

# The Delights and Discontents of Shopping

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We go on a shopping trip: we travel to material havens to escape from the daily drudgery of work and duty—to explore and taste the world of goods. Yet sometimes shopping itself is drudgery, as when shopping hurriedly for groceries after work. We go treasure hunting in thrift stores, second-hand clothes stores, antique stores, flea markets, or garage sales. Some of these treasures become the junk that clutters our garage or rented storage space, or is later sold in our own garage sale.

Shopping can make us hypocritical. While we might love to say that we hate shopping, we find ourselves shopping and loving it. Some of us become shopaholics, addicted to shopping for the sake of shopping, and then have to go to AA-like therapy. Even if not all of us harm ourselves directly, as shopaholics do, we indirectly do so by generating environmental pollution and degradation. Shopping entails much more than provisioning, and it has multiple meanings, functions, and consequences.

Shopping has become an omnipresent activity. Even when we are not shopping, we carry the signs of having shopped—shopping bags (only of the most prestigious stores!) to lug things around. In Ankara, Turkey, where I live, bread can be delivered to your door every morning and placed in a basket or a bag that you place outside your door. One of my neighbours leaves the bag of a designer store for her daily bread. There is now even a genre of novels that may be called “Sex ‘N’ Shopping” novels, such as those of Judith Krantz.<sup>1</sup>

Advertising accentuates the promise of the pleasure of consumption, and television beams images of people spending money. Various spatial arrangements attempt to make shopping more enjoyable. More and more shopping malls have theme parks, while recreational areas, cultural sites, and theme parks have shops. One way that companies attempt to control or manage the experience and amount of shopping is by atmospherics—music, décor, design, layout, colours, and smells such as artificially-produced fresh bakery aromas in supermarkets. Spaces like department stores, malls, supermarkets, museum stores, auction halls, and occasions

such as birthdays and anniversaries, stimulate shopping. Capitalist institutions have turned the holidays of Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Valentine's Day into occasions for shopping, and these shopping holidays are diffusing globally. Christian holidays such as Christmas are spreading even in Muslim and Buddhist countries as occasions for shopping for decorations and gifts. Increasingly commodified celebrations and such gift-giving occasions contribute to the global proliferation and pervasiveness of shopping.

Shopping can be viewed as a generalized search behaviour, a way to "spend" discretionary time, and a hedonic recreation.<sup>2</sup> Shopping is different from buying since one may buy without shopping or shop without buying. The complex array of shopping experiences range from being irritating, very disagreeable, labouring, one of status anxiety, to enjoyment in spending and in the theatrical spectacle of the mall.<sup>3,4</sup> Some of these feelings are aroused by the space, assortment of goods, and the people in it. We may be irritated by the salespeople, by waiting in line at the cashier or not finding the size or colour we want. These feelings are also related to our worldviews and ideologies. For example, while people might love shopping in farmer's markets, street fairs, estate sales, bookstores, music and computer stores, they might hate shopping in supermarkets and malls.

While shopping implies a potentiality of buying, the poor also shop, although they cannot afford many things in the stores, even in the supermarkets. This becomes their way of participating in the consumer society that they are otherwise excluded from. In Turkey right now, after the economic crisis of 2001, many people shop without buying. They go to supermarkets and large department stores to look at the things they cannot afford. This is usually done on the weekends, as a family outing. Some even take a large shopping cart, choose items with a lot of deliberation, fill their carts, only to leave the cart at a corner of the store after an hour or two of shopping, and leave empty handed. Such going through the motions of shopping without buying suggests that there is joy in the act of shopping, or a sour and frustrated joy in this case.

Despite and because of the "empty" joy of shopping, criticisms of shopping abound in religion, art, academia, and intellectual social circles. Barbara Kruger's photomontage *I Shop Therefore I Am* and Juliet Schor's book entitled *Do Americans Shop Too Much?*<sup>5</sup> are examples in art and academia. There are some individuals who opt for a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity. There are environmentalist and religious groups who voice resistance to shopping and consumption. A non-profit organization called "Alternatives" challenges consumerism and aims for a faith-based resistance to, and protest against, the commercialization of Christmas. They urge consumers to "unplug the Christmas machine" and return to giving

pieces of the American Dream to others instead of buying into that same Dream selfishly.<sup>6</sup> Mocking Christmas shopping, Cori Prescott says:

Welcome to the shopping season in America. Welcome to designer gloves—welcome to diamond rings. Welcome to trips to the mall to celebrate “family time”—welcome to credit card debt. Welcome to over consumption, materialism, waste, overtime, stress, depression, debt counselling, and worry about lagging behind the Joneses. Welcome to the disease of buying power and continued happiness in slavery. Welcome to the culture of consumption and the consumption of culture. Welcome to the shopping season in America.<sup>7</sup>

There is also protest media: the magazine *AdBusters* provides a post-modern critique of consumerism and promotes the “Buy Nothing Day.” Buy Nothing Day, held annually on the day after Thanksgiving (the busiest shopping day of the year in the USA), urges collective resistance to the commercialized season.

The joys and discontents of shopping are co-constructed by consumers and producers/marketers/advertisers of market capitalism and its consumer society. I will now turn to the various forms and functions of shopping that take shape in consumer cultures world-wide.

### **Shopping for the Experience, Fun, and Entertainment**

Consumers shop not only for goods and services for provisioning but also for experiential and emotional reasons. Hirschman and Holbrook state that “hedonic consumption designates those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products.”<sup>8</sup> The activity of shopping is part of the experience of the product. At times, the purchase of goods may be incidental to the experience of shopping: some people buy so they can shop, NOT shop so they can buy. Furthermore, shopping is hoped to alleviate a negative state emotional state—when people feel down, they go shopping hoping to compensate for powerlessness, lovelessness, or unhappiness.

Mall environments are part of a shopper’s hedonic consumption activity. Retailers appeal to the multiple senses of sight, sound, scent, tactility, and in the case of food, taste. Fantasies can be played out in a mall as a shopper walks in the mall, sits in a mall atrium, or is “waited on” by a responsive retail sales associate.<sup>9</sup> Shopping malls provide semiotic messages, fuel consumer emotions and fantasy, and provide a stage for acting.<sup>10</sup> The mall is a theatre where consumers can create their own world and fantasize their parts in a play. Retailers provide the staging, props, lighting, and mannequins. Mall semiotics have also been conceptualized

as creating a sacred space because the mall is separated from the outside world: it is enclosed and controlled inside, thus protected from the outside world. A mall is safe, habitable, and could be said to serve as a substitute for the medieval church. To strengthen this analogy, it has been suggested that the church floor plan in the shape of a cross is reflected in the mall's layout as well as the atmospherics of space, height, and light.

The mall space is produced as a retail-entertainment complex in order to orchestrate shopping and enchant the shopping experience.<sup>11</sup> The largest of the malls, The Mall of America, filled with both tourists and local shoppers, brings the touristy visual consumption of places into the realm of retailing. It contains a wide array of entertainment-oriented attractions: theme parks such as Knott's Camp Snoopy, miniature golf course, interactive virtual reality laser games, LEGO theme park/store, and Underwater World Aquarium. The approach to design adopted from theme parks relates to practice of "theming" or in Disney's terms "imagineering," which designates the process of "making the magic real" by translating fictions and fantasies to concrete themed architecture and attractions.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the mall, other spaces also set the stage for the joy of shopping. Consumers go treasure hunting in thrift stores, antique stores, garage sales, and flea markets. Stores selling retro clothes, 1950's appliances and antique furniture cater to our longing for authenticity or nostalgia. Auctions and street fairs provide a feast for the eye, touch, and smell: the consumer obtains food for the senses and aesthetic pleasures by being in such shopping spaces. Tourists shop for arts and crafts (matrushka dolls, paintings, carpets, jade bowls) whether in Moscow, Istanbul, or Shanghai. Such souvenirs make tangible the pleasurable travel experience and memories of exotic lands. If they have not bought enough souvenirs or gifts before they leave, there are always the airport shops.

### **Shopping as Self-Seduction**

Shopping feeds on the seductive world of goods and fuels self-seduction. Shoppers place themselves in the tempting world of objects of desire. The sensations of smell, touch, and the sight of consumer objects and the anticipation of consumption fuel the imagination and enhances consumer desire. Consumer imaginings and cravings for consumer goods not yet possessed can mesmerise and seem to promise magical meaning in life. Among the sorcerers helping to enchant these goods are advertisers, retailers, peddlers, and other merchants of mystique. In addition, consumers willingly act as sorcerer's apprentices in window-shopping, daydreaming, television viewing, magazine reading, Internet surfing, word of mouth conversing, and our often not-so-casual observing of others' consumption.<sup>13</sup> Similar to sexual autoeroticism, shopping involves self-stimulation

of consumption desires. The fantasies cultivated are socially inspired by media, books, and films among other things.

While shopping, consumers nurture their desire for goods and rehearse what it would be like to obtain the object of desire. Building expectations and excitement by rehearsing this acquiring rests on fantasizing about the sensory as well as the social. The social object seduces us<sup>14</sup> but we want to be seduced and play an active part, for instance by shopping. Objects of desire promise a magical transformation, escape, or an altered state. The anticipated transformation can be to the past (nostalgia), the future, or another place, all of which offer escape from present conditions, from boring quotidian existence. Shopping is one means through which past or future images are condensed into a sought after consumer good.

### **Shopping for Social Reasons**

While shopping for fun and self-seduction may seem to imply individual hedonism, shopping is about social relations. The conventional view is that shopping is about the free choice of autonomous individuals who are alienated from society or are fending off its pressures. Against this view Miller<sup>15</sup> argues that shopping is about creation and maintenance of relationships with family, self, or pets. The sociality that may otherwise be lacking in one's life can be found in the process of shopping. What makes people feel secure from the alienating experience of the market and its institutional forms is the development of social relationships—through material relations, through consumption that objectifies relationships.

The simplest sociality is provided by mingling with and seeing people while shopping. Furthermore, shopping together with others fosters relationships. For example, a participant observation study of home shopping parties investigating the seemingly irrational and coercive aspects of party purchasing found that these parties provide sociality and femininity to the participants.<sup>16</sup> The meanings with which party shopping and buying are invested by female shoppers suggest that these activities are much more than simple economic transactions. Shopping parties offer unusual opportunities to foster personal relationships among segregated individuals in an atomized society through participation in the rituals of a moral economy. At the same time, the parties play a part in the cultural definition of female roles and the very construct of “femininity” itself.

Social relationships are grounded in, and continuously recreated through, material relations, the consumption of goods used to provision households. The “labour of love” put into shopping is caught up in a dialectic tension between normative discourses and the particularities of the specific persons one is in a relationship with. Shopping is a practice through which people try to resolve these contradictions. Shopping highlights the

way relationships are posed between a series of normative models and the particular relationship. Shopping is both an expression of the norms of relationships (provided by commerce, parent-child or gender roles) as well as of the particulars of a relationship. There are contradictions between the normative discourse about the kin category in question (what wives or daughters in general are supposed to be like) and the particular person(s) one lives with. Shopping is used to resolve these tensions.

Consumption is seen to be evil and destructive by many shoppers. Such discourse of consumption as evil and wasteful is inherent in religious criticisms, in the ethics of “green” in industrial societies as well as in many traditional societies. Consumers attempt to make the practice of shopping negate such discourse by turning consumption from an act of spending money to one that is devoted to thrift and saving money.<sup>17</sup> Shopping expresses the contradiction between morality and altruistic concern for distant others.

The ritual of shopping takes the discourse of shopping as an antisocial, materialistic, selfish, hedonistic pursuit and turns it into a moral act that consists of the dutiful attempt to save money on behalf of the household. Miller finds that the more hedonistic consumption, seen as a “treat,” is the exception rather than the rule. Focusing on provisional shopping, he argues that the primary motive for most such shopping is the desire to express love implicitly through material practice—buying the things the family members like and want. Social relations are continuously (re)constructed through the object-relationships. Shopping mediates and attempts to reconcile the contradictions of everyday life, such as in the relationship between the shopper and the household, or the identification of the household with gender and class. Furthermore, consumers draw from various ethics prevalent in their cultures to make their shopping and consumption moral or legitimate.<sup>18</sup> Their legitimating accounts include passionately cultivated aestheticism, utility (goods as tools to nonmaterial sources of happiness, empowerment, independence, and security), altruistic sociality (shopping for others), societal forces and media, being part of the modern world, and deservingness (prior deprivation or reward for achievements).

While Miller focuses on provisional shopping, a study on less mundane, more desirable consumption also found the creation and maintenance of social relationships to be an underlying factor. An object of desire is hoped to facilitate social relations, joining with idealized others, and directing one’s social destiny. The objects that transfix consumers are hoped to be conduits to, rather than surrogates for, love, respect, recognition, status, security, escape, or attractiveness. Furthermore, consumer desire has a mimetic aspect: people emulate valued others and shop for

what they have in order to be like them or to be accepted by them. Shopping for either objects of desire or for provisioning is most often social, whether in the sense of inclusion, sociability, or mimesis. Thus, despite the dominant (Western) ideology of individualism, shopping (even in the West) is about relationships, not about individuals. Shopping mediates and constructs social relationships, expresses the core relationships people live with.

### **Shopping for Learning**

If shopping is about relationships, we learn about others and form a real or imaginary relationship by shopping for the goods of the Other. Objects such as talismans, tribal art and crafts, jewellery from distant lands, and antiques are sought by collectors and other consumers partly for aesthetic reasons and partly to learn about the cultures that produced these goods. Some of the pleasure in such playful encounters with the exotic Other is not in buying but rather in the process of shopping for, and finding out about, such goods while talking to the dealer about the piece and its traditional uses and origins. Knowing what they are improves the aesthetic pleasures. We shop for crafts and arts of exotic cultures because we feel that the process enhances cultural cultivation and personal development.

In the contemporary world of mobility, shopping provides the first and easiest contact with a new culture when we go to live in a foreign country for a few years as an expatriate, or permanently, as an immigrant. Goods in the marketplace and the act of shopping help us learn about the host culture and its values and ease our adaptation to the new surroundings. Even learning something as simple as the type and colour of milk containers aids our daily lives in a foreign land. Strolling in the malls, shopping streets, and supermarkets gives the first taste of a new context. Shopping becomes a way of learning to cope with the strangeness and unfamiliarity of the new surroundings. We learn more easily the local symbolic codes of the host country by watching how the locals behave in public shopping spaces.

In the fast marketizing countries all over the global world, shopping is coming to serve the construction of new, “modern” identities.<sup>19</sup> As shopping is seen to be a part and parcel of being modern, consumers in transitional societies such as Turkey, Poland, Romania, China, and Kazakstan use shopping to learn to become modern. In the process, these consumers also learn the art of shopping—comparing, evaluating, making choices.<sup>20</sup> The new American-style look-alike shopping malls become the spaces of leisure, weekend family outings. In pursuit of building new modern social selves, shopping (especially for goods of the global world) attains a new significance. Mimetic and social nature of consumer desire operates here too: consumers in transitional societies shop for the objects of the imag-

ined “good life” in order to feel modern, to participate in the modern consumer society.

In Kazakhstan, while cultural and psychological ties to Russia remain, modernity is now assembled to be anything that is non-Soviet. Consumers are drawn to novel, high-tech and high-quality European and American goods with the newest features, yet most can only afford the “poor and cheap” Chinese products or fakes of prestigious brands. Hoping that it will aid their shopping, consumers, with an immense lack of trust and a sense of being lost, have taken up advertising as a reading interest in its own right. People buy magazines and newspapers for the adverts in this country where there were no advertisements before 1994. Anything from decorative copper plates with carved Arabic calligraphy from the Koran, French perfumes, and plastic Smurf characters are hoped to provide respectability, investment/security, gift-giving/social ties, and aesthetics, in a word, modernity.

In China, young women get together on Saturdays for a leisurely outing in their new shopping malls. Some Chinese consumers shop not only for goods but also for looks. Department stores provide “beauty corners” with computers. Shoppers can select hair colours and shapes, clothes, and make-up by first seeing themselves on the monitor. Even if they don’t buy the cosmetics they buy the computer-generated pictures of themselves with their various modern looks, with blond or red hair.

In such cases, shopping for the goods of the modern world is aligned with the desire to break away from the “failed” past (rural, traditional, and poor) to become modern and to live like the Westerners seen in television, films, and magazines. The goods shopped for are hoped to bring a fundamental and permanent escape, a totally new (modern) self and life, beyond a casual playful encounter with the exotic Other. Shopping serves as a way to relate to the modern world; it is used to construct and express a relationship to the modern world. By learning to become shoppers, people learn the modern life in the market economy; by becoming shoppers they experience that they have become modern.

### **Trials and Tribulations of Shopping while Learning to Become Modern**

Shopping becomes a frustrating practice in marketizing societies, however, as the available goods are too expensive for most and the affordable ones are poor quality; consumers complain that they do not know the criteria to compare and evaluate the newly available goods.

Since abundance is a recent phenomenon, consumers are not experienced in searching for products and information about products (if it exists), or in evaluating alternatives. Confusion emerges in the absence of knowing how to judge quality and to assess alternatives. While some take



delight in the newly found opportunity to choose and the freedom to make decisions (even if only in the commercial domain), many count on friends' choices and brands to guide their selection and remove their confusion. Further dissatisfaction occurs when products bought in this context don't perform or end up not being utilized. For instance, in Turkey, people who don't want to pay the prevalent high prices venture into the open-air spot markets that have been popping up. Anything from Russian caviar, T-shirts, and gadgets, to electronics, (and sometimes even cars) are sold in these marketplaces. Although the products are cheaper there, there is no guarantee that something is in working condition. As experience with consumption builds, some of these confusions and dissatisfactions may dissipate.

The desire for consumption in this context of sudden exposure creates some more serious problems as well. Confusion about priorities may emerge when the poorer consumers have to make major compromises. In Turkey, a mechanic or an office boy smokes Marlboros, wears brand name jeans, and buys a VCR, but may not have adequate nutrition. A mother in a Turkish village sells her cow's milk in order to buy candy for her two-year old son so that he would be "just like the city kids"; but that means the kid has to go without any milk. Furthermore, the majority of people in marketizing societies cannot buy much and thus feel excluded from the modern (consumer) society, leaving them angry, frustrated, or at best helpless.

### **Shopping for Shopping: Compulsive Consumption**

In more established and affluent consumer societies or among the affluent in marketizing societies, shopping is a "smiled upon addiction," smiled upon in two senses: it is both a source of wry humour and a practice encouraged by the omnipresent marketing and advertising machinery.<sup>21</sup> It has been estimated that up to 6% of Americans may be compulsive shoppers.<sup>22</sup> According to Carla Perez, a psychiatrist who has treated many compulsive spenders, "[t]he compulsive shopper doesn't just shop—she must shop."<sup>23</sup>

Compulsive shopping is a preoccupation with buying and shopping that is experienced as irresistible, intrusive, and senseless. It may result in frequent buying of more than can be afforded or needed, or shopping for longer periods of time than intended. It is chronic repetitive buying that becomes a primary response to negative feelings and provides short-term gratification while ultimately harming the individual shopper or others. Such consumers conduct shopping sprees in which they find themselves completely "out of control," buying things they do not need and sometimes cannot even use.<sup>24</sup> These behaviours are precipitated or accompanied by an irresistible urge to buy. Compulsive shoppers express confusion

and considerable frustration at their inability to control this urge. They often speak of situations where the urge to buy was just too powerful to resist, and how it is as if something is controlling their actions. Both the fear of being discovered and the reality of spending beyond their means interfere with the lives of many compulsive spenders. They feel guilty, ashamed, and anxious. For many compulsive shoppers buying is a reaction to stress or unpleasant situations. Compulsive shoppers become addicted to shopping as an escape from and coping with unhappiness, suggesting that shopping may be a sedative addiction.

### **Shopping as an Arena of Power and Resistance**

Such dependence on shopping invites the metaphor of religion—consumption is the new religion of the masses and shopping malls are cathedrals of consumption. This metaphor points to the power of the ethos of consumerism over the individual actor. However, when we focus on the power of the shopper, this metaphor may not be adequate. The shopper has agency and power in various ways.<sup>25</sup> First, 80-90% of all new products fail: despite the advertising and marketing techniques of the “priests of consumption,” consumers do not buy everything and anything that is offered for sale.<sup>26</sup> Second, the shopping mall serves as the terrain of guerrilla warfare where the art and tricks of the weak (consumers) can impose damage on the interests of the powerful (producers). John Fiske reports a study in Australia which showed that 80% of unemployed young people visited the mall at least once a week, window-shopping, with no intention to buy. These young people consumed the space and images without generating profits.

Third, shopping can be seen to have historically been empowering for women. For women, compared to their historical place in the kitchen, now their place is in the mall. Shopping has enabled women to cross the boundary between the public and the private. Historically, the department store was the first public space, other than the church, that could legitimately be visited by respectable women on their own. Furthermore, Fiske argues that shopping, as a practice in which women excel more than men, is used to assert the feminine against the patriarchy. Referring to a bumper sticker stating “when the going gets tough, the tough go shopping,” and television programs such as *The Price is Right in the USA*, Fiske argues that “Shopping entails achievement against a powerful oppositional force (that of capital) and the successful shopper is properly “tough.” Shopping is seen as an oppositional, competitive act and as such as a source of achievement, self-esteem, and power.”<sup>27</sup>

In addition, compared to the domain of production where people have no control or choice, consumption offers a domain where the pleasurable

control and choice can be exercised. Shopping “offers a sense of freedom, however irrational, from the work involved in working and loving under patriarchy: working and loving are conflated as chores from which shopping offers an escape.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Gender and Shopping**

Shopping in Western societies is generally viewed to be a gendered activity, linked to the female role. Data on shopping indicate that women constitute a majority of shoppers, spend more time shopping than men, and visit more stores and buy more. The media has richly portrayed the shopping pursuits of famous people such as Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Princess Diana, and Imelda Marcos, all of whom are female. “Shopping” conjures up images of housewives shopping for groceries, females shopping for clothes and knick-knacks. Discourses emphasize the female as the shopper who enjoys shopping and males as disliking or even hating shopping.

However, the widespread view that women shop more than men is wrong when we consider the money men spend on buying cars, boats, and computers, or time they spend in bookstores, music stores, and hardware stores, as well as their infatuation with gadgets and high-tech toys. A better way to look at the marked gender difference in shopping is to examine what males and females associate shopping with. Campbell<sup>29</sup> argues that men and women apply different logics when they consider the value of shopping: men adapt the shopping activity to a work frame, women to a leisure frame. Men, due to their socialization and/or traditionally greater involvement in the world of paid work, are predisposed to see shopping as a work-related activity, and they do not expect it to be recreational. They apply the work-related criteria of rationality and efficiency to shopping. In contrast, women apply a leisure frame, regarding it essentially as recreation, distinguishing it from work, whether paid or domestic. Hence they are inclined to define it as enjoyable and reject the application of merely utilitarian criteria to shopping.

Men and women have different domains of shopping they like to engage in. Generally, women find clothes and shoes shopping more enjoyable than food shopping, and men find technology shopping appealing, even if they may not call it enjoyable. While many males say that they dislike shopping and appear to love to hate shopping, they do love shopping for gadgets, CDs, cars, and electronic hi-tech goods, even if their discourse emphasizes the rationality and efficiency of their shopping rather than the pleasure of it.

### **Sacred and Profane Shopping**

Though compulsive and hedonistic shopping tends to be seen as profane, shopping for gifts and for family/household provisioning are seen as more sacred. But given the reciprocity in gift-giving, sacred gift shopping nevertheless escalates profane consumption.

Various types of shopping occasions, spaces, and objects may be perceived to sacralize shopping. For example, the occasion of a wedding sanctifies shopping for oneself, for gifts, and for dowries; similarly, Mother's Day and Father's Day raise the status of shopping. Museum shops and art galleries are spaces where high art, cultural and/or connoisseurial interest sanctify shopping. Certain objects themselves may objectify the sacred: religious or spiritual artifacts sold in the stalls around the Vatican, temple shops around the Buddhist temples in China, or in numerous gift shops in many cities in the world. "Authentic" arts, handicrafts, and talismans of "traditional" or tribal cultures are similarly revered. So are objects associated with aesthetics, high art, cultural cultivation, and connoisseurship.

On the other hand, practices such as camp reverse the sign of such objects, profaning the sacred by the purchase of, perhaps, Jesus Christ action figures or glow-in-the dark Marys for the fun of it.

### **Wrapping up the Shopping Trip**

Shopping permeates daily life as identity is constructed and relationships formed and maintained in and by consumption. Shopping is pervasive because it is at the service of pleasure, sociality, empowerment, learning, cultivation, modernity, and even spirituality. When we shop, what we are searching for is not the goods that we shop for but rather the social relations, the personal and social transformation, personal and social identity, and the alterity that the goods come to objectify.

The spectacle of the mall, or more broadly, the carnivalesque capitalist marketplace sets the stage for the delights and discontents of shopping. We will shop until we drop if having has more allure than being. Can we enchant our nonmaterial world so that the enchantment available is not only in shopping? Can we rely on the human desire and potential for sociality to make shopping more constructive rather than destructive for ourselves and others?

## Notes

- 1 Stephen Brown, "Consumption Behavior in the Sex 'N' Shopping Novels of Judith Krantz: A Post-Structuralist Perspective," *Advances in Consumer Research* 23 (1996): 43-48.
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- 3 Colin Campbell, "Shopaholics, Spendaholics, and the Question of Gender," *I Shop Therefore I am: Compulsive Buying and the Search for Self*, ed. April Lane Benson (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc. 2000), 57-75.
- 4 See Daniel Miller, *A Theory of Shopping* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998).
- 5 See Juliet Schor, *Do Americans Shop Too Much?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).
- 6 <http://www.simpleliving.org>
- 7 quoted in Trace Ramsey, 2003, *Consumption: Buried in the American Dream*, [http://www.eosdev.com/Illustrations\\_Quotes/Trace/consumption.htm](http://www.eosdev.com/Illustrations_Quotes/Trace/consumption.htm)
- 8 Hirschman and Holbrook, *op.cit.*, p. 92.
- 9 See Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (London: Blackwell, 1987).
- 10 Frederick W. Langrehr, "Retail Shopping Mall Semiotics and Hedonic Consumption," *Advances in Consumer Research* 18 (1991): 428-433.
- 11 Fabian F. Csaba and Sören Askegaard, "Malls and the Orchestration of the Shopping Experience in a Historical Perspective," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 26 (1999): 34-40.
- 12 *ibid.*
- 13 Russell Belk, Güliz Ger, and Sören Askegaard, "The Fire of Desire: A Multi-sited Inquiry into Consumer Passion," forthcoming in *Journal of Consumer Research* (Dec. 2003).
- 14 See Jean Baudrillard, *Les stratégies fatales* (Paris: Grasset, 1983).
- 15 Daniel Miller, 1998, *op. cit.* Also see Miller, *The Dialectics of Shopping* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).
- 16 Brenda Gainer and Eileen Fischer, "To Buy or Not To Buy? That Is Not the Question: Female Ritual in Home Shopping Parties," *Advances in Consumer Research* 18 (1991): 597-602.
- 17 Daniel Miller, 1998, *op cit.*
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22 Ronald J. Faber and Thomas C. O'Guinn, "A Clinical Screener for Compulsive Buying," *Journal of Consumer Research* 19 (1992): 459-469.

23 Susan Jacoby, "Compulsive Shopping," *Glamour* April 1986: 318-319, 348-351.

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25 John Fiske, "Shopping for Pleasure: Malls, Power, and Resistance," 1989, *The Consumer Society Reader*, ed. Juliet B. Schor and Douglas B. Holt (New York: The New Press, 2000), 306-328.

26 *ibid.*, p. 306.

27 *ibid.*, p 310.

28 *ibid.*, p. 328.

29 Campbell, *op. cit.*