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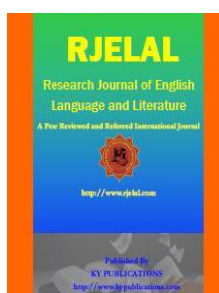
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## THE MOLD MIXTURE OF CONSUMERISM AND NIHILISM

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### ABSTRACT

The basic purpose of this study is to handle consumerism and its effects on contemporary life. It gives a brief background of consumerism, its development and its emergence especially in America. People nowadays replace their religions with consumerism because it is an easy equation of happiness. Moreover, the study discusses the idea of manufacturing superfluous and unnecessary needs using advertising. It sheds light on men as consumers and the relationship between consumption and machismo. Besides consumerism, the study argues nihilism as a consequence of consumerism. The study tries to prove that consumerism is nihilism at the end and it assures that people just over purchase out of their nothingness. Not only that, but also it highlights Chuck Palahniuk as a phenomenal nihilist author followed by a quick glance at his uniqueness. He is classified among the authors who are interested in issues of consumerism and his fiction is full of themes of anti-consumerism.

**Key terms:** consumerism, nihilism, masculinity, advertising, chuck, Palahniuk

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### INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, one judges everyone by how much he or she consumes. People now do not ask God for health or success; they pray for extra bonus on their credit cards. Steven Miles says, "consumerism is ubiquitous and ephemeral. It is arguably the religion of the late twentieth century" (1). As consumerism has become the new religion and probably the most efficacious religion, this supports Friedrich Nietzsche's idea that 'God is dead'. At the heart of materialistic life, the religious experience is not the salvation anymore. From this point appeared the new church with no sense of obligation, with no need for redemption, with no commitment and with no order of asceticism. Loyd D. Rue guarantees the previous by asking, "Who can seriously doubt that consumerism has vastly more influence on our goal hierarchies, self-esteem links,

memory systems, and appraisals than religious traditions do?" (339). "Consumerism became synonymous with unfettered freedom and the more people to love their freedom ... the more they viewed themselves as having no obligation" (Mansvelt 86). Comparing faith to consumerism, we will find that it is a highly complicated process which requires confidence, depth and courage. Conversely, consumerism accepts your shallowness, emptiness and your crappy spirit.

Mark Clavier says that consumerism has changed our way of looking at life like any religion. The most surprising thing is the difference between the deal of Christianity and the deal of consumerism with things. Christianity cares about how to please people by things like exorcism while consumerism cares about their happiness and identity (4). In this content, Grace Ji-Sun Kim says, "consumerism has

become natural, inevitable and conventional" (36). He continues, "we show our devotion to it by working hours to attain its rewards, by going into deep debt to remain members in good standing, and by spending many hours a week shopping" (36). All these quotations indicate the dangerous role played by consumerism in society. Thus, this study comes to prove that we have lost too much by letting consumerism be the root of our happiness. There is a link between consumerism and nihilism. However, the researcher is going to prove that consumerism is nihilism at the end.

### History of Consumerism

The roots of consumer culture appeared within the eighteenth century. Before the eighteenth century, major religions try earnestly to persuade their followers to make spiritual ceremonies the focal point of their lives and to get rid of any earthy activities. For Buddhism, the pleasures of life are very dangerous because they own the minds of believers. Concerning Christianity, it suspects that material goods can lead to spiritual devotion. The pigs could fly, but it will be hard for a wealthy man to gain a warrant for heaven. Confucianism agrees with other religions and rejects consumerism in all its aspects. (Stearns 3-4) Consumerism is new and old. The Great Depression in America 1930 reshaped the industry of consumption in a phenomenal way. Dietmar Rothmund expounds the condition of the United States during the Great Depression, "it was characterized by a very uneven distribution of income, a concentration of capital and a lack of further prospects of productive investment" (48). That's why America encourages consumption and its only challenge was how to push people to consume. William H. Young and Nancy K. Young explain, "by the 1930s, advertisers designed their promotions to show how much people needed goods and services; the older themes of social status, benefits and pleasure did not entirely disappear, but they received reduced emphasis" (1). From this point, people begin to accept the new values of inexhaustible consumption and individualism's profile. Consumption's rate continues in its high growing till the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gray S. Cross makes it

clear why consumerism has conquered America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

Consumerism succeeded where other ideologies failed because it concretely expressed the cardinal political ideals of the century – liberty and democracy – and with relatively little self-destructive behavior or personal humiliation ... consumer goods gave people the means to establish new personal identities and to break with old ones without necessarily abandoning family, friends, and culture. (2)

21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed the actual birth of contemporary consumer America. The American society is almost oriented with consumerism and defines itself through materialism. For a long era, America advertises for its dream not only that, but also it announces itself as the saver of world. The essence of American dream is not equality, welfare and freedom. It is increasing the levels of consumption and having economic security. William V. Clark says that "the American dream only increases over production and an orgy of consumption" (5). He continues, "the American dream may be a loosely defined cluster of aspiration, but it clearly encompasses the chance to make money, to buy a house, and to ensure an education for next generation" (5). In this sense, J.B. Twitchell regrets piteous America:

Sell them their dreams. Sell them what they longed for and hoped for and almost despaired of having. Sell them hats by splashing sunlight across them. Sell them dreams – dreams of country club and proms of visions. Of what might happen if only. After all, people do not buy things to work for them. They buy hope – hope of what your merchandise will do for them. Sell them this hope and you will not have to worry about selling them goods. (271)

### The Fake Fabric

With the rise of consumerism, our world has turned into a big heap of soda cans. There is no certain evidence that consumerism appeared haphazardly. Consumption's industry relies on capturing the attention of people through compelling materials. Almost 90% percent of our

behavior is engaged to consumerism even religious ceremonies. Following the observations of Sigurd Oslen about consumer behavior in America, we will discover that citizens' concept of ideal life is always related to a new car, a massive TV screen or a sudden vacation (95). They don't care about the American dream as much as caring about the next update of their cell phones.

The policy of consumption depends upon creating an endless chain of false consciousness or illusionary choices. In an era of aggression, injustice and anxieties consumption is the only sponsor of self-satisfaction. It has been said that "the consumer is driven by false needs created by the culture industry, which uses advertising to persuade; what becomes important is not the music itself but rather that the need to consume be fulfilled" (Carnes 58). William F. Arens describes it from a psychological point of view:

Advertising tries to inspire people in buying decisions by playing with their emotions in different ways especially by showing fake things in ads and then promising the same by using particular products, like showing and promising greater status in the society, social status. This leads people to adopt harmful habits and make poor people to buy those things which they cannot afford just by showing emotional appeals in ads which make people to place themselves in the place. (qtd. in Baig et al.100)

The use of music, words, pictures and other forms is necessary for transforming the advertisement fascinatingly. Stephen Butler Leacock describes advertising as "the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it" (qtd. in Singh 14). Concerning this Chuck Palahniuk says in his novel *Fight Club*, "you have a class of young strong men and women, and they want to give their lives to something. Advertising has these people chasing cars and clothes they do not need" (149). He persists, "generations have been working in jobs they hate, just so they can buy what they do not really need" (149). Advertisements convey their messages by the use of music. Music works like the bridge between the product and the audience. The emotional effect of a familiar tone increases the

memorizing of brand's name as well as buying it (Kaser 277). The success of advertising goes side by side with the good choice of models, scenes and creating a positive mood in an appealing context (Fennis & Stroebe 128). Sean Brierley says, "TV commercials may have only 30 seconds to get the story across, hence the need for many short cuts and short sentences" (186). She continues, "people's attention moves from looking at pictures to listening to the voice-over (or music) to reading text" (168). In brief, the dialogue plays the main role in evoking the interest of the customer. In his book *The Discourse of Advertising*, Guy Cook analyzes the power of word during advertisements. For example, using the trade mark "Sprite Diet" instead of "Sprite" because losing weight is what customer aspires for. He wants to drink without worrying about calories. In addition phrases like "there's a cool fresh world" and "where you can go", Sprite draws your own fantasy comfortable planet where there's no existence of heat or thirst (42-48). Moreover Sprite in its letters is similar to spirit and it is the type of words that we seek. Besides what is mentioned above there are two kinds of stimulus: vivid stimuli and salient stimuli. The salient stimuli "grab the organism's attention but do not necessarily provide an opportunity for some action" (L'Abate, 81). It is like the alarm and it disturbs people. While vivid stimuli plays on the persuasion of the audience with textures and images.

Dominic Strinati thinks that false needs has contributed in suppressing the real needs of social life (55). The more people correspond with fake propaganda and aspire to live as models they watch in an ad, the more they are overwhelmed with dissatisfaction and frustration. Richard J Hart says, "consumerism enslaves rather than liberates. We need to expose the lie and illusion that it liberates and leads to happiness. The apparent satisfaction leads to dissatisfaction and lack of fulfillment" (41). He adds, "consuming less will lead to real happiness and fulfillment ... the disciplined person makes a distinction between real needs and unnecessary wants" (41). Andrew G. Walker and Robin A. Parry sum up, "consumerism is amoral – it does not aspire to good or evil – all it cares about is feeding and it is very, very hungry. It will sell what people desire and

it will stoke whatever desires it needs to in order to sell" (30).

#### **Smell like a Man**

Consumerism nowadays captivates the desires of men and on the same footing for women. It cultivates the idea of showing man's appearance, sexuality and charisma. Men are trying to achieve a target of attractiveness by over consume, not only that but also their purchase strengthens their sophistication and sends them far away from being junky. Actually, the male mode recently gets its pleasure, power and perfection through consumption. Speaking about the art of selling masculinity, Jean Baudrillard explains:

All of masculine advertising insists on rule, on choice, in terms of rigor and inflexible minutiae. He does not neglect a detail ... It is not a question of just letting things go, or of taking pleasure in something, but rather of distinguishing himself. (147)

Men are competing with women in personal care and beauty industry. Advertisers use sexy male models as actors instead of average real men. The model is looking at the camera as if he is the product itself. The cliché of stupid rock male moving in front of audiences and arousing their sexual lust made men thought it is the only way to be happy. Consumerism creates a fairy-tale for masculinity and this fairy-tale provides a ready-made answer for the insomniac question: How to be a man? Beer advertisements achieve that by focusing on physical structure by using the features of cowboys riding horses and performing in roads. It has been mentioned that " the myth of masculinity is manifested in myriad forms of mediated and nonmediated communication; beer commercials are only one such form, and to a large extent. The ads merely reflect preexisting cultural conceptions of the man's man" (Craig 36).

Consumerism reinforces the sexual domination of men and restore their balance in social life. Carole Counihan Psyche Forson and says that the hamburger commercials like Hardee's and Burger King "both suggest that by enjoying hamburger men can seize a supposedly stable component to masculinity, their natural desire for animal flesh" (261). Commercials celebrates

machismo by feminizing men and men escape feminization by skinning in it more and more. It is schizophrenic to announce appetite as a mark of masculinity and at the same time show male models with flat stomachs. It is schizophrenic that trademarks such as "Hungry Man Dinner", "Manwich" and "Manhandles" can satisfy machismo though they cause excessive fatness. Margret Atwood says, "Men's bodies are the most dangerous things on earth" (qtd. in Goldstein 3) and consumerism removes the hair of their bodies. Consumerism plays on the anxieties of men and promises them a better way of life than they currently have. Janell Carroll explains, "the purpose of advertising is threefold – to get your attention, to get you physiologically excited, and to associate that excitement with the product being advertised" (483). Sexuality has been used to sell products for decades. After the great depression, men were threatened by unemployment that's why advertisers tried to regain man's authority by commercials. They innovate a new image of man by hiding women and giving prominence to men as the absolute power. With the return of economic welfare, the tone of advertising has changed and defined a modern macho figure as the ideal father who provides his family with goods they need. Recently, they brightened the image by cigarettes and luxuries with the image of playboy who can break limits and ethics (Carroll 11). Emotionally stressed by their sexual future and rate of testosterone in their blood, men abuse Steroids. Doretta Lau gathers the feminizing side effects of Steroids on men:

Even though anabolic Steroids increase muscle mass and decrease fat which is a masculine ideal sought after by body builders and other body conscious men ... Men who take large quantities of Steroids sometimes develop a condition called gynecomastia, in which they grow breasts .... Another feminizing effect that anabolic Steroids users suffer from is shrinking testicles and a lower sperm count. (23)

#### **Tempted by Trivia**

Consumerism destroys everything it touches and decreases its value. It grabs our health, our interests and our definition (Bruckner 83).

"Advertising has taken over politics which now uses sound-bites and slogans; television claims to slave our broken hearts, to render justice, to supplement the police force and make school redundant" (83). According to Jay McDaniel there are temptations that make people consume in a foolish way: a) that appearance is the most principle sector in your life; b) that being busy by work all the time is a sign of productive atmosphere; c) that being a loving caring person is not necessary as having booming career; d) that working at home is a waste because you get unpaid; e) that living is not about pleasing God, but collecting a lot of money; f) that shopping is the pursuit of happiness; g) that satisfying my need is the goal no matter what are the consequences and h) that you are not a citizen but a consumer and your country is the market place (62). That short-term temptation process has led to a long-term torment. It has been mentioned that:

Consumerism affects the individual in number of ways, it affects the psychological health of the individual by eroding our true self and replacing it with false self and the spiritual health of the individual by eroding our spiritual connections with nature and replacing it with consumption of goods and services. (Parashar et al. 8)

Contemporary critics shed light on the different effects of consumerism. Pamela Ugwuclike clarifies the relationship between crime and consumerism. She says, "consumerism can encourage people to become preoccupied with acquiring material possessions that they do not need. Indeed, people may go to extreme things to acquire these material things. They may restore to criminal activities" (127). From another dimension, consumerism influences social class in a great way as it is a means of self-reflection. The range of social classes from the lower to the upper is determined by their consumption. Consumers do not shop in order to satisfy their needs, but to win a personal meaning upon the circle of society. Things they consume express to which social class they belong (Kazmi 165). Part of social acceptance is engaged to beauty trade especially fashion and plastic surgeries. Usually light skin, straight hair and well-toned body is a mark of wealth. Beauty draws the map of personality as well

as it achieves self-worth and approval for both men and women. Eve Shapiro explains, "although beauty scripts place a greater burden on women to meet bodily expectations, men are also subject to gendered scripts that propel them to enhance their masculinity through technological intervention" (189). People will vouch for anything that enables them to be regardless its negative outcome. In her examination of why people are fond cosmetic surgeries, Magdalena Alagna says that people's search for perfection pushes them to die for gaining an ideal self-image (10). "They get the fat sucked from under their cheekbones to make their cheekbones more defined. They get fat sucked from their abdomens to get rid of a spare tire or love handles" (12). Consumerism's impact extends to include identity. Mark A. Burch avers, "... consumerism affects the soul, the self, the very identity of a person trying to live out its values" (30). Consumerism offers a new self as Danielle Todd explains, "the process of consumerism makes it possible for a person to move from one area of society to another independent of circumstances of birth, gender, or race" (49).

#### History of Nihilism

The earliest development of the term nihilism occurs in 1970s by F.H. Jacobi who argues that the human subject is everything and the whole world is nothing. In 1799, Jacobi extends his criticism to include the idealism of the German philosophy and coins the expression "nihilism". Among all the idealists who treat nihilism, Friedrich Nietzsche is considered to be the pioneer of that movement (Nishitani xvi-xvii). Since the writings of Nietzsche, nihilism has transformed from emotional themes to a unique issue that forces modern man to think about it. For him, nihilism depends on depriving things from their value. Thus, Nietzsche declares that 'God is dead' and announces that the advent of nihilism is to endure the meaningless without God. Thomas P. Miles thinks that " ... the declaration that 'God is dead' meant to be a warning that we can no longer rely on God as the cornerstone for our ethical, natural, cultural and political thought" (184). Moreover, "... unless we find another cornerstone or foundation for these things, we face crisis of nihilism in which we will lose all ability to believe in such

things" (184). In his book *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche says:

Once on time men sacrificed human beings to their God and perhaps just they loved the best ... Then, during the moral epoch of mankind, they sacrificed to their God the strongest instincts they possessed. Their "nature"; this festal joy shines in the cruel glances of ascetics and "anti-natural" fantasies. Finally, what still remained to be sacrificed ...? Was it not necessary to sacrifice God himself ...? To sacrifice God for nothingness – this paradoxical mystery of the ultimate cruelty has been reserved for the rising generation; we all know something thereof already. (39)

In his essay *The Word of Nietzsche*, Martin Heidegger explains, "In the word 'God is dead' the name 'God,' thought essentially, stands for the supersensory world of those ideals which contain the goal that exists beyond earthly life" (64). Heidegger describes nihilism as the forgetting of being and that is completely different from Nietzsche's concept of meaninglessness. While Heidegger focuses on "idea", Nietzsche focuses on "value". Heidegger thinks that Nietzsche has been trapped in reducing being to values. Nihilism is a psychological journey that man pass through nevertheless the moral truth due to Nietzsche. According to Heidegger, nihilism negates being as a whole and this being is nothing (Peters 48-49). Herman Philipse differentiates, "Nietzsche ... thought that his insight would prompt a reevaluation of values because he is convinced of life, and indeed of beings in their totality, as will to power" (284). On the contrary, Heidegger "defined the metaphysics as the set of doctrines that say what beings are in their totality without mediating on transcendent being" (284).

#### **Lotion versus the Holy Water**

Consumerism has replaced religion for many people because it somehow allows spirituality to enter their souls without a recognition of them. It comforts them, enables them to connect with others and it frees their identity (Cavanaugh 36). Maybe consumerism deserves to be a religion as it is the answer for our nihilistic existence. Jay McDaniel

thinks that consumerism suggests salvation through making the performance to public more confident and through achieving marketable victory. Everything is alright as long as we can appear affluent, desired and triumphant to others. Money accomplishes impossible mission and fetches lost pride (73). In the age of rapid change, it becomes hard for church to cope with the demands of its followers. Mara Einstein says, "Religion cannot become so of the market that it loses its unique selling proposition: its ability to raise us above the market" (209). Churches realize the risk and start to compete with consumer system. It has been said that "some churches install the latest high video and audio systems, thinking and hoping these will attract church shoppers" (Brunn 2291). But the church fails at the end, Gordon Atkinson expresses that:

Of course, a church cannot spend all of its time trying to make visitors happy. If a church tries to become what it thinks people want, than it stops being the body of Christ and starts becoming something more like Walmart or Disney World. The danger of those of us who are looking for a spiritual community is that we might slip into a consumer mentality. (qtd. in Brunn 2291)

On the other hand, Christianity itself has shattered towards consuming habits. Ross Hastings comments that when people go to church, they expect to worship God. But the truth is they are going to spend money over the people of God (64). "It will always be easier to treat Jesus Christ from the point of view of the marketplace, as if were outsiders looking in, window shoppers lusting after the promises of bargain-bin cruciformity" (Stevenson 205). In this sense, Stephen Sharot avers that even religion has participated in the growth of consumerism (257). "Church music and doctrines turned into the interior displays of department stores; and religious symbols such as crosses and church replicas were sold in large numbers" (Sharot 257). Peter Berger concludes the situation:

The religious tradition, which previously could be authoritatively imposed, now has to be marketed. It must be 'sold' to a clientele that is no longer constrained to



'buy'. The pluralist situation is, above all, a market situation. In it, the religious institutions become marketing agencies and the religious traditions become consumer commodities. (9)

#### Chuck Palahniuk: Truth speaks

Simon de Beauvoir stated in *The Second Sex* that "the writer of originality, unless dead, is always shocking, scandalous; novelty disturbs and repels" (440). Writers such as Bret Easton Ellis, Douglas Coupland, Irvine Welsh and Chuck Palahniuk develop these characteristics in their works. They are also called the writers of Generation X which is distinguished with "a radical cynicism to mainstream society and money and is notable for its anti-corporate and anti-consumerist attitudes" (Mason 127). Elizabeth Young and Graham Caveney describe the style of those writers as, "a flat affectless prose which dealt with all aspects of contemporary urban life: crime, sex drugs, sexual excess, media overload, consumer madness, inner-city decay and fashion-crazed nightlife" (qtd. in Malkems 91). Mainly Chuck Palahniuk jumps of the pages since he uses contemporary persuasive topics. It has been assured that "Violence, self- destruction, parental absence, pornography, the crossing of gender and body limits, are favorite themes in Palahniuk's fiction" (Rodriguez 6).

What makes Palahniuk the mutation of this generation is that he acts like a real man and writes as a real man. He eats, cries, screams and lives shit. The world of Palahniuk is rapid, magical and "made of people telling stories" (Palahniuk xix). He explains, "look at the stock market. Look at fashion. And any long story, any novel, is just a combination of short stories" (xix). He adds, "each time you create a character, you look at the world as that character, looking for the details that make that reality the one true reality" (xxi). In theory Palahniuk is a very disgusting writer and his way of revealing truth of the world may cause unstoppable fainting, but in practice readers adore his works. Jesse Kavaldo analyzes:

Palahniuk's popularity is more complex, however, than chronological or cultural proximity to the Promise Keepers or Million Man March suggests. His books' manic

charm transcends a core readership of disaffected young men galvanized by the books' stylish nihilism, violent chic, or tongue in cheek contravention. (4)

All this weirdness of character has been accompanied with a rare simplicity as Johannes Hell explains, "Chuck Palahniuk is the kind of guy, who when he is to hold a speech at conference, enters the room, kicks off his shoes, has a seat on the table and then doesn't hold back with honesty until you can't help but just like the fellow" (4). In one of his interviews he clarifies his attitude:

To me, it's a choice: whether to focus on the way things work out beautifully, or to focus on the way things work out miserably ... My stories tend to bring people from isolation into community – with at least one other person, usually with a whole community of people – so that they find themselves accepted back by a world that they kind of fled from. (*Chuck Palahniuk: You can't be just a Spectator*)

Palahniuk is boiling the water all the time by trying to free himself from the superficiality of the world and writing what really adapts with everyday life. It has been mentioned that "in many ways like all good artists, Palahniuk is a teacher, a satirist holding up a mirror to the worst features of American capitalist society and all of its horrors" (Sartain 97-98). He clarifies his attitude:

Some writers research in order to write. I write in order to research topics that interest me. Especially if I can meet with other people, in forums from illness support groups to phone-sex hotlines, and learn what other people know best. Every character (really, person) sees the world through a framework of education and experience that they're proud experts about. To write a character, find out what they know best, and then you'll know how they'll describe a "hot day." Or a "pretty girl." Plus, when you're talking to someone about their field of expertise (really, just listening) whether it's physics or mythology or finding risky sex, you'll notice how people really shine when they talk about

what they know well. Being around that shine is reward enough. (*An Interview with Chuck Palahniuk*)

#### **Palahniuk's Remarkability**

Chuck Palahniuk is known for his bizarre, caustic and horrific style of writing. He can be classified among authors of transgressive fiction and he considers himself one of them. He defined it as "fiction in which characters misbehave and act badly, so they commit crimes or pranks as a way of either feeling alive, gaining a sense of personal power or as a political acts of civil disobedience" (*Postcards from the Future*). It has been mentioned that:

Palahniuk's literature has run the gamut of responses with critics and readers. For some, his work represents mere shock literature, deviant and transgressive with an adolescent sensibility. Palahniuk's fiction speaks great truths about the nature of their lives, and for still others, he's a merely a ripping good read. (Sartain xv-xvi)

Palahniuk writes in order to create his own version of life. He urges his reader to cut off the circle of being a response to conditions and take an action towards what he actually wants himself to be (Palahniuk 215). It has been mentioned that "Palahniuk unflinchingly reveals the dark compulsions and of characters struggling to find fulfillment in postmodern world where the Orwellian power of mass media and the crushing weight of the past make doing so all but impossible" (Rubin & Kuhn 16). On the other hand, "the characters in Palahniuk's fiction usually have an unorthodox approach in life, but their main goal is quite straightforward to find a way to live together with other people" (De Rocha 106). That's why "Palahniuk has specialized in exposing social flaws and mishaps in the most bashing of ways, the comedic. This humor is absolutely devastating, for it is us who he is laughing at and worst of all, he is right to do so" (Hell 4).

Palahniuk is a remarkable writer who is concerned with issues of Marxism, consumerism and masculinity disorders. He uses direct address "you" to bring the reader closer to the events. Palahniuk uses very strange ideas and depends on unusual

characters. "His novels are primarily realist in form, albeit with an exaggerated hyperbolic style of writing where sentences are often simply short punchy phrases that theatrically announce their own significance" (Mason 242). May be Palahniuk wants to connect with people by writing, Jessica Hopsicker states:

He doesn't speak to the angry, jaded and disenfranchised youth, his novels; hijack their minds, launching them on a ride from the very first line. Readers throttle through the black terrain of what he likes to call satirical Horror and Transgressive Fiction fought with sexual deviance gore and violence. These words choke and nauseate but also somehow incite and inspire insignificant ways. Cast into labyrinthine plot lines, text and subtext. Strewn with arcane trivia and useless information, Chuck subjects the readers to poignant themes tackling consumerism, social stigmas and sexuality. (195)

#### **Conclusion**

Consumerism is one of the most harmful things and at the same time it works as a speedy recovery for all problems. People over purchase out of their nothingness. It is scary that consumerism now replaces major religions. Thus, consumerism is nihilism for both of them shape the looks of life. Under the magic of enjoyment, people sell their souls to products. Advertising corrupts minds with glamorous goods and services. American society ruins its love for country, its faith and its families for consumption's dream. Even the church consumes religion in one way or another. Nihilism's perspective relies upon Nietzsche's claim that God is dead. Of course, God's spirit was removed by the materialistic system. In this sense, people find their life meaningless so that they consume in order to fulfill it. Consumerism is identity, pride and lost paradise. Among authors who are concerned with issues of consumerism and nihilism, Chuck Palahniuk. He is a minimalist writer who rejects the obsessions of capitalism. He is creative writer in the way he handles world in his fiction. He prefers truth with all its bitterness and may be its nauseating changes. He loves doing whatever comforts him and



writes whatever convinces him. His works of art were labeled by their harsh content, yet he never gave up on showing his talent. He is like the Polaris star, helps people to find their way when they are stray in the vast desert.

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