

## Consumerism and Identity: Some Psychoanalytic Considerations

*“To what extent buying is effective in enlarging or building identities cannot be known for sure. However, it seems to me that the identity-building quality of consuming is becoming more and more dominant.”* (Zepf, 2010, p.151)

### Introduction

This essay applies various psychoanalytic concepts to the analysis of consumption, the practical everyday routine buying activity of individual consumers. It is a response to German psychoanalyst Siegfried Zepf's journal article, *Consumerism and Identity: Some Psychoanalytic Considerations*, published in the International Forum of Psychoanalysis in 2010. The essay begins with an overview of consumer society, before drilling down into Classical Freudian and Postmodern Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts and theories to look at some of the unconscious, erotic, fundamental life processes that drive, create and maintain subjective identity and consumerism.

### Consumer Society

We live in a postmodern world of media bombardment, in which consumerism is a powerful symbol of capitalist society. (Andersen, 2000; Deleuze & Guattari, 1984; Gidden, 1991) Highly visible, its advertising imagery permeates the public and private spaces it occupies. Children and adolescents receive increasing attention from advertisers who wish to tap into purchase power and potential adult consumers. (Dittmar, 1992; Douglas & Isherwood 1996; Miles, 1998) Indeed, many psychoanalysts, social and cultural critics argue that contemporary society is first and foremost a consumer culture, where life operates in the imaginary and symbolic sphere of consumption.

Consumption, the buying of consumer products, has become central to the meaningful practice of our everyday life. People make their consumption choices based not only on a product's utility value, but from the personal symbolic meanings they invest in objects. Drawing on the work of Tuan 1980, Belk 2000, Benson 2000, Dittmar 2008 and other social and cultural critics, Zepf presents his idea that consumer identity, meaning and value, is formed by

what an individual has and possesses. He explores the role that buying plays in meaning making and identity formation, arguing that it is leading to an increasingly imaginary, fantasmatic and egoistic consumer society based around the ownership and possession of objects.

### Emptiness is Addictive

A contemporary postmodern psychoanalytic view is that the increase in consumerism coincides with the individual's attention to and concern with their identity, as they form their aspirations, choose their ideal objects and construct themselves. Zepf (2010) for example, argues that consumption is used to define both individual and social identities, through pursuing imaginary ideal consumer objects. But these objects never satisfy the postmodern anxiety ridden, empty and greedy subject and more products must be purchased to fill the void of the decentred subject. The postmodern subject is conceived as an empty 'no self' filled with nothingness. (Sarte, 1998; Lacan, 1998; Gergen, 1991) The subject not only continuously moves towards an object to satisfy its unmet needs, it does so precisely because it lacks an object that could satisfy it and therefore the postmodern subject is conceived of as a 'movement' which is pursued endlessly, simply for the enjoyment of pursuing it. (Nobus, 1998) In contrast to the Lacanian subject, the Freudian 'ego' must be formed and developed through looking for meaning in the everyday objects, routines and rituals of life. (Miller, 1987) This individuation quest for meaningful objects – such as a self – is said to be fundamental to human existence. (Campbell, 1987; McCracken, 1988; Slater, 1997)

### The Ego Project

The products that we buy, the daily routine activities that we do and the philosophies or beliefs that we pursue, tell the world stories about who we are and with whom we identify. (Elliott, 1997; Gabriel & Lang, 1995) This means that we not only consume products to satisfy our own biological instinctual needs, but to carry out an 'ego project' of identity formation. (Belk, 1985; Zepf, 2010) That is, we strive to create an identity through symbolic consumption, which means that individual identity is becoming increasingly inseparable from consumerism. (Gergen, 1991; White & Hellerich, 1998) For example, Gergen (1991) argues that in contemporary consumer society, people crave for a sense of meaningfulness in their pursuit of

‘being’. That is, consumers symbolically acquire meaning from everyday consumption. While Slater (1997) asserts that, “*consumption is a meaningful activity.*” (p.131)

### Love Making in the Marketplace

All voluntary consumption seems to carry, either consciously or unconsciously, symbolic meanings. (Dittmar, 1992; Douglas & Isherwood, 1996) By this I mean that if a consumer has a choice, she will consume the things that hold particular meaning for her personally. For example, buying organic vegetables may mean, ‘I care about the environment’, or buying tickets for a classical concert may mean, ‘I am a cultured person’, or buying an unbranded detergent may mean, ‘I am a clever consumer’. Much literature suggests that we are what we have, since our material possessions are ‘viewed’ as a major part of our extended selves. (Belk, 1988; Dittmar, 1992) This is because material objects embody an unconscious system of meanings, through which we express ourselves and communicate with others. (Lacan, 1998) This is the central meaning of Jacques Lacan's statement that the unconscious is structured like a language. Since all consumer ‘goods’ i.e. ideal objects, hold some kind of expressive meaning, we choose and incorporate into our life and identity those meanings that we aspire to, while struggling to resist those we find undesirable. This means that identity is continuously formed and reformed not only through consuming, but also by deliberately avoiding and rejecting particular objects, in order to create the person we want to be.

### Psychoanalytic Theories of Identity

In his research for his *Consumerism and Identity* (2010) paper, Zepf considered classical (Freud, 1923; Erikson, 1968; Fromm, 1976) and contemporary (Minolli, 2004; Goldberg, 1999) psychoanalytic theories of identity and chose to use the definition given by the father of identity theory Erik Erikson. Neo-Freudian Developmental psychoanalyst Erick Erikson is known for his theory of identity formation. Erikson studied research on identity by authorities in psychoanalysis (S.Freud, 1914, 1923), ego psychology (A.Freud, 1936) and positive social psychology (Jahoda, 1958), but developed his own psychosocial theory of identity formation and socialisation in his essay *The Problem of Ego Identity*,

*“The conscious feeling of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the immediate perception of one’s selfsameness and continuity in time; and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one’s sameness and continuity.”* (Erikson, 1980, p. 22)

In keeping with the Structural post 1923 Freudian view of ego consciousness, Erikson saw identity, sexual and social development as intimately tied together and marked by conflict, for which successful resolution resolved around an important person or object. (Freud, 1913, 1923) For Erikson, the oedipal phase of development, or oedipal drive, was a critical time for developing a sense of pleasure in identification with one’s love objects. The point about Erikson’s definition of identity in relation to consumerism, is the importance of the identification with, choice of, and attachment to, a specific person or object, in the process of identity formation. Identity must be developed through ‘object identification’ and is a product of an individual’s decision making adaptation to his/her environment. It is an ‘inter-subjective’ partly autonomous identity that can be undermined or ruptured, therefore must be defended and nurtured, worked for and fought over. Erikson’s definition of identity is ideally suited to the interests of a free market consumer society of choice, as Zepf and other psychoanalysts, social and cultural critics have identified.

#### Jacques Lacan’s Formation of the Subject

According to Lacan’s essay, *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience* (1949), an individual - the ‘I’ or ‘ego’ that Lacan refers to as the ‘subject’ - first emerged when an infant saw herself in the mirror, during the Mirror Stage of psychosexual development. (Lacan, 1949 [2006]) Lacan chose the ‘mirror’ as his primary symbol because he thought mirrors help children develop a sense of self identity. He does not mean a literal mirror but a ‘reflective’ surface, such as a mother’s face or a lover’s body. Similar to Winnicott’s ideas in his *Mirror Role of Mother and Family in Child Development* (1971) essay. For the postmodern Lacan however, being seen and reflected is not all positive, as seeing an image of oneself outside oneself establishes a discord between the complete ‘contained’ image within the m/other and the biological (real) and social (symbolic) realities that are not always coherent or ideal.

Lacan's concept of the 'ego-ideal' is an imaginary fantasy construction that dominates the subject's psyche. In order to constitute itself, the subject must 'separate' itself off from its object of desire, sometimes called the 'cause of desire'. (Lacan, 1998) At first, Lacan used the term 'objet a' to designate a significant person or primary object as an erotic object. But in his essay *The Formations of the Unconscious* (1957), he groups all the partial drives to 'part objects' (the breast, penis, the gaze and the voice, etc.) together under the term objet a as well. (Lacan, 1957-58) Later, after having shown that 'lack' is what makes the erotic object, he used the 'a' part of 'objet a' to designate both the object that symbolizes this lack and also the 'lack' itself. This lack - of the wholeness and omnipotence one feels when united and satisfied with their primary object - is at the centre of the postmodern Lacanian subject and it is what continuously and repetitively drives the subject to find its object.

*"The object is encountered and is structured along the path of a repetition - to find the object again, to repeat the object. Except it never is the same object which the subject encounters. In other words, he never ceases generating substitutive objects."* (Lacan, 1998, p.100)

For Lacan, a subject's innate biological constitution is subordinated to the structural function of 'lack' introduced by the signifier - the no of the father and the laws of language and society - the symbolic order. At the start of life, it is language and the laws of society that 'causes' separation from the narcissistic omnipotent merger with its primary objects – the mother, her gaze, her voice and other loved objects. Separation from the state of oneness with primary objects causes otherness and an empty space symbolised by objet petit a. The Lacanian subject comes into being as a lack-in-being and a want-to-be, that can only achieve a semblance of its true being through meaningful 'symbolic identification' in fantasy. (Lacan, 1998) In nosological and clinical terms, mental health in the Lacanian perspective is an illusory ideal of wholeness, which can never be attained because the subject is essentially split.

The introduction of the infant into the realm of language (the symbolic order), when an infant begins to speak and become socialized, implies the alienation or disappearance of its innate pure (biological) nature that is not free in the world, but 'subjected' to the needs, wants, demands, laws, rules and codes of its family, culture and society and has to develop an autonomous thinking ego and learn how to make conscious decisions about itself. What it will or won't say, think, believe, do, be, buy, sell, have, claim, reject, deny, avoid, challenge, love, hate and so on. Considered from the perspective that the individual/subject emerges from nothingness or emptiness (Sartre, 1998; Lacan, 1998) in order to achieve a sense of an existential self, it

becomes essential that it fill the emptiness with the meaningfulness it believes can symbolically constitute who or what he or she is. This pursuit of meaningful objects is vital to the formation and development of an ego identity and its continuation and communication, as symbolic meanings are used to bridge the gap between the subject and others in society.

### Psychoanalytic Market Research

Psychoanalytic concepts have been applied to both psychoanalytic market research and psychoanalytic analyses of consumerism, on both sides of the seller - buyer divide. Psychoanalytic concepts such as the primacy of unconscious erotic drives, libido, desire, the pleasure principle, primary process, auto-eroticism, primary and secondary narcissism, repression, regression, repetition, identification with a totem, projective identification, substitute, ego-ideal object of choice, etc., can be extremely useful for understanding unconscious identificatory psychical processes that drive people to buy consumer products. (Freud, 1914, 1917, 1923, etc.)

The so called founder of advertising and public relations and 'Father of Spin' Edward Bernays, was the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud's nephew. In his biography of Bernays, Larry Tye (1998) writes that Bernays was the first to apply psychoanalytic theories and techniques to advertising, public relations and market research. (Bernays, 1972, 1980, 2004) Tye writes that with his understanding of psychoanalysis' emphasis on unconscious erotic drives, Bernays realized that in order to sell products, the advertising industry had to limit its reliance on rational consciousness and logic and utilise emotion and desire. Cultural and social critic Ewen (1996) and others (Packard, 1957; Curtis, 2002; Turner, 2012), write that following Edward Bernays, advertising executive and market researcher Ernest Dichter honed psychoanalytic methods to exploit consumer anxieties, tap hidden desires and urges and offered consumers moral permission to embrace sex and consumption. (Dichter 1940, 1957, 1960, 1979)

Desire is the powerful emotional motivating force behind consumers' everyday experiences of longing for and fantasizing about particular consumer objects. Yet it is both discomforting and pleasurable, involving inaccessibility and rejection and a quest for that coveted ideal object. Driving the pursuit of the quest for ideal objects is desire, seduction, longing for love, fear of being without love and tensions between seduction and morality. Freud wrote about this ideal object of choice in 1905, 1913, 1914, 1915, this quotation is from his 1912 essay,

*“Psychoanalysis has shown us that when the original libidinal object of a wishful impulse has been lost as a result of repression, it is frequently represented by an endless series of substitutive objects none of which, however, brings full satisfaction. This may explain the inconstancy in object-choice, the ‘craving for stimulation’ which is so often a feature of the love of adults.”* (Freud, 1912, p.189)

## Objects of Consumption

Faced with the power of advertising commercials and shopping in consumer society, social scientists and researchers from various fields turned to psychoanalysis to understand consumerism. (Miller, 1987, 1988; Nava, 1991) The first point to make is that ‘objects’ in psychoanalysis are not necessarily material things. An object could be animate or inanimate, human or non-human, a person, part of a person, or an item of material culture. Freud originally used the term ‘object’ to refer to anything that a person used in order to satisfy their life drives. (Freud, 1905) In this sense, objects are ‘targets’ towards which people direct their desire for instinctual satiation.

The Object Relations school of psychoanalysis moved away from the materialistic approach of Freud’s early drive/libidinal theory, to an emphasis on the use of objects in establishing relationships. (Winnicott, 1968) Objects for emotional sustenance, objects that meet psychological and development needs, objects that bridge the inner and outer worlds and the personal and cultural spheres. From an Object Relations perspective, people use objects in their environment to develop, manage and mediate their sense of self and to relate to others and the external environment (Gomez, 1997; Stavrakakis, 2006). However, similar to classical Freudian psychoanalytic theory, the emphasis remains the ‘fixing’ of attention and psychosexual energy upon objects that can satisfy instinctual needs.

In *Totem and Taboo* (1913), *The Taboo of Virginity* (1918), *Instincts and their Vicissitudes* (1915) and other essays, Freud discusses the concept of the ‘object’ as in ideal object of choice. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), he uses the term ‘object’ as one of the four components of the ‘drive’ along with its source, aim and pressure. According to Freud, the first experiences of enjoyment and pleasure is feeding at the mother’s breast, but this means that satisfaction is derived from an action dependent upon an external object, so that separation and

loss will inescapably overshadow the first ideal attachment to the primary object of enjoyment i.e. the mother. This precious object that first supplies the subject with gratification, becomes the prototype for later object choices, but according to Lacan it is constituted as an 'object of loss'. In later life, the response of an adult, craving for satisfaction dependent upon the ideal of an early love object, is to 'turn in upon itself' in autoeroticism. Freud goes so far as to claim that, "*the finding of an object is in fact a refinding of it.*" (Freud, 1905, p.145)

Freud's essay *On Narcissism* (1914) is pivotal in the history of Freudian psychoanalysis, situated between his early works: *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895) and his later works, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1921), *The Ego and the Id* (1923). In *On Narcissism* (1914), Freud described the ego-ideal as the heir of infantile narcissism and as a psychic agency (an ego) capable of conscious self-observation. He had already defined narcissism in much the same way in the third chapter of *Totem and Taboo*. (Freud, 1913) The Freudian concept of the ego-ideal is an amalgam of idealized images, fantasies and wishes against which an individual measures their experience. It represents an attempt in later life to recreate the condition of primary narcissism, the period of infancy when a child imagined itself to be the centre of a loving admiring world. In this process, often referred to as the 'ego project', the ego-ideal can be built on cultural and professional achievements, on nostalgic recreations of a golden past, or utopian visions of a glorious future. (Lasch, 1980; Gabriel & Lang, 1995; Schwartz, 1990) The project involves a fashioning of an image in which an individual can admire their self and through which he/she can gain the respect of others. Through ego-ideal processes involving fantasies and narratives, an identity can be formed that can command the attention, respect and emotion of others.

What is crucial in relation to understanding consumerism psychoanalytically, is the relation between ego-libido: an autoerotic narcissistic loving of the self; and object-libido: erotic energy directed outwards and invested in someone or some object. In *On Narcissism* (1914), Freud introduced a major modification to his Libido Theory and Drive Theory, by making a distinction between two forms of 'libidinal cathexis' (energy investment): ego-libido (self-investment); and object-libido (other/object investment). Narcissism is transformed into 'object love' through psychical processes of splitting, transference, projection, identification, substitution and sublimation. In describing the 'relationship' between ego investment and object investment, Freud quoted from Goethe's *Westöstlicher Diwan*:

Does she expend her being on me,  
Myself grows to myself of cost;



Turns she away, then instantly  
I to my very self am lost.  
(Freud, 1917, p.418)

In other words, that elusive trait we find in our ideal objects of choice is something more than the characteristics of that object. The 'real' object of consumption that the consumer is attempting to attain, is not only their own ideal identity, but the endless pursuit of the 'objet petit a' projected into and perceived in advertisement's and commercial's ideal scenes and narratives. The longed for, coveted and unattainable significant other, the memory of our past idealized object of choice. According to Freud's theory of narcissism then, we have split off the object of our erotic energy and invested it in a consumer object. This investment is the mark of the 'I' qua subject.

One of the reasons that the buying of consumer products is so successful, is that the erotic idealization processes involved – attraction, aversion, liking, disliking, fantasizing, idealizing, choosing, rejecting, avoiding, denying, buying, consuming, enjoying, sensorial stimulation, etc. – are narcissistic activities that keep the drives moving and the ego fantasizing. Moving that is, if the subject's libido is free and uninhibited, which is not always the case as we see in neurosis characterised by extensive control over the drives. Yet the so called 'ego project' is itself an inter-subjective attempt at balancing flowing and inhibited dynamic and fixated psychosexual energies. An 'ego process' of negotiating of meaning, value and identity, as libido is directed inwards and outwards and invested in self and objects. Then, turning back onto the individual, to nourish the sense of identity and attain pleasure and satisfaction. In the process, participating in cultural and societal codes and practices that please others in society, because it gives them something to aspire to and identify with.

### Lacanian Drive Theory Applied to Consumerism

Jacques Lacan took his master Sigmund Freud's libido, drive and economic concepts and theories of the pleasure principle, auto-eroticism, narcissism, repression, regression, repetition, substitute, projective identification, ego-ideal object of choice, etc., and built on them to develop his own ideas. In his essay *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience* (1977). Lacan's concept of the 'ego-ideal' is probably the key

psychoanalytic concept for understanding consumer behaviour - the ideal of perfection that the ego – that is, the ‘I’ as in identity, the self – strives to emulate.

Gazing is an important concept in Lacan’s drive theory that has been applied to consumer society research. (Lasch, 1980; Gabriel & Lang 1995; Schwartz, 1990) This is the idea that a subject appears to achieve a sense of mastery by seeing herself in the m/other as ideally complete. She begins her entrance into the world of culture and language, establishing her own identity through a fantasy ideal image in the mirror that she aspires towards throughout life. In comparison to the biological reality of human nature, the ego-ideal image in the mirror is a stable and coherent version of the ego that does not correspond to the unruly instinctual drives of our actual material body and the conflicts within self and society. Lacan explains that the narcissistic ego-ideal complete fantasy image of oneself is maintained in the imaginary order and filled in by others who we want to emulate in our lives, e.g. role models, famous people, love objects, beautiful, intelligent, successful people, anyone that we set up as an ideal image for ourselves in a narcissistic relationship.

In Lacan’s seminar twenty *On Feminine Sexuality* (1972-73), he discusses ‘jouissance’, another important concept used to explain the excited state of desire that moves children and adults alike to want to buy, as it devotes specific attention to passionate desire for the sake of desire. In his theory of the formation of the subject, the lack at the centre of the subject represents anxiety and unfulfilled unconscious childhood wishes. The degree of this tension and arousal is equated with the drive. The magnitude of the need/tension/ arousal/desire determines the ‘urgency’ a consumer feels to purchase an object and reduce their tension. It also determines the amount of effort and money a consumer will spend to satisfy their desires. Inspired by Freud’s concept of ‘excess’ or ‘surplus’ energy, Lacan’s concept of surplus-jouissance refers to the excess of jouissance which has no use value but which persists for the mere sake of jouissance – organism and satisfaction.

### Cultural and Social Critiques of Consumer Society Applying Psychoanalytic Theory

According the social and cultural critics Mannoni (1971) and Gabriel & Lang (1995), in the past traditional societies supported individual ego-ideals with cultural ideals, powerful role models and overbearing symbols. Members of religious and political groups derived narcissistic

fulfilment through their membership of these organisations, which promised them omnipotence in one form or another. Gabriel and Lang (1995) have argued that,

*“Gone are the days of sweeping cultural ideals and moral certainties... gone are the powerful role models... gone are the stirring symbols... gone to are the great cultural accomplishments, artistic, scientific or military, in which we may take unalloyed pride.”*  
(Gabriel & Lang, 1995)

Lasch (1980) has powerfully argued that the world of objects appears to hold the promise of delivery to our ailing narcissism, that consumerism promises to fill the void in our lives. He provides pictures of the narcissistic personality which he sees as dominating American culture. The narcissus who spends endless amounts of time looking at himself in mirrors, but is lost in self admiration. As beautifully described by Goethe’s poem.

## Conclusion

Psychoanalytic analyses of consumerism deal with the fundamental desires and illusions of the human being for pleasure, fulfilment and a sense of containment and identity. Its concepts and theories about the construction and development of the individual ego bear upon issues of meaning, value, power, desire, people and object relations in consumer society. For these reasons, market researchers, social and cultural critics have borrowed heavily from psychoanalysis to develop strategies for advertising and marketing, and theories for critiques of identity, subjectivity and consumerism. In postmodern consumer society, identity encompasses the pursuit, negotiation, placement and exchange of images and ideals for people to make meaning in their lives. It is the sum total of the subject’s past experiences, unmet needs, ideal wish fulfilling fantasies, aspirations and hopes which drive the subject to find an object to fill the void and create a sense of completeness and identity. Consumerism here is a social, cultural and economic process of endlessly pursuing and choosing meaningful objects. It bridges economic/cultural institutions and discourses of the self and reflects both the opportunities and constraints of postmodern consumer society. As to the increasing dominance of the ego’s imaginary project of identity formation, I am disinclined to position myself either on the side of biological materialistic determinism, or the socio-cultural myth of hegemonic consumer society. The illusion of material objects seems to hold the promise of bridging the gap between the actual and the ideal. An object or gap, *“to walk (drive) around something.”* (Lacan, 1977, p.168)

## References

- Andersen, Robin. (2000) *Consumer Culture and TV Programming*. Critical Studies in Communication and in the Cultural Industries. Oxford University Press.
- Belk, Russell. (1985) *Images of Ourselves: The Good Life in Twentieth Century Advertising*. Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 11, pp.887-897.  
(1988) *Possessions and the Extended Self*. Journal of Consumer Research, Vol.15, pp.139.  
(2000) 'Are We What We Own?' in Benson, April., *I Shop Therefore I am: Compulsive Buying and the Search for Self*. Jason Aronson, New Jersey. pp.76-104.
- Benson, April. (2000) *I Shop Therefore I Am: Compulsive Buying and the Search for Self*. Jason Aronson, New Jersey.
- Bernays, Edward. (1972) *Propaganda 1891-1995*. Kennikat Press, London.  
(1980) *Public Relations*. University of Oklahoma  
(2004) *Crystallizing Public Opinion*. Whitefish, Kessinger.
- Campbell, Colin. (1987) *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Romantic Consumerism*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Curtis, Adam. (2002) *The Century of the Self*. Television documentary series produced by Lucy Kelsall and Stephen Lambert. BBC4.
- Deleuze, Gilles. & Guattari, Felix. (1984) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem & Helen Lane. The Athlone Press, London.
- Dichter, Ernest. (1940) *Psychoanalysis in Advertising*. March Issue. Time Magazine, New York.  
(1957) *Put the Libido Back into Advertising*. Motivations, Issue 2, pp.13-14.  
(1960) *The Strategy of Desire*. N.J. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick.  
(1979) *Getting Motivated: The Secret Behind Individuals Motivations by the Man Who Was Not Afraid to Ask Why*. Pergamon, New York.
- Dittmar, Helga. (1992) *The Social Psychology of Material Possessions: To Have Is To Be*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.  
(2008) *Consumer Culture, Identity and Well-Being: The Search for the Good Life and the Body Perfect*. European Monographs in Social Psychology. Psychology Press, East Sussex.
- Douglas, Mary. & Isherwood, Baron. (1996) *The World of Goods: Towards An Anthropology of Consumption*. Routledge, London.
- Elliott, Richard. (1997) *Existential Consumption and Irrational Desire*. European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 34, Issue 4, pp.285-296.
- Erikson, Erik. (1968) *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. Faber and Faber, London.  
(1980) 'The Problem of Ego Identity' in *Identity and the Life Cycle*. W.W. Norton & Company, London. p.22.
- Ewen, Stuart. (1996) *PR! A Social History of Spin*. Basic Books, New York.
- Firat, Fuat. & Venkatesh, Alladi. (1995) *Liberatory Post-Modernism and the Re-Enchantment of Consumption*. Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 22, Issue 3, pp.239-267.

Freud, Anna. (1936) *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*. Translated by Cecil Baines. The Institute of Psycho-Analysis and Karnac Books, London.

Freud, Sigmund. (1895) *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. Vol. 1. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Translated by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud and assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson. The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, London.

(1905) *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Vol. 7, S.E.

(1912) *On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love*. Vol.11, S.E., p.189.

(1913) *Totem and Taboo*. Vol. 13, S.E.

(1914) *On Narcissism: An Introduction*. Vol. 14, S.E.

(1915) *Instincts and their Vicissitudes*. Vol. 14, S.E.

(1917) *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Vol. 16, S.E., p.418.

(1918) *The Taboo of Virginity*. Vol. 11, S.E.

(1923) *The Ego and the Id*. Vol. 19, S.E.

Fromm, Erich. (1976) *To Have or to Be?* Continuum, London.

Gabriel, Yiannis. & Lang, Tim. (1995) 'The Consumer as Identity Seeker' Chapter 5 in *The Unmanageable Consumer: Contemporary Consumption and its Fragments*. Sage Publications, London.

Gergen, Kenneth. (1991) *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*. Basic Books, New York.

Giddens, Anthony. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Polity Press, Cambridge.

Goldberg, Carl. (1999) *The Patient Who Assumed His Analyst's Identity*. Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis, Vol. 27, p.177-89.

Gomez, Lavinia. (1997) *An Introduction to Object Relations*. Free Association Books. London.

Jahoda, Marie. (1958) *Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health*. Basic Books, New York.

Lasch, Christopher. (1980) *The Culture of Narcissism*. Abacus, London. p.95.

Lacan, Jacques. (2006) [1977] 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed I Psychoanalytic Experience', in *Écrits*. Translated by Bruce Fink in collaboration with Heloise Fink and Russell Grigg. W.W. Norton & Company, London.

(1998) *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Book XI: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Edited by Jacques Alain Miller. W.W. Norton & Company, London. p.100.

(1998) [1972-73] 'On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge' in Book XX: *Encore*. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Translated by Bruce Fink. W.W. Norton & Company, London.

(2002) [1957-58] *The Formations of the Unconscious*. Book V: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Translated by Cormac Gallagher.

- Mannoni, Octave. (1971) *Freud*. Vintage Books, New York.
- McCracken, Grant. (1988) *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Miles, Steven. (1998) *Consumerism - As a Way of Life*. Sage, London.
- Miller, Daniel. (1987) *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.  
(1998) *A Theory of Shopping*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Minolli, Michele. (2004) *Identity and Relational Psychoanalysis*. International Forum of Psychoanalysis, Vol.13, pp.237-245.
- Nava, Mica. (1991) *Consumerism Reconsidered: Buying and Power*. Cultural Studies, Vol. 5, Issue 2, pp.157-173.
- Nobus, Danny. (1998) *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. Rebus Press, London.
- Packard, Vance. (1957) 'Self Images for Everybody' in *The Hidden Persuaders: What Makes us Buy, Believe - and Even Vote – the Way we Do?* Ig Publishing, New York.
- Sarte, Jean-Paul. (1998) *Being and Nothingness: An Essay of Phenomenological Ontology*. Routledge, London.
- Slater, Don. (1997) *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Shwartz, Howard. (1990) *Narcissistic Process and Corporate Decay*. New York University Press.
- Stavrakakis, Yannis. (2006) *Objects of Consumption, Causes of Desire: Consumerism and Advertising in Societies of Commanded Enjoyment*. Gramma: Journal of Theory and Criticism.
- Tuan, Yi Fu. (1980) *The Significance of the Artifact*. Geographical Review, Vol. 70, pp.462-72.
- Turner, Christopher. (2012) *The Hidden Persuader: Ernest Dichter, the 'Freud of Madison Avenue'*. Cabinet Magazine, Issue 44, New York.
- Tye, Larry. (1998) *The Father of Spin: Edward Bernays and the Birth of Public Relations*. Owl Books, New York.
- White, Daniel. & Hellerich, Gert. (1998) *Labyrinths of the Mind: The Self in the Postmodern Age*. State University of New York Press, Albany.
- Winnicott, Donald. (1968) *The Family and Individual Development*. Tavistock, London.  
(1971) 'Mirror Role of Mother and Family in Child Development', Chapter 9 in *Playing and Reality*. Tavistock Publications, London.
- Zepf, Siegfried. (2010) *Consumerism and Identity: Some Psychoanalytical Considerations*. International Forum of Psychoanalysis, Vol. 19, pp.144-154.