What is assumed to be the materialization of the inner truth of the self is in fact an idealization of the material –objectified-traces of consumer choices." (Bauman, 2007, p. 15)

The characteristic of freedom to choose reflects how people in liquid modernity work. 'Flexibility' is the slogan and working life is saturated with uncertainty (Bauman, 2007, p. 147). In solid modernity, or early 'heavy' capitalism the engagement between capital and labor are fortified by the mutuality of their dependency, that is, they depend on each other for continued existence. However, in the present, capital can travel fast and its lightness and mobility have turned it into a paramount source of uncertainty. It becomes the present-day basis of domination and the principal factor of social divisions (Bauman, 2007, p. 121). From the angle of political power the free-trade era has well and truly come to a peak. In terms of employment, Bauman employs the term 'precariousness' (Bauman, 2007, p. 161) in that no one can feel truly secure about their job under the pressure of downsizing, competitiveness, productivity, effectiveness and flexibility. In the absence of long-term security, 'instant gratification' seems to be reasonable approach to life (Bauman, 2000, p. 162). Gratification should

not be delayed for the reason that we do not know what will happen tomorrow. In solid modernity delay of gratification of desire was employed as a work ethic for the producers' side and as an aesthetic of consumption for the consumers' side. However, in liquid modernity, the aim is no longer to delay the gratification of desire, but to shorten the duration of that desire once it has been fulfilled.

Individuals' consumption is nowadays accelerated with a variety of choices and values used to speed up turnover;

"The life of consumers, the consuming life, is not about acquiring and possessing. It is not even about getting rid of what was been acquired the day before yesterday and proudly paraded a day later. It is instead, first and foremost, about being on the move... satisfaction must be only a momentary experience." (Bauman, 2007a, p. 98)

An increase of sales correlates to an increase in products' demand and relates to a trend set by marketers, not only locally but globally. Klein criticizes the manner of branded multinationals that talk of diversification, however, their clones are found all over the global market under management's tasks of "how best can I steer you into the synergized maze of where I want you to go today?" (Klein, 2002, p. 130). Feelings of not belonging to the group are a tenacious source of psychological pressure. Bauman mentions this as one of the collateral casualties of consumerism (Bauman, 2007, p. 117). It is thus understandable why Bauman evaluates the concerns of members of consumerist culture into the following three characteristics. Firstly, 'Being ahead of the style pack', the style pack is the reference group or the significant others. Staying ahead refers to being alert to the danger of overlooking of renewability of current marks of belongings of the reference group. In the society of consumers, therefore, the sentiment of belonging is not obtained by following the style of the pack but through the process

of self-identification with one's own pack with the help of visible marks of belonging in the shops (Bauman, 2007, p. 83). Secondly, a use-by date model that is very well united with the pointillist time that is composed of instants. Thirdly, the individual must choose. In the world of consumerism 'freedom' and 'choice' are two names of the same condition, one might decide not to choose only by surrendering their freedom (Bauman, 2007, p. 85).

3.3. Crisis of Modern Ethical Regulations

The liquid stage of society causes insecurity, uncertainty, and lack of safety. There is a transition from the earlier state regulations which were used to administer people, to a situation where this administering is done by commercial corporations. It is now the subject, not the social institutions, which is granted freedom for the critique of reality. The objective is to liberate the subject from coercive social constraints, the routine base, the social institution and bureaucracy. Hindrance to movement should be removed and the subject should start to feel free to move or act, with no resistance to the moves intended or desired (Bauman, 2007, pp. 16-17).

Transition of capitalism from heavy modernity to consumerism in liquid modernity changes the roles of leaders from commanders to counsellors (Bauman, 2007, p. 64), "The life conditions in question prompt men and women to seek examples, not leaders" (Bauman, 2007, p. 71). Culture has changed its role from the preservation of the nation-state to becoming an agent for change (Bauman, 2011, p. 12). Culture in liquid modern terms turns to focusing on fulfilling individual needs and solving individual problems, it consists of offerings, not prohibitions and propositions, not norms. The function of culture today corresponds to the human right to be

different, which has replaced the idea of territorially determined rights or the right of belonging (Bauman, 2011, p. 37).

Bauman describes a worrying shift from normative regulations to individually run and managed life politics which subsidizes the protection from solid institutions to consumer markets (Bauman, 2006, p. 4). He explains the necessity of social constructs from two cases, that is, based on physical threats and spiritual burdens. The first case, raised by Hobbes, is that human beings agreed to live together so as to prevent war of all against all. For this reason, human beings agree to set up normative regulations out of necessity. In another case, from Emmanuel Levinas and Knud Løgstrup, human beings are conceived in a positive light, with unconditional and unlimited responsibility for others or the infinity of ethical demand. According to Levinas, our responsibility for the other is already rooted within our subjective constitution. From this perspective, the principle function of society is to make the essentially unconditional and unlimited responsibility for the other both conditional and limited.

Things have changed in the age of liquid modernity. Bauman explains that both premises for togetherness have been diminished. Rather, the normative regulations that prevent harm between men to men has been dissolved in favor of individual 'life politics' which is deregulated and privatized. Consumerist pursuits are given priority. The responsibility for one's choices and the burden of the consequences of those choices rest upon the individual's shoulders or the consumers' responsibilities. Therefore, the institutional force is not so dominant as before. A pursuit of what Freud called the pleasure principle has replaced the reality principle due to its promise to support an infinitely extendable commercial profit. On the other hand, the boundlessness of the suprahuman dimensions of ethical responsibility has been shifted

to the individual. Each individual sets the limits of their responsibility for others and decides to what extent they will sacrifice their personal welfare to express responsibility to others (Bauman, 2009, p. 51).

According to Bauman the members of consumerist society are trained differently from the modern period. Back in the modern era, the members of society were trained to produce and obey commands and routines, and to be able to postpone gratification. The work ethic was the principal behavior pattern. In the society of consumers, on the other hand, people were trained to be 'shop dependent' "Everyone needs to be, ought to be, must be a consumer-by-vocation... that is one universal human right and universal human duty that knows of no exception" (Bauman, 2007, p. 55).

Similar to Adorno's culture industry, Bauman refers to Joseph Brodsky 'tyranny' which describes an arrangement of human togetherness by culture managers that structure the individual's world for them. The managerial spirit controls the perception of the human world ranging from day to day surveillance and policing to PR. There is a shift from the modern state of overregulation to a state of diffuse uncertainty, and individual life-politics transferred into the domain operated by consumer markets (Bauman, 2009, pp. 201-203). In this sense, it distorts an ability of consumers to rely on their own reason. The market's reassurance that the products on offer are necessary to relieve suffering creates an unending dependency. The subject's dependence towards the consumerist process causes disengagement among members in consumerist society which Bauman defines as a characteristic of relationship liquid modernity. Together the responsibility of normative regulations being laid upon individuals' shoulders, it seems that now even the ethical code is no longer so easily

solidified. The concept of responsibility now revolves around the calculation of risks (Bauman, 2007, p. 92). The focal point is no longer the responsibility for others but responsibility to oneself. Responsibility has been moved to the realm of self-fulfillment, and therefore responsible choices serve the desires of the individuals.

When interaction occurs between multitude of individual constituting society, each members deeds have an influence upon the other. In this circumstance, what is needed are moral skills. Bauman proposes re-personalizing morality which means to return to the starting point of the ethical process (Bauman, 1996, p. 34). The return to the stage of nature is for Bauman a return to the values of trust and care. The question is how to ensure that trustfulness can continue to exist in this unsecure world.

3.4. Bauman's Idea of Ethics in Consumerist Society on Løgstrup's Ethical Concept

3.4.1. Trust

Though living in the society might lead to resentment, Bauman believes in the necessity of society with the precept of loving one's neighbor as oneself as the birth act of humanity. In response to the uncertainty and risk characteristic of liquid society, it seems that only trust can be a remedy. However, liquid modernity seems to be against trust. Insecurity from uncertainty is stimulated in many ways and provides the ground for resentment. Uncertainty is derived from privatization whereby individuals have to take responsibility for their own choices. Such a circumstance is likely to lead toward to mistrust and mixophobia rather than to trust and care.

Nevertheless, uncertainty is the ground for morality. Morality for Bauman is nothing but an innately prompted manifestation of humanity without any purpose, expected profits, or self enhancement (Bauman, 2009, pp. 62-63). Løgstrup's ethical paradigm is grounded in trust. Humans are enterprising and emotional beings and they surrender themselves by placing trust in one another (Løgstrup, 2007, pp. 44-45). This perspective influences Bauman's notion that "we are delivered to each other's care" (Bauman, 2007c, p. 116). Bauman explains that being responsible for the other is a starting point and it is the first reality of the self. Rather than being a product of society it precedes all engagement with others (Bauman, 1996, p. 13).

3.4.2. The Sovereign Expressions of Life

Løgstrup holds the same view as Bauman that humans are originally born with trust for one another. In their interrelatedness to others, the sovereign expressions of life spontaneously occur: through trust, through mercy, through the openness of speech. Løgstrup clarifies that "The expressions of life cannot be applied, but can only be realized, as I realize myself in it. This is due to its sovereign character" (Løgstrup, 2007, p. 53). Bauman thinks that humans are morally ambivalent and there is no logically coherent ethical code that can fit this condition of morality. Therefore he suggests that what is needed is to learn how to live without such guarantees (Bauman, 1996, pp. 11-10). Hence, in the liquid society, humans need to learn how to manage their responsibility to others.

"It is now up to each individual to set the limits of her or his responsibility for other humans and to draw the line between the plausible and the implausible among moral interventions – as well as to decide how far she or he is ready to go in sacrificing personal welfare for the sake of fulfilling moral responsibility to others. As Alain Ehrenberg convincingly argues, most common human sufferings tend to grow nowadays from the surfeit of possibilities, rather

than from the profusion of prohibitions as they used to in the past" (Bauman, 2009, p. 51).

For Løgstrup, the sovereign expressions of life are triggered by immediacy. He refers to Levinas's writings concerning the proximity or the immediate presence of other human beings that are weak and suffering and requiring of help. The sovereign expressions of life spontaneously occur to the individual and cannot therefore be manipulate for individual ends. Fink and Macintyre summarize Løgstrup's idea that,

"I am not the cause of such sovereign expressions of my life. They are not my achievement, but through them I can achieve what will be of genuine help to other people. They are sovereign because in them 'My life has taken me over before I have taken my life over'." (Løgstrup, 1997, p. XXV)

Contrary to this, the obsessive expressions that emerged out of powerlessness were reactive, not sovereign, actions produced by envy, jealousy, and offensiveness. The likelihood of mistrust in this liquid society and the progression of deregulation and privatization are now calling into question the human capacity to love and make sound moral judgments. Nevertheless, it appears that Bauman still perceives the possibility of ethics in the midst of this uncertainty. He concurs with Løgstrup's sovereign expressions of life, stating that "the state of certainty – be it genuine or putative, factual or contrived, gained or imposed – is not the hoped-for haven of morality. In the realm of certainty the conjecture of responsibility wilts and the push of responsibility grinds to a halt" (Bauman, 2007c, p. 117).

3.4.3. Ethical Demand

Bauman explains the meaning of ethical demand as, "the demand to be concerned with and to take care of another person just because I and the other person share the same world and so our fate and welfare are intertwined and interdependent"

(Bauman, 2007c, p. 116). For Løgstrup, the demand asks us to take care of the other person for their own sake through our own unselfishness. "The demand, precisely because it is unspoken, is radical... the radicalism of demand consists, further, in the fact that it asks me to take care of the other person's life not only when to do so strengthens me but also when it is very unpleasant, because it intrudes disturbingly into my own existence" (Løgstrup, 1997, pp. 44-45). However this demand has its limit otherwise it would lead to encroachment. The characteristic of unlimited responsibility may deprive the other of their personal responsibility by coercing them against their own will in the interest of what is best for them. This can be compared to the role of parents who should give their children freedom and independence, not shape their children with rules and directions which assume unlimited responsibility and seem to direct their children's whole future through remote control. Whether or not the children will suffer this is still a kind of encroachment (Løgstrup, 1997, pp. 47-48).

When producers manufacture products, on one hand they may listen to the market voices and needs, but on the other hand, they may invent or try to fabricate new needs in order to increase production and profit. Take for example the computer and digital platform, the growth of food science technology, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), pesticides, or even coffee and biscuits in the morning and topping up with a one-a-day multivitamin pill. The producer aim to persuade consumers to enjoy themselves and make them believe that such is the way life should be, and apparently there is a parallel change in consumer's life styles and beliefs. It seems that this is one kind of encroachment through the cultivation and management of members in society as Adorno proposed in his culture Industry. This is partially true judging from the whole process of interaction between producers and consumers.

Comparing this with Kant, Andersen notes that Løgstrup's idea is contradictory. An interrelation to others is a source of knowledge of morals for Løgstrup, while for Kant, humans exercise moral reason in an isolated manner (Andersen, 2007, p. 36). Løgstrup did not argue against rationality; he explained that rationality had many benefits, like the rule of law, the world of consumer goods and the medical sciences. On the contrary, what is unable to be rationalized are one's expressions of life. This does not mean that one's expressions of life are irrational, but it simply preceeds any distinction between rationality and irrationality as here expressed that, "taken together, the unrationalizable expressions of life form the foundation upon which our rational endeavors are built. Without them, the whole of our pervasively rationalized social structure would collapse" (Løgstrup, 2007, p. 151). Bauman comes to terms with this idea of ethics by reasoning that there seems to be gap between the universally binding ethical principles and the sociopolitical realities marked by progressive diversification and individual life-politics (Bauman, 2007c, p. 115). In short, these unrationalizable expressions of life are the necessary ground for constructing a rationalized structure.

In Kant, the moral obligation must be developed by will as pure practical reason (Kant, pp. 4:416-425). The Categorical Imperative of Kant proposes that the individual ought to act as if the principle or maxim of their action were to be a universal law. To pursue the good, is to use reason to will according to duty, which is to will objectively. These grounds are valid for every rational being. Will is good in itself because of its volition, regardless of its consequences (Kant, p. 4:394). A study from Fink holds that according to Kant, individuals ought to act in each situation as legislators for the whole of humankind. While for Løgstrup individuals ought to act in each situation as supporters of the person whose life is in our hand. "On the objective level the ethical

demand is that we act to the greatest benefit of the other person. Løgstrup is not concerned with the rationality, universalizability, or law-likeness of the ethical. He has no conception of a practical reason, either in a Kantian or in an Aristotelian form” (Fink, 2007, p. 25). More investigation from Andersen points out that,

“The only conflict is that between obligation and temptation. Kant’s epistemological model of moral life causes him to ignore the relatedness of human beings and to picture them exclusively as isolated individuals... In Kant, he says, reason is not merely an instrument but is a self-sufficient source of moral knowledge. According to Løgstrup’s conception of ethics, however, moral reason is instrumental in the sense that it is not, in and of itself, the source of moral insight. Our knowledge of moral law has a different source, and reason has its role in discerning which course of action is the most appropriate in the given situation.” (Andersen, 2007, pp. 35-36)

Bauman emphasizes the collective role of society in steering towards a better condition of living, either in order to stop war of all against all or on the basis of humans’ basic good nature they must necessarily participate in a social contract to limit the troubles arising between people (Bauman, 2009, p. 19). In addition, socialization is a product of the ongoing interplay between the individual’s paradoxical yearning for freedom and security. However, now that traditional society has given way to liquid modernity, the individual is isolated and highly dependent on shopping objects, while privatization lessens the roles of traditional ethical codes. Bauman even complains of a considerable amount of social deskilling (Bauman, 2007, p. 16). Therefore, the ethical demand with regard to the interrelated source might be put into difficulty. However, he believes this uncertainty and insecurity can be used as a ground for ethical skill development.

Furthermore, Bauman views the ethical challenge on the level of globalization where distances matter little and the gap between one’s deeds and their consequences seems to be too far to imagine (Bauman, 2009, p. 71). He refers to Max Weber who

noted that modern capitalism was the separation of business from household. Bauman quotes Menenius Agrippa's ancient allegory of "secession" to describe this separation whereby businesses become free to venture into a genuine frontier and, free of moral concerns and legal constraints, they create their business's own code of behavior. He depicts human misery as being derived from the unprecedented moral extraterritoriality of economic activities. For Bauman, Globalization may be described as "Secession Mark Two" (Bauman, 2008, p. 74). The differences from mark one are that this time the modern household is protected by the nation-states economic, military, cultural, and political sovereignty. In addition, with an extraterritorial territory of the business, the strong producer sweeps away all weak local powers and pursues its own ends ignoring all others as economically irrelevant and illegitimate. The result would be similar to the first secession but this time on a global scale. So new solutions need to be tailored to deal with these new circumstances.

3.5. Conclusion and Observations to Chapter Three

Bauman concurs with Løgstrup in his optimistic view of humans' natural inclinations. He believes in the natural characteristics of trust with spontaneity, impulse and the urge to trust rather than mere calculation. He claims that "morality is nothing but an innately prompted manifestation of humanity - it does not serve any 'purpose' and most surely is not guided by the expectation of profit, comfort, glory, or self-enhancement" (Bauman, 2009, p. 62). This spontaneity is an expression of life or what Løgstrup terms the sovereignty of life's expression (Bauman, 2009, p. 63). However, in this liquid society, the responsibility of choice is altered into the calculation of risk. This kind of trait is not necessarily on the same track as ethical duty. This means that in

the era of uncertainty, individuals are led to pursue more selfish courses of behavior, thus moving further away from pure-minded responsibility of choice.

People in this era are terrified of inadequacy, namely, inadequacy of time and resources to acquire possessions or achieve a desired status. Regarding to aspect, the individual plays an important role in terms of moral duty to others and the responsibility of choice.

There has been a shift from coercion by others or by the nation-state (in previous solid social functions) to privatization (in the presently liquid modernity). The more the liquidity of individual movement, the more responsibility to other individuals needs to be cultivated. Bauman notes that there is some reflection that once this responsibility is shifted over to individuals, the task becomes overwhelming. A central authority would no longer be an option, so the stage of uncertainty would arise together with the consequence of demeaning self-reprobaton of individuals (Bauman, 2009, p. 52). In this case, the commercial agency eagerly takes on the 'responsibility' of selling their services in to cure those uncertainties and allow individuals feel relief from the daunting task of self-responsibility. According to Bauman, responsibility in the consumerist society remains much the same as it was in the stage of modern history. The only difference is that now the responsibility is shifted from the responsibility 'to' a superior person or an authority to the responsibility 'for' the welfare, autonomy and dignity of another human at the receiving end of the action (Bauman, 2009, p. 53).

Concerning Bauman's application of Løgstrup's ethic to the liquid modern world, some objections have been voiced by Øjvind Larsen, Associate Professor at Copenhagen Business School, who specializes in ethics, political theory and economy in society. He responds to Bauman's essay on "The Liquid Modern Adventures of the

‘Sovereign Expressions of Life’” (Larsen, 2007). For Løgstrup individuals meet each other upon the basic foundation of trust, but for Bauman human bonds in the fluid world are becoming increasingly fragile. There are a combination of factors leading to this fragility, namely, insecurity (of position, entitlements and livelihood), uncertainty (as to their continuation and their future stability) and lack of safety (of one’s self and body and their extensions: possessions, neighborhood, and community) (Bauman, 2007, p. 181). However, Larsen questions Bauman’s proposition that, “uncertainty is the home ground of the moral person and the only soil in which morality can sprout and flourish” (Bauman, 2009, p. 63).

Among uncertainty and crisis, ethical demand calls upon the moral subject to care for others. Without such care, the human community would have no way to be constructed and live together harmoniously. In an age of war of all against all, humanity might finally learn the lessons of pain and dishonesty. Enforced isolation would reveal itself as contradictory to human nature. The sovereign expressions of life are prompted by immediacy, not only in face to face relationships but also with regards to the human capacity for investigation. I shall apply this theory with regard to human interaction with products and with other persons in cyberspace network.

The consumer necessarily interacts with their chosen product on different levels, both functionally and emotionally, and with or without conscious recognition of the process. For example, when one consumes a bottle of soft drink or a tube of toothpaste, they quickly experience what it tastes like, its quality, and they make the decisions on whether or not to repurchase it. Moreover, with just a few clicks of the mouse the consumer is able to access information about the manufacturing process and the environmental effects in a way that is unprecedented throughout history. However,

the decision making process to do with a car is far more complex, involving more emotional benefits and functional concerns. The consequences of one's act of consumption may be out focus due to the distance of production places and consumption venues. However, now the movement to manage the relationship between the producer and consumer is beginning and is even more real time, able to be campaigned, on a global scale and facilitated by cyberspace.

Bauman also hopes for ethics on a global scale. For him, Globalization means an increased interdependence between nations, societies and individuals (Bauman, 2009, p. 71). Larsen notes that while Løgstrup's concept was mainly limited to immediate or close relations between people, Bauman applies that concept to distant relations on the level of globalization. This is because Bauman aims to purport that people should not simply act as bystanders. Instead, with a responsibility as a silent demand, people should take the initiative to design a new standard of behavior appropriate to the global society. For him, the ethical challenges of capitalism and consumerism can be cured by allowing for the sovereign expressions of life in individual life politics, and further applying them to the global scale of politics.

CHAPTER FOUR

Compatibility of Ethics in Liquid Modernity

4.1. The Interplay between the Consumer and their Products

A subtle interplay is taking place every day, in every interaction between consumer products and the consumer. In liquid modernity, the acquisition of products and services on a worldwide scale is as easy as a few simple clicks of the finger. Consumers can navigate websites, check for information, make bookings, purchase products, ask questions and review data. Bauman claims that capitalism and consumerism leads to the isolation of communities, disabling the collective work of society, its harmony and common good, but I propose that this position should be reconsidered. Online social networks are the new phenomenon on the internet. The internet is a real time channel, which not only connects individuals, but also forms unprecedented networks between producers and consumers. This cyber-dimension is where a new system of consumer ethics can be constructed.

4.1.1. Online Social Networks: A New Platform of Interaction

At present, there are both offline and online interactions and both of these kinds of interactions support each other. A study of Internet Addiction shows that "internet is being used as a tool to facilitate offline interactions. Results also indicate that because virtual networking is becoming a new culture, being bicultural (social both on and offline) may facilitate well-being" (Torres, 2010). Who would have thought that the Internet could be a source of knowledge that also supports offline interactions and actually leads to well-being? This new online-culture definitely doesn't lead to isolation. While individualization is often a function of capitalism, consumerism, and

privatization, the online social culture facilitates a new type of socialization by helping to connect individuals. De Soto explains the formation of Western capitalism as involving a new requirement for the accountability of individuals. He notes, interestingly that,

"Capital is born by representing in writing- in a title, a security, a contract, and in other such records ... The integration of all property systems under one formal property law shifted the legitimacy of the rights of owners from the politicized context of local communities to the impersonal context of law. Releasing owners from restrictive local arrangements and bringing them into a more integrated legal system facilitated their accountability. By transforming people with property interests into accountable individuals, formal property created individuals from masses." (De Soto, 2000, pp. 49-54)

From that day forth, individualization began, in other words, the subjects began to be identified as distinguished from others by materials and ownership. Bauman also discusses the same subject in his explanation of subjectivity fetishism, saying,

"'consumers' subjectivity is made out of shopping choices - choice made by the subject and the subject's prospective purchasers; its description takes the form of the shopping list. What is assumed to be the materialization of the inner truth of the self is in fact an idealization of the material - objectified - traces of consumer choices." (Bauman, 2007, p. 15)

The internet is a new tool for individuals to access both material resources and information. This produces new condition for a massive shift in social behavior patterns. Shopping choices are now available anywhere and anytime depending on one's access to electronic devices. A recent study failed to support the hypothesis that time spent on the internet would be positively correlated with feelings of loneliness (Campanelli, 2009). The internet functions as a new space for sharing information. Despite the fact that nowadays there is the option of web cameras for effectiveness of virtual communication, I do not see any possibility of humans living without offline

interactions. The internet is simply an extra social platform which even provides a space for new dimensions of individual expression.

Cyberspace social networks provide the opportunity of new connections between subjects working together. This network can be compared with the human brain with its billions of brain's cells. Each cell is connected by a long wire which has a little nodule at the end that shoots out a chemical that goes across a gap and triggers another cell to send a message. A cell here is compared to the subject; the long wire and the chemical are compared to the way communication takes place involving face to face contact and online contact respectively.

Some thinkers suggest that online social networks are not “real” social networks because the socialization process cannot exist in cyberspace. They contend that socialization is a never-ending process that develops organically into a peer-to-peer fashion, that is, “socialization is a continuing process where an individual acquires a personal identity and learns the norms, values, behavior, and social skills appropriate to his or her social position where in the online social networks the socialization process does not exist”. (Emirgil, 2008). This view is common to traditional socialization theory. It is nevertheless hard to deny the reality that change in technology drives change in human behavior. The evolution of online social networks has effected a profound change. One study proposes a theoretical framework for building online communities of practice with social networking tools. The results of this study show that,

“The evolution of the World Wide Web from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 is creating subtle but profound changes in the ways human beings locate and access information, communicate with, and learn from each other. The changes in technologies are driving changes in human behavior, interactions, and knowledge acquisition. The paradigms for learning have already evolved beyond traditional classroom models to synchronous and asynchronous,

interactive, and collaborative learning, which is further extended by Web 2.0 tools and social networking approaches." (Gunawardena, et al., 2009, p. 3)

It might therefore be necessary to widen the scope of the definition of socialization so that online social networks might be reviewed in much more detail. Such a task is, however, beyond the intention of this thesis, which aims at an understanding of the possibilities and benefits to be gained from online interaction.

Social networking sites are places where the subject expresses themselves and shares their identity. Their personal profiles, favorite things, ideas, events and talents are publicized through such sites as Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn and YouTube. There are also many forums where the community members interact on their specific interests. Yet for Bauman this is still a cause for concern. He refers to the 'Sociology of the Senses' of Georg Simmel which suggests that people cannot hide their feelings when interacting face to face with another person unless they are a well-trained actor. But the withholding of one's true feeling is accomplished easily by cyberspace. Bauman notices that nowadays people turn to internet agencies for spiritual comfort, but they are isolated from real relationships. Encounters with a live person call for social skills and so Bauman worries that reliance on the comforts and anonymity of cyberspace create a considerable amount of social deskilling (Bauman, 2007, pp. 16-18). He presents the following discussion of offline and online interaction:

"In the carnivalesque game of identities, offline socializing is revealed for what it in fact is in the world of consumers: a rather cumbersome and not particularly enjoyable burden, tolerated and suffered because unavoidable, since recognition of the chosen identity needs to be achieved in long and possibly interminable effort – with all the risks of bluffs being called or imputed which face-to-face encounters necessarily entail. Cutting off that burdensome aspect of the recognition battles is, arguably, the most attractive asset of the internet masquerade and confidence game. The "community" of interauts seeking substitute recognition does not require the chore of socializing and is thereby

relatively free from risk, that notorious and widely feared bane of the offline battles for recognition.” (Bauman, 2007, p. 115)

4.1.2. Investigation of the Moral Status of Virtual Community

Amidst the argument of positive and negative views between the online and offline medium, the question of moral obligation in virtual communities has been investigated by Barney (2004), Canadian Research Chair in Technology & Citizenship and Associate Professor of Communication Studies at McGill University. Technology can be instrumental in producing objects and can also play a role in producing the human subject in the context of an array of social, political, and economic conditions. (Barney, 2004, p. 22). A community comes into being when human association occurs through communication with mutual interest being the linking factor. Likewise, the virtual community possesses this qualification, however without clearly delineated moral obligation. He states;

“Among that which is produced by this technology is a practice of community that is emptied of obligation and, so, drained of the moral attribute that distinguishes community from other types of relationships in civil society. In the particular social, political and economic context in which they are situated (i.e., in liberal-democratic, high-technology capitalism), digital network technologies participate in producing virtual community – which is to say they help to produce community without moral obligation, and to reproduce the voluntarism essential to the contemporary liberal ethos.” (Barney, 2004, p. 22)

His argument is grounded on an account of community (off-line community) as constituted by mutual moral obligation. This moral obligation is not present in virtual communities because members in virtual communities agree to associate on the basis of shared interests. While members of the offline community are bound by a morally grounded regard for one another. He says, “it is moral obligation in particular, and even more specifically the mutually observed moral obligation in regard to one’s fellows despite one’s interests, that characterizes community theoretically as a distinctive form

of civil association.” (Barney, 2004, p. 28). Barney refers to Bruce Bimber’s idea of thin communities which are merely associations of individuals whose private interests are complementary and this definition is applicable to virtual communities. Thin communities, quite similar to Bauman, are unlikely to contribute to the constitution of a collective good of thick communities.

Barney points out that virtual communities meet the conditions of individual liberty, here defined as freedom of choice, which is indeed the perfect proponent for a liberal market society. He describes the practices of community members as shopping rather than caring for each other. Consumer choice therefore replaces moral obligation. This brings forth the question, “what are the moral consequences of technology that produces communities that cannot be distinguished from markets?” (Barney, 2004, p. 37).

In response to this, I agree that activities in virtual community, including communication and interest sharing, help construct subjectivity. The subject accrues knowledge and self-awareness by interacting in the virtual community. Furthermore, if the subject can experience the free market in the context of the virtual community, this experience could be transferred and applied to off-line interaction. Although the on-line experience might lack moral obligation, the subject can use this experience and modify it with the moral bound in the case of off-line interaction. Even if the experience resulting from on-line activities causes off-line interaction to become a mere matter of consumer choice, as Bauman expressed the concern about human responsibility to others, the community could eventually adjust and find a proper way to harmonize. This constitutes the continuing process in pursuit of well-being.

Online communities can be a source of knowledge. In the similar sense to Barney, social networking is defined as "the practice of expanding knowledge by making connections with individuals of similar interests" (Gunawardena, et al., 2009, p. 3). I would like to add that knowledge involves both direct and indirect knowledge. Direct knowledge is where members of online and offline networks share or discuss specific issues while indirect knowledge is a secondary stage of knowledge that the individual constructs and synthesizes in their mind. For example, a member of an online pet care society can share his ideas and comments on Brand A pet food. His direct knowledge is information about how other members think of Brand A. For instance, one might learn that Brand A is made of good natural ingredients, however, the factory of Brand A drains out sewerage into a river thus decreasing oxygen-content of the water. His indirect knowledge then is the awareness of the advantages of the natural ingredients, and the awareness of the negative environmental effects of the production process. This indirect knowledge can be accumulated as a basis for the consideration of other products. I shall presume here that this process constitutes an important possibility for ethical idea development in addition to Bauman's face to face interaction.

4.1.3. Products talk to us

It is important for marketing practitioners involved in research and development to think beyond the functional benefits of a product. Kotler recommends five levels of products (Kotler, 2003, p. 407), namely, (1) a core benefit, (2) a basic product, (3) an expected product, (4) an augmented product, (5) a potential product. The core benefit is the fundamental benefit, such as patients paying for treatment from a hospital. The basic product is evolves from the core benefit. For example, to get treatment in the

hospital, the basic product includes examination rooms, doctors, nurses, and medical tools. The expected product is a set of attributes consumers expect. In the case of the hospital, the patient would expect capable, experienced doctors, caring staff, clean medical tools and clean examination rooms. The augmented product provides services that exceed consumer's expectations. For example, the same hospital might provide free juice and tea for refreshment or free internet access. The potential product already provides all the possible augmentation and is the creative ground where corporations search for new ways to satisfy and delight their customers. For example, the hospital might provide shopping areas, restaurants, bookstores, banks, and accommodation for relatives of admission patients. Sometimes the core benefit even pales in importance and becomes a secondary choice. For example, one might select a gas station on the basis that it provides clean restrooms. Therefore it is on the level of the potential product that marketing and competition thrive and flourish (Kotler, 2003, p. 408). Marketers have to be aware of the consumers' total consumption system. In other words, they must foster the generation of desire from the initial stage of contact with the product until the final phase of product experience or the product's disposal.

High involvement products are products where consumers might need extensive information and require time to make a purchasing decision. Such products might include electronics and high technology products, healthcare services, insurance, and travel packages. A description of these products is necessary in order to make the product accessible, reachable and responsive for targeted consumers. Products must speak the same languages as the targeted consumers. Just as some artworks are unfathomable for some spectators who turn them away, other spectators may be poignantly drawn in and desirous to acquire the artwork. The circumstance is same

when consumers make first contact with products. The appearance, attributes, and characteristics of the product are investigated and assessed in the same manner as a first meeting with a new potential friend. Fashion accessories and luxurious goods are good examples of this phenomenon. A wristwatch has the core function of counting the time, however different sets of augmented benefits lend a number of extra distinctive characteristics, which are able to attract the targeted group of extravagant and affluent consumers.

In terms of responsible product design, Madsen (2005), Executive Director Emeritus of the Center for the Advancement of Applied Ethics at Carnegie Mellon University, explains that the design of a product is a fundamental activity that has a fundamental relationship to ethics. From his perspective, responsible design is based on three areas of value judgment. These are asking about ends (is it worth doing?), means (are design managers making the proper choices among various means of achieving certain design ends?), and constraints in design. This trinity forms a dynamic relationship that is a kind of dialectic of ethical design. The responsible design, moreover, also responds to questions of professionalism, questions of knowing (the trinity forms) and doing (to engage only in conduct that benefit society) (Madsen, 2005, p. 37). The ethical concerns of product design are widely discussed in Madsen's work. This discussion includes the ethical responsibility of image or contemporary graphic design. Graphic designers rely heavily upon the synergy of word and image for the irrefutable reason that most consumers have been primed by images before making purchases. Following this, graphic designers make goods and services visible to the public through images that produce desire. They often seduce the unnecessary purchase of products by influencing the identity of the purchasers. The study then suggests the

responsible representation of image by designers known as corporate visual responsibility (Becker, 2008). Product designers recognize that their works can influence consumers' behavior. Product functions and forms affect consumers' judgment responding to their expertise background and preferences. For example, there is a study that shows that when core functionality of a new product improves and the form changes unconventionally, experts are more likely to choose a new product than novices (Liang, 2009).

However, it is not only functionality that marketers are trained to look for. Well-conducted market research of value-added-on products also finds solutions to problems consumers have never realized, or actually voices out consumers' insight. Take for example, an advertisement of a whitening lotion that makes a young lady office worker feel confident and finally become successful in her career. Meinhold (2007), Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Guna Chakra Research Center, Assumption University of Thailand, proposes that in terms of fashion goods, what companies have tried to sell us is not only the products or the core benefits of the products themselves, but also related by-products or what he identifies as meta-goods. For example, companies advertise the beauty of clothes which is presented as extending the value of the product beyond the basic function of clothes for protecting the body. It is in fact this beauty that motivates the consumer's desire for the products.

“Meta-good is placed behind or around the real product. In many cases, the meta-good also represents the motivation why a certain product will be bought by the consumer. Meta-goods are existential, intellectual, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual values or symbols.” (Meinhold, 2007, p. 8)

According to Meinhold, the grounding impetus behind the consumption of fashionable products is that human beings desire to be recognized and tend to think in a

comparative mode. Since they are generally concerned about metaphysical problems and transcendence, human beings therefore consume fashionable products to imitate the better ones, with the hope of a holistic improvement of their body, mind, and soul. “The human being is not just composed of body, soul, and mind, but of mind, soul, body, clothes and other consumer products” (Meinhold, 2007, p. 9)

There are a wide range of mediums that convey a products' message or communicate the products' attributes, benefits, and characteristics. Key mediums include visible designs on packaging, places of distribution, ambience in the case of services, advertising and publicity messages. Theoretically, one piece of advertising needs three instances of exposure to be effective. This means that consumers need to be exposed to commercial messages, such as advertisement, three times and then they will either act on it by purchasing the product, get irritated by it, or stop noticing it after that (Kotler, 2003, p. 600). Hence, there is a multi-layered interaction between advertising messages and the public. The ads stimulate potential consumer sensation and the consumer interprets and evaluates accordingly until it becomes their own perception (Devito, 1994, p. 60).

The problem of boredom and the need for overcoming boredom seems to be promoted by media to accelerate replenishment. Silva (2011), Professor of Philosophy at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, explains that boredom occurs by a deficit of attention and the deficit occurs when there is carelessness in concentration and a fresh interest in the subject or object is recommended (Silva, 2011, p. 574). When one feels bored recognition of a problem begins. Boredom is a kind of emotional problem that seems to be endless and very easily induced. It can occur with everything ranging from foods to social status, and advertising likes to play on this cultivating a sense of

inferiority. Hutanuwatr and Rasbash (2005) criticize Thai consumer society, which is influenced by Western dominated media and advertising, in that it inflicts a sense of inferiority. The message is: no matter who you are, you are never good enough. From their perspective this is a basic form of alienation that rejects basic notions of human identity (Hutanuwatr & Rasbash, 2005, p. 106). In support of this view, Meinhold also explains on his Comparative Melioration and Pathological Pathogenization in Viagra marketing that "the Pathological Pathogenization is a trend to define everything as sick, unhealthy and dysfunctional with an economic agenda in the backdrop" (Meinhold, 2011, p. 179). Regardless of whether or not the individual is aware of their problems, marketing itself is able to induce recognition of a problem, making the individual observe, reconsider and accept the product's necessity in solving their problem.

Producers bring intrinsic values, or meta-goods, to a potential product, which appear to offer a sense of identity and ego-boosting for the sovereign subject. Bauman links this subjectivity of the subject to Karl Marx's commodity fetishism in the following manner,

"'Subjectivity' in the society of consumers, just as "commodity" in the society of producers, is (to use Bruno Latour's felicitous concept) a *faitishe* – a thoroughly human product elevated to the rank of superhuman authority through forgetting or rendering irrelevant its human, all too human origins.. " (Bauman, 2007, p. 14)

This leads to 'subjectivity fetishism', I shop therefore I am a subject (Bauman, 2007, p. 17). The subject's epistemology is changed so that they must seek expression in consumption. He explains that,

"In the shops, goods come complete with answers to all the questions their prospective buyer might wish to ask before taking the decision to buy, but they themselves keep politely silent and don't ask questions, let alone embarrassing ones...They stick to the role of the Cartesian 'object' fully docile, obedient stuff for the omnipotent subject to handle, give shape to, put to good use. By their sheer docility they elevate the buyer to the noble, flattering and

ego-boosting rank of the sovereign subject, uncontested and uncompromised. Playing the role of objects impeccable and realistically enough to convince, market commodities supply and perpetually replenish the epistemological and praxiological grounding for 'subjectivity fetishism'. (Bauman, 2007, pp. 16-17)

I personally feel this perspective is a little too pessimistic. It might be partially true in a sense that the subjects create their identity by shopping. However, it fails to acknowledge the potential for intellectual ability of the subjects, with their life-politics, to use reason in the process of acquiring shopping goods. In consumerist society there are various segments, so marketers must serve each segment accordingly. The degree of subjectivity fetishism is different among each segment, for example, it might noticeably high in fashion obsessed consumers and be used as a kind of status builder. The stereotyped view point leads to an unclear perception of the complexity of society. It also blocks the positive side of consumerism especially the potentiality of ethics that leads to well-being deriving from choices and interactions between producers and consumers. Nevertheless, Bauman also recognizes this possibility in his idea of the sovereign expression of life, in which he searches for responsibility of choices in a world of consumers (Bauman, 2009).

4.1.4. We Talk to Products

While we are experiencing consumer products, for example by watching ads, reading labels or trying products, a process of communication is set in motion. When consumers buy products, their past experiences and backgrounds influence their decisions. Communication is a transactional process says Devito (1994), a famous U. S. Communication scholar, at Hunter College. Each side is seen as both speaker and listener, as simultaneously communicating and receiving messages. And this is an ever-changing and ongoing process:

“Each person in a communication transaction acts and reacts on the basis of the present situation influences in great part by his or her history, past experiences, attitudes, cultural beliefs, self-image, future expectations, and a host of related issues. One implication of this is that actions and reactions in communication are determined not only by what is said, but also by the way the person interprets what is said.” (Devito, 1994, p. 33)

When a product is developed, it goes through the product development process involving many relevant areas. Similarly, consumers' ability to form an opinion about a product is influenced by their past experience. Both players communicate with each other. It is an ongoing process of interaction between product information and consumers' interpretation.

How do consumers form their opinion and develop a purchasing decision? On the lines of the consumer behavior theory, consumers go through a problem-solving process, to recognize the problems, to search for information, to identify and evaluate the options, to purchase, and to have after purchase considerations (Hanna & Wozniak, 2001, p. 293). It is also likely that in some situations some steps might be skipped. For example, before making an impulse purchase of chewing gum consumers might not search for much information. The mental or physical activity associated with each stage may vary significantly based on financial status, and the social or psychological situation of consumers. Some may recognize a problem by themselves while some may be influenced by a peer group or community they belong to. The communication with products begins when consumers search for options and evaluate, consider the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, make judgements, and finally, make a purchase or refuse to purchase. Take the case of buying a car for example, in addition to the consideration of the performance of the car, some consumers also estimate the likelihood that others will approve of it. They contrive an image, an intrinsic value or

meta-goods of a car. The question is: Am I interested in the 'Joy' of BMW or do I approve of the 'Value for Money' offered by Toyota? This process of judging does not necessarily always end up with making a purchase. "Judgments are evaluations or estimates regarding the likelihood that products and services possess certain features or will perform in a certain manner. Judgments do not require consumers to make a decision" (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004, p. 223). Hence, when one communicates with a set of products or services, one will necessarily evaluate and make judgments, storing that information as one's own ideas. However, this process does not guarantee an actual choice. This is what is known as 'talking' to a product.

Consumers employ analytical processes or a set of judgments to make product selections. The outcome of post-purchase evaluation – the feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction – will determine if consumers will repeat the purchase of the product or not. It also establishes whether or not they will form positive attitudes toward the product and the producers, and therefore recommend the product to others, thus becoming a brand ambassador. A promotional campaign by marketers creates expectations and induces purchase, but at the same time it is capable of leading to its own ruin. In such a case a campaign might overstate product benefits thus creating very high expectations. Yet if the actual experience of the product fails to meet these expectations, dissatisfaction occurs. Dissatisfaction is a great concern for marketers because it is costly to have to recruit new customers, and moreover, the dissatisfied customers are a source of bad word-of-mouth. It is more cost-effective to preserve the bond with existing customers. In general, disappointed consumers will display their dissatisfaction in various ways, ranging from little impact to high impact for the company. These manifestations of dissatisfaction may involve calls and complaints,

refusal to purchase the product, switching of brands, spreading negative messages to peer groups and initiating boycotts of the specified product or brand. The British Ethical Consumer Organization justifies product boycotts on the basis that;

"For Ethical Consumer, boycotts offer campaign groups and/or individuals the chance to exert economic pressure on companies. They are particularly appropriate when governments are unwilling or unable to introduce reforms. We see them as a vitally important extension of our formal democracy." (www.ethicalconsumer.org)

Boycotts are generally ethically approved and taken seriously by corporations. They are used as a means to prevent corporations' owners from acting unethically. The consumer behavior theory suggests that customers whose problems are promptly brought to satisfactory resolutions are likely to be pleased and continue to be loyal customers (Hanna & Wozniak, 2001, p. 311). Many producers treat this consumer dissatisfaction seriously and take consumer complaints as opportunities to further develop their products or service qualities. Complaint-handling functions, such as toll-free consumer hotlines, are set up as a stage for consumers to express their opinions about products. The advent of the internet it enables this communication process to take on an interactive format. 'Contact us' has become a mandatory page on official websites of corporations. How real time producers respond to cases becomes a key performance index.

The customer as co-producer strategy (Wikström, 1996) is one of many new business approaches that build interactions between producers and consumers refining the distribution of roles. Consumers are supported and the production process is designed so that consumers are able to take part in generating their own value-creation. For example, made-to-order cars in terms of product design, DIY furniture in terms of production, a new mom class for baby delivery patients in a hospital. These products

and services are hoping for a much longer relationship between consumers and producers, which makes the company better adapt to suit customers' desires and to provide higher quality services. Producers must be aware of how consumers' think in order to make their business enterprise sustainable.

4.2. Ethics and Individual Choice

I express the idea that marketing itself is a process of interaction between consumers and producers. Marketing by itself is neither good nor bad, it is rather just a process of working back and forth between two players. Consumers exercise their expressions of life in terms of products. The reflection returns to producers by way of many indicators like sales and word-of-mouth. Then producers respond with a new set of communication in the form of fine-tuning their products and advertising. As Bauman suggests there is no logically coherent ethical code that can neatly contain the expressions of life, therefore, as the members of the consumerist society, people need to learn how to live without a solidified ethical code and practice responsibility to others and society in general. In their 'Beginner's Guide,' Ethical Consumer gives a practical concept of what is ethical consumerism:

"Ethical consumerism means adopting a different income. Instead of seeing money as a means to buying us status, luxury goods or an improved quality of life, we also need to consider our money as a vote which we use every time we go shopping. Buying cheap clothes which have been made in sweatshops is a vote for worker exploitation....Favouring organic produce is a vote for environmental sustainability and Fair trade, a vote for human right." (www.ethicalconsumer.org)

Even though these ethical codes may be written down in textbooks, they are often overlooked in the real life scheme of things. However, the situation is not hopeless. The way individuals can learn to live with this unguaranteed statement is

simply by having a caring attitude and learning to share. One of the great benefits of technology is that it facilitates knowledge sharing on a real-time and worldwide basis. It can help to construct a liquid moral code responding to specific circumstances. This is quite similar to the way in which the subject expresses their life, simply with a different format and scale. I suggest that ethics on marketing caring is based on two things: 1) the ground of product justification, and 2) the moral ground of products. This can be added to Schwartz's idea of four scenarios in which ethical concerns can attach to consumer products (Schwartz, 2010, p. 22). The ground of justification is concerned with wrongdoing in product marketing. While the moral ground of products is concerned with the wrong doing during product manufacturing, during product use, and wrongdoing ancillary to the product itself.

4.2.1. The Ground of Justification

This thesis uses the term ground of justification as a body of knowledge that consumers have on hand to make a judgment about products, rather than direct experience from use of those products. It involves direct knowledge deriving from reading product descriptions, seeing content of advertising, peer group experience and information sharing, and indirect knowledge which is the synthesis of accumulated knowledge from consumers' past experience. Consumers need information to make judgment on a repeated basis. Good judgment necessitates good information which means it should be factual-based, balanced, and verifiable. Producers communicate to consumers with a mix of communication strategies. Due to being driven by a financial goal, producers' means of communication are often criticized as seduction. Furthermore, unethical practices in this process constitute a violation consumer rights.

4.2.1.1. Factual Based Product Marketing

Many critiques view marketing campaigns in terms of negative effects on the subject as shown earlier; for instance, manipulation, management from the top, culture industry and commodification. In the midst of the controversy, however, one thing can be strongly affirmed and that is: deception of product communication is morally unacceptable. Buller and Burgoon, Professors of Communication at the University of Arizona, define a deception message as "a message knowingly transmitted by a sender to foster a false belief or conclusion by the receiver" (Buller & Burgoon, 1996). Similarly, deceptive product communication refers to the case where a product does not have as high a quality as advertised or communicated, or leaves the consumers with information that is incorrect or cannot be verified. From the Consumer Behavior text, deceptive advertising, deceptive labeling and deceptive selling practices are criticized as being a violation of consumer rights (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004, p. 510).

Based on the Buddhist teaching, acts that take place in society and have impacts on society are obliged to be morally responsible. Marketing campaigns create social impact and can move society to new stages of development. For example, the launch of new electronic devices like smart phones, gadgets, or a wide range of health products like medicine or cosmetic surgery services, can all have poignant effects on people's attitudes towards life. There is a study that distinguishes moral and immoral advertising by its style, dividing it into the three styles of the three eras: Product Era, Image Era, and Positioning Era. The Product Era advertising focuses its message on names, benefits, prices, and usage. The Image Era advertising, with its high competition between competitors, focuses its message on the manufacturer's name, to create confidence in the brand without concerning a particular product per se. The Positioning

Era is the period wherein goods resemble products on the market or even come from the same manufacturers, which we see in liquid modernity, therefore intrinsic values are added on. Without an intentional deception, which is universally unacceptable, the first two styles are morally acceptable while the third often engages in surrealistic claims making people overlook the actual quality of products (Changkhwanyuen, 2004, p. 255). The Buddhist point of view aims to create the conditions for peace of mind, not to induce desire, so it can be used as a reference point for reflecting on ethics on marketing communication.

4.2.1.2. Balanced Communication

Balanced communication is here defined in terms of two factors: balanced in terms of positive and negative aspects of information, and balanced in terms of a parity qualification of message senders and receivers. Imbalanced quality of content misleads consumers' judgment. It distorts the reality of individuals' choices. Devito (1994) explains;

“Communications are ethical when they facilitate an individual's freedom of choice by presenting that person with accurate bases for choice. Unethical communications, therefore, would be those that force people 1) to make choices they would not normally make or 2) to decline to make choices they would normally make” (Devito, 1994, p. 16).

The missing information in advertising always is usually the negative aspects of a product and can leave consumers with false impressions. Under an assumption that the individuals were of an age and mental condition to allow the reasonable execution of free choice, disclosure of both positive and negative qualities is an ethical standard.

However, with an imparity qualification of the message receivers, there is an unethical possibility we also need to be aware of, such as advertising targeted at children or the youth market. Youth marketing happens when corporations promote their brand to a new demographic group. As Klein points out, brands that flourished through the recession around end of twentieth century did so because of the youth market;

"Maybe their sales were slumping not because consumers were "brand-blind" but because these companies had their eyes fixed on the wrong demographic prize. This was not a time for selling Tide and Snuggle to housewives - it was a time for beaming MTV, Nike, Hilfiger, Microsoft, Netscape and Wired to global teens and their overgrown imitators. Their parents might have gone bargain basement, but kids, it turned out, were still willing to pay up to fit in. Through this process, peer pressure emerged as a powerful market force." (Klein, 2002, p. 68)

Being naive, youth are easily to induce by entertainment and fun. Emotional benefit might be a key criterion of purchase without real need of the products' benefits.

4.2.1.3. Verifiable Product Marketing

Verifiable campaigns are product propositions that must be able to prove either scientifically or statistically. They should not set up related to myths or beliefs. The consumer has the right to be protected from hazardous effects to their health and well-being. For example, nutrition information of packaged foods must provide nutritional facts, not only to claims to promote fitness. Verification of emotional benefits is not as easily proved in comparison with functional benefits. Most purchase campaigns play a role in making the purchaser feel good about their decisions. In the case of luxury products, fashion products, and services, all meta-physical attributes need to ensure there that this is unequivocally the best choice. This is the most controversial issue of the marketing function.

4.2.2. The Moral Ground of Products and Business Practices

Discussion about the moral grounds of commercial products is necessary. The nature of products and the nature of business practices themselves should not go against the well-being of all beings. The term 'all beings' here includes both human and non-human beings. Even in the case where people interact with products in a relationship based on truth, balanced information and non deceptive messages, the ground of products themselves must also not contradict basic principles of goodness. To determine whether the nature of a particular business constitutes moral wrong-doing or not, Schwartz proposes four distinct methods to analyze wrong-doing which are harm to others, injustice, promoting bad outcomes, and moral offense (Schwartz, 2010, p. 32). These four can be applied when consumers think about the products and the nature of particular business practices. Gaski (1999) shows a strong agreement that all marketing ethical guidelines are only the restatement of law and economic self-interest. He might be right because it is the ethical potentiality of human beings that makes all related activities, including economics, become a common theme of ethical criticism.

This idea is on a quite similar footing to Buddhist teaching. The Right Livelihood factor of the Noble Eightfold Path ensures that one earns one's living in a righteous way. The Buddha mentions five specific kinds of livelihood that bring harm to others and are therefore to be avoided, namely, dealing in weapons, in living beings (including raising animals for slaughter as well as slave trade and prostitution), in meat production, in poisons, and in intoxicants. In addition, the Buddha specifies several dishonest means of gaining wealth which fall under wrong livelihood. These are practicing deceit, treachery, soothsaying, trickery, and usury (Bodhi, 1994, p. 59).

It might seem contradictory that I propose the possibility of responsibility to others from interaction between products and consumers. Meanwhile I support the moral ground of product recommendation. Repeatedly, the immediate expressions of life come before the ethical demand or the demand to take care of the other person's life. In liquid modernity, the sovereign expressions of life develop in the midst of uncertainty. As Bauman mentions, people need to learn to live without kind of this ethical code being guaranteed. Resulting from those prompt responses, the moral ground has been forming and adjusting to fit with society's characteristics. This is a process of ethical code construction. These ethical codes are therefore the measure of consumerist morality, being common yet highly significant choices. This idea is also observed by Schwartz:

"At the most general level, our very participation in consumer culture is something we can have a hard time seeing clearly. This is because we find ourselves so enmeshed in this culture that it is difficult to get the necessary distance to see its many forms and structures...Consumer ethics also poses epistemological burdens because it stretches thin the stock of 'moral knowledge' we rely upon in making judgments. Perhaps the most pressing issue here is the necessity for consumers to do basic research about the products they buy." (Schwartz, 2010, p. 107)

4.2.3. Expression of the Product in the Liquid World: Check and Balance

The major achievement of capitalism in the West as described by De Soto in the *Mystery of Capital* is "integrating dispersed information into one system" (De Soto, 2000, p. 52). He explains that this did not happen casually, this pulling together of property representations was a tactic aiming at more efficiency. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, politicians, legislators and judges pulled together and integrated scattered facts and rules into one system. Again in this era, the new platform of internet even made it easier to integrate information and provide accessibility. This can be used as a data pool for consumers and producers. However, a difficulty that emerges is the

authority to manage this information pool, and this time it needs to be directed globally in as response to globalization. Also, Bauman expresses his view on global scale ethics that globalization means we are all dependent on each other and distance matters little. He notes the need of democratic control on a similar global scale (Bauman, 2009, pp. 77-76). As a solution for the online social community, I propose a team of international referees whose task is to police online criminals and defend online consumers' rights.

Responsibility, a sense of otherness and a sense of community can all be constructed via the virtual community. In the past, consumers' opportunities to contact with the upper strata of company management was uncommon, but now it is only a click away with real time response. Significantly there is an increasing ownership of internet-enabled devices which accommodate a direct channel to the producers and to the communities who use the same products. The online community has become a very popular internet application. It has also resulted in simultaneous media consumption or media multi-tasking, such as the use of internet-based devices to watch TV and online videos. The study from Nielsen (2012) reports that media consumption habits throughout Asia Pacific are changing at a rate not seen for many years. Allocation of marketing budget reflects this reality. Globally 14 percent of advertising expenditures goes toward digital, moreover, the return on investment of online advertising achieves a higher return on investment. In the Asia pacific region the returns from TV in 2009 was 0.89 while from the digital media was 1.78 (Nielsen, 2012, p. 5). Also, brand experience sharing through social media, online product reviews and opportunities to buy online are changing the game. In short, products' touch-point of digital media effectively enables social engagement between consumers, producers and other consumers.

Online social networks have become a more and more reliable source for product reviews before making purchase decisions (Nielsen, 2012, p. 2). Information from online sources supports offline judgments. The effect of real social and online social networks is that one person with conviction can affect and roll over the choices of others which can be seen in the case of company or product boycott. However, there is some skepticism about the genuineness of online respondents and information, including compliments from producers' nominees, and false accusations from competitors. This situation is also found in offline. Moreover, both negative and positive comments may spark doubt in researchers and trigger other actions that products' owners have to be careful about.

Not only from the consumer side whose right to action plays the role of social watchdog, there is a new trend moving towards consumer self-service. Some of these new technologies put unprecedented power into the consumers' hands. Who can guarantee that consumers will always do what is moral not advantage of their autonomy. Therefore, producers cannot always rely on customers to do the right thing. Neale and Fullerton (2010) show a study of ethical consideration of consumers revealing the unfortunate reality of the dark side of consumer behavior, such as the decision to keep excess change or to commit insurance fraud. Some consumers may actually consider that such actions are justifiable. There is a need to acknowledge the fact that consumers often have a great deal of mistrust. Moreover, business practitioners must design systems and scripts to let consumers know their roles. Therefore, to strengthen good public perception, replacing the old perception that business simply cannot be trusted, businesses must behave as responsible members of a community, and not solely as profit maximizers (Neale & Fullerton, 2010).

The sovereign expressions of life are made promptly without instructions and regulations in the process of interfacing with products. However, the great distances between producers and consumers, which are bridged by a series of distribution channels, can cause blindness to causal relationships involved in ethical wrongdoing. Schwartz explains that due to the long distances between the place of production of and the place of consumption or purchase, the causal effects of a single purchase are so insignificant it would seem incapable of constituting actual moral wrongdoing. The problems arising from this phenomenon are called 'collective-action problems'. According to this idea, individual contributions simply make no difference to collective outcomes so individuals do not need to take responsibility for doing the right thing (Schwartz, 2010, p. 49-56). Nevertheless, in reality there is an influence effect that one's decision asserts on others, who in turn influence others, and so on. This snowball effect is made even faster and more widespread in the realm of cyberspace, where the large-scale amassing of corresponding opinions can emerge as a sudden outbreak. Cyber network facilitates the dissemination of information that could lessen the gap between human beings and the consequences of their production and consumption.

4.3. Conclusion to Chapter Four

The interplay between people and their products shows that such a connection between products and consumers exists. Through this interaction, the chance for people to exercise their ethical potentiality arises. There are now many groups of activists working to combat the unethical behaviour of corporations as noted by Klein that,

"while the latter half of the 1990s has seen enormous growth in the brands' ubiquity, a parallel phenomenon has emerged on the margins: a network of environmental, labour and human-rights activists determined to expose the damage being done behind the slick veneer." (Klein, 2002, p. 325)

Consumers may question and express their desires to support ethical companies, but what is important here is do they really take any action like boycotting the unethical products or producers. Interestingly, a study from Carrigan and Attalla shows that,

"Although consumers may express a desire to support ethical companies, and punish unethical companies, their actual purchase behaviour often remains unaffected by ethical concerns. Processing knowledge about unethical behaviour does not necessarily lead a consumer to boycott the unethical firm or its products." (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001, p. 575)

In this view, consumers place convenience in their purchases over ethical considerations. Yet, producers cannot ignore the ethical considerations. Competition forces companies to improve their products. Many consumers are suspicious of companies' moral ground and they want the assurance that a company or product possesses ethical integrity.

Bauman describes consumerist society as an isolated society. In reality, we are connected all the time, simply with a different formats and scales, which Bauman may not have considered. The advantages to be realized from collective society are still in operation. Some might argue that a low rate of internet accessibility in some countries might be a barrier to this ethical approach. I would say that in order to cope with ethics in consumerist society on a global scale what is needed is a global network tool, and the online network seems to be a new hope. At least, it has brought humanity to a new stage wherein a majority group of people in the consumerist society can express their voice.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This dissertation makes a case for the compatibility of ethics with marketing in the age of liquid modernity by showing how marketing provides for the possibilities of value creation through interaction with the life of individuals. Through this interaction they exercise new ethical potential. This can be seen most clearly in online social networks which provide a new platform of interaction. According to the nature of corporations, it seems that in general they fail to take responsibility for any of their activities other than making profits, ignoring the sustainability and well-being of human subjects and other beings. Since marketing serves capitalism it therefore seems that it is also complicit and plays a negative role. This is the position of Adorno, Dufour, and Bauman who comment on the seductive role of culture managers who are the driving force propelling materialism, isolated-societies, and privatization.

Bauman also notes the moral crisis involving the movement away from normative regulations and the grand narrative, to the self-compartmentalized individual. Ethical codes can no longer be solidified so easily now that responsibility is pressed on the individuals' shoulders. With overwhelming personal responsibility and the diminishing role of the grand narrative, the individual begins to feel insecure, uncertain, and unsafe in their life. I support Bauman's idea that uncertainty is the ground for moral development of human beings and we need social contact to empower this attribute. However, the problem remains as to how the individual can make responsible and ethical choices? How can the subject use their own rationale? The above thinkers stress that the subject in consumerist society loses their autonomy and potential for critical thinking in the process of commodification, what Dufour calls

‘shrinking heads’. By looking at the realities of liquid modernity and the techniques of marketing, I try to point out that the internet, which Bauman sees as causes social deskilling, actually provides a new form of human interaction which is a venue for the subject to reflect on their values and maintain their autonomy and critical thinking.

This dissertation is grounded on two main ideas, the first of these being ‘to love the neighbor as thyself’. It is still in the individual’s power not to harm others. This is part of being human and cannot be altered by regulations or external forces. As a result of their ethical potentiality, humans are able to foresee consequences and feel empathetic to the suffering of other beings. Bauman supports this idea saying that morality is an innately prompted manifestation of humanity. Here Bauman’s view is influenced by Løgstrup who states, “we are delivered to each other’s care” (Bauman, 2007c, p. 116). This characteristic of being precedes all engagement with others.

An objection to this assumption might be that through mass communication arts people are conditioned to be self-focused and responsible only to themselves and their own desires. Yet, as a balance to these tendencies, new technologies can make people more aware of their responsibility to others. Previously, long distance supply chains created a blurred vision of collective consequences of business activities and consumption. As Bauman said, adiaphorizing effects (that is, rendering actions ethically neutral and exempting them from ethical evaluation and censure) are beyond human understanding (Bauman, 2009, p. 53). This is because people always have to deal with middle men so ethical consequences are rendered out of focus. Nevertheless, interactions over the internet can expose information regarding that which was previously out of focus.

Kasser's empirical research points out that, "to the extent people take on the values and beliefs of consumerism, they are less likely to behave in ways that promote the well-being of other people, and they may actually behave in ways that hurt others" (Kasser, 2008, p. 7). Moreover, "The values of consumer society contribute to ecological destruction rather than support the health of all living things (Kasser, 2008, p. 10). Consumption of limited resources is considered as harmful to others for the reason that it lessens others' opportunity to access those resources. From the Buddhist perspective, natural resources should be used sparingly so that the rest is available for others' use. Buddhism supports production that brings positive results leading to well-being and harmony with other beings. As a result of the complicated economic agency the moral basis of humanity has become blurred. People have learnt how to react to their needs but not to be responsible for their own choices. But again, I wish to propose that human interactions and sharing of information bring consequences which were previously out of focus into consciousness, allowing new solutions to be devised and promoting the application of Buddhist ethics in consumer transactions.

The second assumption forming the basis of this dissertation is that interrelatedness to others that is a source of construction of morality. The sovereign expressions of life spontaneously occur through trust, through mercy, through openness of speech, which "can only be realized, as I realize myself in it. This is due to its sovereign character" (Løgstrup, 2007, p. 53). These sovereign expressions occur while the sovereign subject is interacting with someone else, which means interaction between only two individuals. Levinas further elaborated this matter in the theory of twosome-ness and the problem of the third: "The unconditionality of moral responsibility simply can't be sustained when the 'Other' appears in a plural as he or

she does in human society” (Bauman, 2009, p. 45). According to this view, human moral sense reincarnates or is reprocessed into social justice.

For Bauman we are living in a culture of “enjoy now, pay later”. The individual, according to Bauman, relies on the helpful solutions of commercialized products and services which displaces their own agency with marketing agencies. The desire for sovereignty or freedom, now seems to have been replaced by shopping lists. Also, wireless and electronic gadgets of consumerism era like smart phones and tablet for instance, accommodate ways of searching for solutions and references with little effort. The use of devices isolates the individual from offline social bonds or the real interface between human and human. It leads to social deskilling which disables a qualification of collective work of society for justifying common goods.

In this dissertation I wish to challenge this assertion. As seen in Bauman, “Self-love is built of the love offered to us by others.” To love one’s neighbor means to respect their uniqueness, and so we receive respect for our own uniqueness in return. To deny this acceptance leads to self-hatred. However, this force is still operative in marketing itself. As a social animal, I would add that the more one harms others, the more they create an insecure environment and unpleasant society. The social contract theory clarifies this idea. To harm others therefore results adversely to oneself. In terms of commercialization, products can be compared to men, that is, they also have duty not to harm others. Checks and balances occur on an individual scale via the social network and on a global scale via international regulations, and these create the possibility to hold in account corporations who pursue unethical practices.

As for the anxiety concerning the isolation of the individual and the social deskilling which affects social justice construction, I cannot see any possibility how interconnections between real humans could diminish to the extent of being totally replaced by mediated agencies. From both the positive view of Deleuze and Guattari, and the negative view of Bauman, what is noticeable is that the subject becomes more independent. I do support Bauman's idea of "a dream of belong and a dream of independence" (Bauman, 2011, p. 20). He explains the contradictory desires of the individual who longs for a sense of belonging and safety, and also a desire to be distinct from the masses, for freedom. So the solution in reality is to manage a delicate balance between safety and freedom. Also, I have referred to the internet as a new platform of social interaction. There is research that shows that participation in the activities carried out in a virtual community may promote consumer trust and loyalty to the mutual interest of the community. Also, community members can share information, and create relationships among the group members who have similar problems and experiences. This can be explained by the development of emotional ties with the brand around which the community is centered that appear as a consequence of the interactions with other community members, which are usually based on topics related to the brand products (Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalíu, 2007). Again, responsibility, a sense of otherness and a sense of community can be constructed via the virtual community.

Apart from these two assumptions, this dissertation points out that consumers and marketers exercise their responsibility for their choices and their creation of choices. A related question that may arise is how can the subject make a choice without

its authentic subjectivity? This question reflects commodification in capitalism that has eliminated or weakened the subject's ability to make critical decisions. According to Marx's epistemology of the subject, capitalism turns people into commodities and teaches them to see others as commodities. Commodification pursues objectification with monetary value. Therefore, it alienates people from the fruits of their labour, from their species-essence, and alienates them from others who they will see only as commodities. Capitalism creates a mentally and physically dehumanized human being and this is false consciousness. Humans lose their nature as autonomous ethical subjects.

Deleuze and Guattari see more potentiality in the deterritorialization of capitalism. Through applying Nietzsche's ideas of nihilism, the acceptance of the reality of deterritorialization brings people to the origin of their desire-production. In a similar way, the capitalist subject of Hardt and Negri is a deterritorialized identity but is still dominated by Empire.

But Bauman criticizes deterritorialization and the manner in which it isolates humans from real communities. This is also found in Defour's desymbolized subject who becomes the neoliberal subject in the post-modern era. The desymbolized subject loses its autonomy and becomes merely passively receptive to the commodity.

I quite doubt that the activities of selling and buying products, are merely the buying and selling of identities, are anti-enlightenment and impede the development of the autonomous subject as can be read in Adorno. There is now a development of consumerism in terms of protecting consumer rights, and it is broadened to ecological concerns. as Dufour notes for the destruction of the old grand narratives to become the

ecological narrative. It involves in our economic activities, as can be seen from the job market of today for example:

"As banks look at making loans for green buildings, law firms develop new kinds of contracts for carbon credits, and companies target consumers who value greener products, students who understand what sustainability looks like in various industries or organizations and have experience solving real-world problems will fare well. [...] if students understand sustainability principles, any job can become a green job." (Anonymous, 2010, p. 104)

In reality, the sovereign subject's ability to make critical decisions is enabled by a new platform of online interaction via cyberspace. The transfer of information through the internet allows the subject to reflect on their ideas, to interact and to share similar interests with online communities. It must be emphasize that offline and online interactions both support each other, and the internet can also be a means to facilitate offline interactions. Knowledge supporting offline interactions leads to well-being and helps to connect individuals. Online interaction cannot replace offline human relations, and the offline will exist as long as human beings need family and safety. This is to say that territorialization might become recognized through a set of interests, but not merely geographical interests as in the past. Internet provides the subject opportunity to question their own desire, to share and get information and to create ethical judgments on their desires. Subjectivity can be accomplished via the online and offline venue. However, Bauman seems to have a negative view point on this. He views the internet as a venue for the game of identities, what he calls 'carnival identities' (Bauman, 2007, p. 115) who create new selves with no fear of the sanctions that the subject would encounter in real life. The Other in cyberspace plays the role of instrument of self-confirmation. He explains that,

"In the internet-mediated identification game, the Other is, so to speak, disarmed and detoxified. The Other is reduced by the internaut to what really

counts: to the status of the instrument of one's own self-endorsement. The unprepossessing necessity to grant the Other's autonomy and originality, and to approve the Other's claims to an identity of their own, not to mention the off-putting need for durable bounds and commitments, unavoidable in the offline battles for recognition, are all eliminated or at least kept off-limits for the duration. Virtual socializing proceeds after the pattern of marketing, and the electronic tools of that kind of socializing are made to the measure of marketing techniques." (Bauman, 2007, p. 116)

Based on his statement, on the internet the subject is at the same time the Other who plays two roles in the carnival of identity, as an endorser and as a self-presenter. In fact, this formula is also apparent in offline socialization. In offline society and cyber society, the recognition of subject requires approval of number, however, with some differences of spatial and temporal basis. The offline subject is recognized based on time and space, as the collection of the subject's historical truth. While in virtual community, the subject's identity can be altered without obligations, instantaneously and with on the spot fulfillment. Bauman and others are concerned with the lack of commitment in the interactions of virtual society. However, it seems that in real-life, offline society, this kind of situation also exists. Moreover, in cyberspace, one might argue that there is no "real" socializing. Also, cyber-socializing never occurs completely isolated from reality, offline and online interactions support each other.

In consumerist society, the creation of the subject depends very much on the consuming of goods. Consumer objects have the role of supplying the public with solutions to all needs and questions. They both supply and perpetually replenish the epistemological and praxiological grounding for 'subjectivity fetishism' (Bauman, 2007, p. 17). Not only shopping products on the shopping list, but also life's necessities, can be found in the form of commercial solutions, for example, water supplies, toll-ways and healthcare services. This factor broadens and firms the

foundation of subjectivity fetishism. The commodification of subjects now turns to subjectivity fetishism arranged from the offline and online markets. Models of advertising messages are designed using problem-solution strategy. The subject, therefore, is familiar with buying solutions.

In consumer life, I often see subjects making decisions through their own informed reason. Through the subject's construction of an identity, their past and present experience comes to influence their decision. They are not merely passive to the commercial message, but also active agents who can decide whether to do or not to do. Along with these economic activities, ethical grounds are established. Customer dissatisfaction occurs when products cannot deliver the benefits they have promised. Unfulfilled expectations, resulting from the inconsistency between the message propounded by marketing and the real quality of the products, lead to skepticism and cynicism. Consumer cynicism is often seen as a defensive psychological tool against brands. Consumers interact with marketing campaigns, they use their spontaneity to continue or terminate the transaction. The interaction of economic activities, including marketing, creates sovereign expressions of life which are a possibility to develop ethical grounds for living together. This process of ethical development is in fact driven by marketing activities. Though it seems that ethical philosophy and business philosophy respond to very different sections of human activities, both are (or should be) directed towards the same ends of human well-being. Being directed to this same end, therefore, the reconciliation of materialism and ethics seems to become a real possibility. The nature of products and the nature of business practices should never be harmful to the well-being of all beings. It is through the art of subjectivity that the subject exercises their ethical potentiality through the sovereign expressions of life.

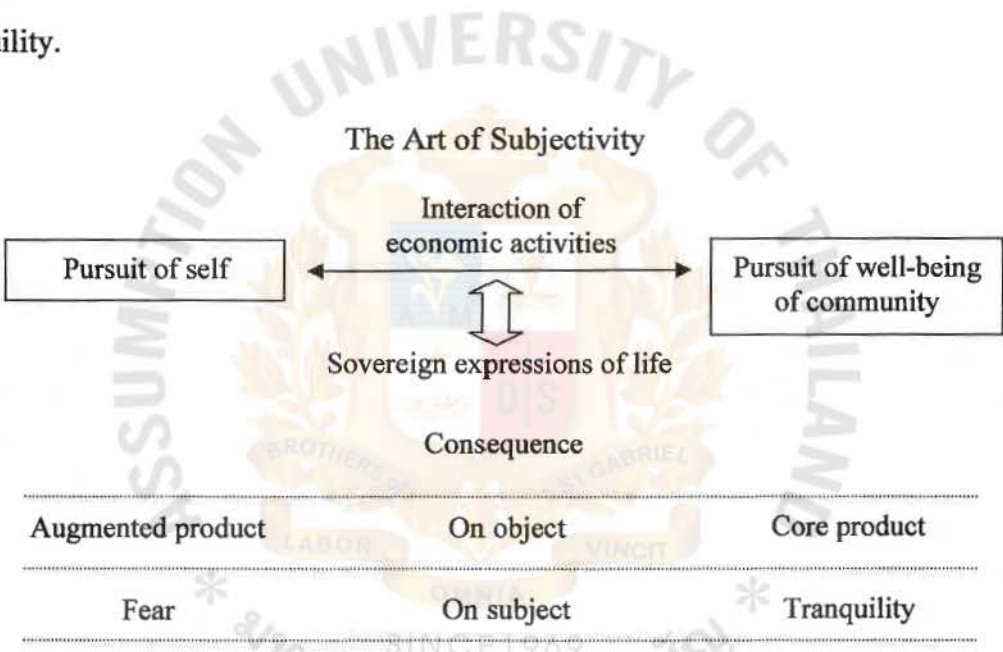
According to Buddhism, human beings are a combination mind and physical elements. The traits of mind produce reasoning, perception, and imagination. The traits of physical elements produce physical feeling and leads to the pursuit to self-happiness. But the mind can be fulfilled with self-actualization, knowledge and enlightenment. While the body can be fulfilled through the consumption of objects including foods, clothes and medicine, mind is indeed master of body. Based on the view of Buddhism, the pursuit of happiness through materialism can create imbalances in the body and mind reflected by endless material desires and suffering from lack of resources for consumption. For ethics to be possible there must be this continued ability for reason and imagination as the basic traits of the human being.

Consumerism facilitates the art of life and the subject is naturally transformed along the way. Concerning this, I see two opposite sides, namely, the pursuit of self and the pursuit of all beings. The art of subjectivity is the art of balancing consumption through knowledge of the consequences of resource consumption both for the subject and other beings. The consequences of resource consumption have both positive and negative aspects, including the depletion of resources on the one hand and the benefits to the subject both physically and mentally on the other. The sovereign expressions of life determine how the consequences will diverge.

As Kasser mentions:

“People who tend to care about wealth also tend to care about image and status while people who oriented towards intrinsic values (self-acceptance, affiliation, and community feeling) are more empathic, more cooperative, and more likely to engage in the kinds of pro-social, generous behaviors that promote good will and the well-being of others” (Kasser, 2008, p. 13).

There will always be self-seeking subjects who pursue their own desires, are materialistic, egoistic, and are status seekers. On that account, they will passively build their identities by selecting the products augmenting and fulfilling their characters. This whole process causes a dynamic change and never-ending cycle that leads the subject to crisis. On the other hand, the subject with awareness and compassion for all beings will be more considerate of the results from the resource consumption and tend to be easily contented. By being prudently gratified, the subject faces a life that is filled with tranquility.



Bauman criticizes the consumerist subject as living under anxiety with deregulations and overwhelmed by responsibility. The sovereign expressions of life develop in the midst of uncertainty. I agree with Bauman that people need to learn to live without any guaranteed ethical code. And I believe that present day technologies can supply this possibility, and marketers, often despised by philosophers, are instrumental in the flow of information which allow subjects to maintain their autonomy and make ethical decisions.

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