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Alienation: Critique and Alternative Futures

Lauren Langman and Devorah Kalekin-Fishman

The burden of this chapter is to show how, despite a multiplicity of interpretations and a great number of conceptual critiques, *alienation theory* remains a valuable analytical tool in the social sciences. By looking at social reality in the twenty-first century with the theoretical apparatus derived from analyses of alienation, we commit ourselves at the outset to grasping the world as a site of conflict, oppression, and exploitation which contextualizes social life and is likely to foster alienation. More recently, however, many researchers are concluding that a dialectical analysis of social processes and social structures reveals that alienation can also give rise to moments of competition and even of co-operation. Alienation has been, is and will remain a central concept for sociologists insofar as it reveals how life within the fragmented communities of meaning of modern, technologically advanced, hierarchical societies inform the nature of deviant and criminal behavior, community and personal life. Alienation can be seen as a way the social thwarts the freedom and fulfillment of the personal. In this chapter we discuss how insight into the diverse workings of alienation shows its enduring value for sociological inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

Derived from the Latin word for 'other,' the concept of alienation has been applied to various domains of living in order to describe different types of conditions and situations. In Roman law the concept has been deployed to refer to the transfer of property and giving up all claims upon sale. In the Middle Ages, it was used by the early psychiatrists, the alienists, to mean the loss of normal mental competence. More recent meanings have included the surrender of personal privilege for the good of the collective, or the Hegelian notion of estrangement of the world from transcendental spirit (cf. Israel, 1971; Meszaròs, 1970; Smith, 2005). In the nineteenth century the term alienation was adapted to explaining the unsettling structural dysfunctions that were making radical changes in the world people knew. Social theorists were confronted with the upheavals

of social life that followed upon the development of capitalism. The on-going concentration of industry, the fragmentation of the labor process, and attendant intensive urbanization that atomized social relationships required new tools for investigating society. In attempting to explain the adversities of a rapidly expanding modernity, the fathers of sociology pinpointed different foci as the dynamic mechanisms of change.

Emphasizing the centrality of rationality, the primary value of modernity, Weber (1958/1946) saw that Enlightenment based rationality of capitalism had expanded to almost every realm of social and personal life. Capitalism, as a rationally organized economic system, depended on a rationalized administrative apparatus that entrapped people into 'iron cages.' The bureaucratic implementations of rules and regulations which were efficient in the workplace were debilitating in social life, and caused an imprisonment of the body and the mind. Following upon the positivist legacy of Comte, Durkheim (1951/1897) attempted to understand the shifting normative sands of modernity as driven by a disruption of standards for behavior. As traditional precepts waned, new rules emerged that were not however widely shared in a society with an advanced division of labor. In the varied experiences of daily life, people were faced with 'anomie,' uncertainty about what norms were applicable to novel situations, and about how norms were to govern action.

In contrast with the attempts to situate the effects of capitalism as limitations on action or on thinking about rules, Marx (1978/1844) argued that alienation was an inherent consequence of a capitalist society in which one class owned private property and another class, the workers sold their labor power as a commodity. Capitalism, as the latest expression of an economic system based on classes with competing interests, most clearly revealed how the wealth of the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, was based on the exploitation of the workers, the proletariat. But wage labor, necessarily fostered alienation that thwarted workers' humanity in every domain of their existence. In his analysis, alienation followed the estrangement of the worker from his/her tools on the one hand, and from the products of his/her labor, on the other. The capitalist mode of production, resold the labor the worker expended in the production of commodities, but that 'surplus value' went to the owners of capital, not the workers who produced it. The sale of labor as a commodity, that produced commodities, created a system that stood outside the worker and refluxed back upon her. Workers were rendered powerless, their communities lost coherence, and their selfhood was truncated. Work no longer provided workers with source of meaning and/or self expression. Moreover, people who had to earn their livelihood according to arrangements imposed by the capitalist system could not escape its pervasive effects. Notwithstanding the radical transformations of the current world by a globalized capitalist political economy, the Marxist critique remains a viable framework for revealing the nature of late capitalism and unpacking its manifold consequences.

Current theorization of alienation builds upon the shift in Marxian theory that recaptured the concerns with culture that began with the neo-Marxian analyses of Korsch (1923), Lukacs (1971/1920), and the Frankfurt School (see Jay, 1996; Kellner, 1989) in the first half of the twentieth century. Against the economistic reductionism of the Second International, these theorists defended the role of culture and subjectivity first articulated by Marx in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1978/1844), *The German Ideology* (1978/1846), and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1978/1852). In the twentieth century, the concept of alienation was central to the Frankfurt School's understanding of the rise of fascism, and somewhat later, to their analyses of the nature of consumerism. They synthesized Weber's discussions of Protestantism and rationality with Freud's notions of individual character and his understandings of group

psychology when they noted how alienation prompted 'an escape from freedom' especially among 'authoritarian character types' with attenuated social ties and difficulties in fathoming the deeper significance of their actions (Adorno *et al.*, 1950; Fromm, 1965). Following World War II, they explored insights into the effects of the 'culture industries,' the frameworks in which both high and popular art were, to their minds, mass produced for the sake of both profits and ideologies of deception that sustained 'one dimensional' consumer society. While concerns with alienation were rooted in the nature of wage labor in a class society, in more recent conceptualizations, thinking about alienation led to a migration of its locus from production to the nature of modern consumption and contemporary forms of self-expression. For example, Adorno (2000) explored the pervasiveness of alienation in the arts and in personality, and concluded that the alienation that was growing out of conflict was an indicator of the inevitable deterioration of humanity.

Ironically, Gramsci (1991), who spent ten years in fascist prisons until his death in 1937 at the age of 46, found ways to describe the dialectical possibility of overcoming alienation. In his view, capitalism was deeply entrenched in the twentieth century not only because the historic bloc (ruling classes) controlled the institutions of force and violence, e.g., the police, the courts, and the army, but also because it ruled indirectly by means of a hegemonic ideology that engineered 'willing consent.' By hegemony, Gramsci meant that:

> the entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, and morality which permeated society had the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations. ... To the extent that this prevailing consciousness is internalized by the population, it becomes part of what is generally called 'common sense' so that the philosophy, culture, and morality of the ruling elite comes to appear as the natural order of things (Boggs, 1976: 39).

Nevertheless, Gramsci did not believe that the hegemonic culture imposed by the traditional intellectuals allied to the historic bloc – the coalition of economic, political, and cultural elites – was all powerful. Hegemony was an on-going process located within a larger social reality ever subject to change, and therefore the nature of hegemony constantly needed to be revised. His analysis revealed that openings for contestation and challenge were especially likely at moments of crisis. While one such opening was seen in attempts to organize and unite the Southern Italian peasants and Northern workers, the Church subverted these efforts by demonizing communists and warning that those who joined unions would perish in hell. Moreover, as the appeal of religion waned, consumerism emerged as the dominant hegemonic justification. Nevertheless, Gramsci remained convinced that workers would be able to escape the impasse of alienation. As he put it, society at best sustains only a few 'formal' intellectuals, but the fact is that all people are intellectuals. Dialectically, he could show that the 'organic intellectuals' among workers would eventually be able to forge counter-hegemonic understandings and articulate a culture that would both reflect their true position and be able to envision alternatives.

In sum, successive re-conceptualizations of alienation have provided seminal perspectives on the failure to realize the emancipatory promise of the Enlightenment. As we will show, however, in the spirit of Gramsci, alienation has become a tool of analysis that offers not only a political critique but also images of alternative futures that could envision the overcoming of alienation. Thus while alienation was first theorized in terms of powerlessness, social fragmentation and the warping of selfhood, Marx would later extend his analysis of political alienation of the French peasants. Further, his analysis of Hegel and the German ideology as alienated consciousness moved the analysis to the cultural/ideological levels. Finally, his notion of commodity fetishism, as a reification, when a class relationship appeared as a thing, completed the move of alienation to the cultural realms – though it would need to await Lukacs for a comprehensive analysis of the

reification of consciousness. We would note that not only has alienation expanded from the factory floor to the culture, but so too do we now look at alienation more dialectically, that is today we also look at how even within contexts that might be considered alienating, there are ways people attempt to find agency, community and forms of subjectivity that overcome that alienation. Thus the very existence of wage labor presupposes its negation, creative labor, political alienation presupposes freedom and democracy, and cultural alienation promises transcendence and freedom, what Hegel claimed the 'joyous' consciousness.

Finally, we would note that the concept of alienation has important implications for many other basic sociological concepts such as social conflict, criminal and deviant behavior, and even religious behavior, such as the various ways many people turn to fundamentalism as a way to overcome alienation qua powerlessness, meaninglessness and/or social fragmentation.

In the community of sociologist-researchers, interest in the concept of alienation has flourished, waned, and flourished again. There was widespread interest in alienation in the 1950s and 1960s, with studies focusing on the workplace and its impact on selected aspects of social life. At that time, researchers operationalized alienation as a delimited quantitative index of attitudes (see Ludz, 1973; Seeman, 1991). Concerns with alienation declined as political activism among minorities, women, and anti-war crusaders in the late 1960s overcame alienation and fostered progressive political changes in the Americas and in Europe. Meanwhile, inspired by semiotics and critiques of language and signification, post-modern and post-structural critiques of de-centered selfhood, and the implosion of institutional boundaries signaled a shift from actually existing conditions to texts, representations, and simulations. Thus, many scholars embraced perspectives in which alienation was regarded as an essentialist concept located in now outmoded grand narratives.

Social critique centered on the anxious interests of consumer society. Post-modern and post-structural theories, concerned with representation and meanings decoupled from the political economy, viewed selfhood as a disconnected series of self presentations, while social life and interaction were described as little more than a pastiche of free-floating signifiers (Gergen, 1991; Ritzer, 1997; Rosenau, 1992; Turner, 1990). This vision of social relations as random and fragmented, left no room for conceiving of alienation.

ALIENATION IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

In the dominant sociological literature of the twenty-first century, however, alienation, interpreted as estrangement, dehumanization, stunting of relationships and, the hegemonic domination of consciousness, remains salient. The globalized production of McJobs (Ritzer, 2004) and the ever more relentless colonization of selfhood and desire (Hochschild, 1986) underscore the insight that alienation in the classical Marxist sense has not disappeared. The soaring accumulation of wealth by trans-national capitalist elites, whose intellectuals celebrate neo-liberalism, has been accompanied by the expansion of labor saving technologies of production as well as outsourcing work to developing countries, and has had adverse consequences for millions of people. Increasingly workers have to contend with the erosion of job security, the contraction of entitlement programs, and growing instability in the quality of life as standards of living decline.

Some of the responses to the adverse, destabilizing, and alienating effects of globalization range from fundamentalism and reactionary politics on the one hand, to extravagant machinations in popular culture. Exemplars of these contemporary forms of alienation can be found among racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic clusters of groups

and individuals (see Berlet and Lyons, 2000).[1] In popular culture, we note the rise of MTV, Music Television, a channel devoted to the youth market consisting primarily of music videos, songs with a variety of visuals from street scenes to dancers, and there may well be a chorus dancing in the streets. The basic content of MTV consists of unending spectacles of song, dance, and consumerism in which an artificial reality, or 'hyper-reality' is idealized. The bodies of the singers and dancers represent an intersection of individual genetics and extensive training such that very few viewers will ever sing, dance or look like the performers, yet the viewers, especially young women, will be encouraged to spend vast sums of money on clothes, adornments, cosmetics, and medications in illusory quests to achieve the looks, lifestyles, and perhaps the unbridled eroticism of their favorite idols. Spectacles of ever-gyrating bodies, qua commodified representations, are perpetually celebrating hedonistic sexuality, appearance, and the happiness supposedly attainable to all. The collage of the songs, dances, and celebrity images re-inscribe and valorize essentialist notions of gender which, as role models of 'ideal' masculinity and femininity, are both alienating and dysfunctional in the current world. Yet these images have multiple uses; they sell clothes, cars, jewelry, foods, medications, and beverages. The music evokes emotions of power and desires to live in an ideal, if imaginary world, where the good life is promised to all, but which, as is soon evident to youth who join the labor force, very few can attain these life styles. Other realms of popular culture, such as Goth, punk, heavy metal or 'ghetto rap' which critique the conformity and one-dimensional nature of an alienated and alienating society, create spaces for alternative, counter-cultural life styles. Their articulation of alienation and anger, however, as commodities produced by the culture industries, ultimately neutralizes the promise of political impact (see below).

In sum, we suggest three moments of contemporary capitalism that show why alienation remains a significant aspect of late modern social life.

1   *Wages for labor in routinized services include payment for demonstrations of emotion.* While manufacturing has declined in the developed world, jobs today are often automated, computerized, deskilled, and routinized. In interpersonal services, workers are exploited in new ways; they are required to do 'emotion work,' commodifying their feelings to ensure corporate profits (Hochschild, 1986). People employed in these types of jobs have to balance their admitted submission and their being palpably 'other' than the front demanded of them (Braverman, 1998; Goffman, 1958; Leidner, 1993; Ritzer, 2004).

2   *Changes in technology.* Advanced technologies of information and production have enabled global capital to produce a vast array of goods from cell phones to pharmaceuticals to highly sophisticated means of destruction. At the same time, technologies of surveillance and control foster new modes of domination, dehumanization, and, indeed, of alienation (Foucault, 1995; Gergen, 1991). In doctoral research on the functions of Internet purchasing and inventory control, Zalewsky and Rezba (2000), found that not only was on-line ordering and computer-tracked inventory control devoid of human contact and brutalizing, but the electronic Panopticon enabled greater surveillance and control by management. It is important to remember, however, that technologies can also enable new kinds of freedom and fulfillment.

3   *Culture and identity.* While Mead (1934) saw the self as an outcome of negotiation that begins in early childhood, Erikson's (1950) elaboration of Freudian theory which pinpointed the crystallization of one's identity as a developmental achievement of the late teens, was already outdated in his lifetime, something he appreciated. Instead of finding themselves capable of defining talents, obligations, aspirations, many young people were seen to take out a 'moratorium,' so to speak, putting off the definition of self until the beginning of their fourth decade (Erikson, 1980; Keniston, 1965). Half a century later, the very image of an integrated Eriksonian selfhood is unsustainable, just as the Meadian image of 'I's and 'me's calmly acting in tandem and interacting with role partners has given way to a vision of interaction as a hectic battleground where highly calculated self presentations

compete with each other. Prodded by a kaleido-scope of possibilities, on the one hand, and sti-fled by instant commodified representations, on the other, the individual's search for selfhood is likely to come up against an unruly collection of fragments that cannot, in essence, be configured into a coherent, stable respectable self. Deliberate escapes from the confusion lead many of the alienated to take refuge in collective cer-tainties such as religious fundamentalisms and extreme nationalisms. These ideologies foster rigid identities as adaptations to the rapidly changing world of today. Yet such fundamentally alienated identities (racist and xenophobic with patriarchal and/or homophobic attitudes and mobilizations) are ill-equipped to deal with late modernity (Berlet and Lyons, 2000). On the other hand, various youth cultures formulate pastiches of identity that are marketed as 'cool' (Rushkoff, 2001), or shape subcultures that create a carniva-lesque identity as bricolage (Langman, 2000, 2005a). Such subcultures may grant encapsu-lated realms for alternative identities, meanings, and communities, by enabling 'escape' from the social and withdrawal from the political. But in the end the presumed alternatives serve to reproduce the alienating conditions that fostered them.

Given the dilemmas evident in contempo-rary life, it is understandable why there is renewed interest in Marx's dialectical approach, including its dialectical methodol-ogy for uncovering how capitalism fosters malaise and discontent and also *plants the seeds of its own demise*.

MARXIAN DIALECTICS AND ALIENATION

One of the fundamental differences between Marx and other theorists of modernity was his adaptation of the dialectical approach pioneered by Hegel. While Hegel's analysis was ideal and abstract, however, Marx insisted that dialectical analysis must con-sider first and foremost the actual corporeal human subject that is a constituent compo-nent of material reality. Marx appropriated Hegel's dialectical method and grounded it in material conditions, the actual lives of living people. As Marx (1978/1844: 72) put it (emphasis in the original):

> The whole history of the alienation process and the whole process of the retraction of alienation is therefore nothing but the history of the production of abstract (i.e., absolute) thought – of logical, speculative thought. The estrangement, which therefore forms the real interest of the transcen-dence of this alienation, is the opposition of in itself and for itself, of consciousness and selfcon-sciousness, of object and subject – that is to say, it is the opposition between abstract thinking and sensuous reality or real sensuousness within thought itself.

Insofar as thought was the subject in Hegel's presentation of objectivity as the externalization of the idea, thinking objecti-fies and alienates itself (*Entäusserung*), and objectifies the self into an object. But con-sciousness, as externalized, doubles back on itself, and transcends itself. Imminent in thought is the potential of the idea to negate itself, that is, to negate the negations.[2]

Marx's critique of Hegel was based on the separation of consciousness from the actual human subject that is immanent within mate-rial conditions. Overlooking material reality, Hegel presented the *subject* of the dialectic as disembodied self-consciousness, with the result that even when Hegel did deal with material conditions (civil society, the state, ethical life, etc.), he reproduced the very dualism that he had earlier critiqued in Kant. Having concluded that the idealistic aspect of the Hegelian dialectic was itself an expression of alienated consciousness, Marx established his own point of departure.

> In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say ... [w]e set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their cor-responding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have

no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material inter-course, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life (Marx and Engels, 1978/1846: 154–5).

More specifically, as noted, under conditions of wage labor, where labor power is sold as a commodity, the product of that labor was a commodity that was owned by the capitalist while the whole of commodity production now stood outside the worker. His/her labor created that 'externalized system that now refluxed back upon him/her as an alien force, as an outside power' (Marx, 1978/1844: 72). Yet Hegel valorized Reason, for he contended that if and when people understood the nature of domination as a historical moment, they could transcend it. Thus within the context of alienated labor, there was a possibility of transcendence which would enable the attainment of de-alienated labor. Dunayevskaya (1965: 51) put it very clearly:

It is here – in the second stage of Marx's relation to the Hegelian dialectic – that Marx fully transcended Hegel. The split in the philosophic category of the Absolute into two, like the split of the economic category of labor into labor as activity and labor-power as commodity, forged new weapons of comprehension. It enabled Marx to make a leap in thought to correspond to the new, the creative activity of the workers in establishing a society on totally new foundations which would, once and for all, abolish the division between mental and manual labor and unfold the full potentialities of man – a truly new human dimension.

Thus the fundamental difference between Marx's notion of alienation from either rationalization and entrapment as for Weber, or anomie for Durkheim, was that for Marx, social life had a material foundation and alienation, as a cultural moment, was rooted in wage labor, and therefore rested on contradictions of class interest. For Marx, the domination of private property, inherent in capitalism, held within itself the possibility of overcoming its unique and tragic dysfunction, alienation. His dialectical approach made it possible to establish a society where all could find the full realization of their creative possibilities within a meaningful and supportive community. This required the negation of negation and the subsequent move from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom.

But further, for Marx, the material and cultural (ideological) were not separate realms, as bourgeois thought would make it seem (see Lukacs, 1971/ 1920). Bourgeois thought, much like the fetish of commodities, was reified and its ideologies were imbued with contradictions revealed by critique, the *Ideologiekritik* of the Frankfurt School. Their critical analyses of the prevailing concepts of 'common sense' demonstrated that the ideological conceptualization of 'freedom' sustained the freedom of the market at the expense of alienated individuals, while the valorization of 'equality' masked the inequality of a class society. Yet the freedom and equality promised by capital, thwarted by the alienation it generated yet immanent within its ideology, would follow the overcoming of alienation. This insight, examining the migration of alienation from the specifics of labor power commodified to diverse dimensions of the cultural realm has been one of the major developments in alienation research. Indeed, on the one hand, studies show how alienation can be discerned in unexpected domains, such as science, culture, leisure, and the realm of what we think of as private life. On the other hand, researchers are uncovering the implied dialectic to show how the very pervasiveness of alienation provides opportunities for evading or even overcoming it.[3]

ALIENATION AS THE INEVITABLE HEGEMONIC DOMINATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS?

There is still room for clarifying Lukacs' question of how consciousness was dominated by the reified categories of bourgeois thinking that served capitalist interests. Among current studies of alienation, some researchers who present theorizations of various social

domains voice hope for change but cannot clearly confirm that change is possible. They show that domination is integrated into the modes of operation of political, economic, social, and cultural apparatuses – including the sciences and the realm of high, as well as mass culture. One major consequence of various institutional arrangements is the mystification of the way they impact consciousness, especially of language, perception, and understanding to mystify their operations and foster 'willing assent' to structures and processes that foster alienation.

Harry Dahms (2002), for example, argues that contemporary theorists tend to ignore Marx's insight into the totality of alienation's influence. Thus, they are likely to disregard the fact that the very tools they employ in studying how alienation characterizes modern society may be determined by the alienation they are supposed to illuminate. Calling for an invigorated, interdisciplinary, critical theory of society, Dahms explains that in his view, it is highly likely that what is defined as the work of social scientists imposes at once both alienation and an illusion that the pitfalls of alienation can be evaded. Striving to uncover the inner meanings of social phenomena, sociologists themselves, in his view, embracing empiricism, as the logic of 'rationality,' often become victims of an illusion of objectivity; indeed reification based on the choices of such methods is almost inevitable under the conditions of late modernity. Much as Lukacs showed how using the very categories of bourgeois thought thwarted the proletariat from seeing their own 'standpoint,' the embrace of various 'rationalist' empirical research strategies to study alienation fosters the very alienation that would be studied. Such research, by 'disavowing' a normative stance, cannot inform the transcendence of alienation.

Similar concerns underlie Matthew David's (2005) discussion of how contemporary scientific projects contribute to alienation. Reviewing recent developments in technologies of cloning, genetics, and computing,

David concludes that these fields serve to valorize essentialist understandings of humans as machines, albeit complex, multifunctional machines. Based on an implicit determinism, they lead to reductionist scientific conceptions that normalize alienation in mechanistic and fragmented accounts of humanity. Contemporary theoretical approaches to these developments at the frontiers of natural science actually contribute to the spread of alienation, the locus of which is the colonization of the life-world. The body is subjected to systematically repressive aspects of rationality, and instrumental reason is implemented to distort distinctively human communicative interaction. People are conceived of as disembodied, insensitive to free and open communication, and impervious to either personal or social creativity.

Building on the neo-Marxian *Ideologiekritik* of the Frankfurt School with its reliance on Freudian theory, David N. Smith (1996) explains the compulsivity of the 'authoritarian character' that disposed the German working class to support Hitler rather than socialist or communist parties. From their studies of authority within the family, the psyche, the political economy, and the interiorization of ideologies that shape how people think, Horkheimer and Adorno (1976), Adorno *et al.* (1950), and Fromm (1965) concluded that certain kinds of character structures, alienated from either power or communities, were likely to gravitate to conservative, if not reactionary, political parties when faced with social crises. Extending their theorization, Smith finds that the constructs of *projection*, *aggression*, and the *personalization* of abstract social forces explain the world of alienated labor, as well as how and why the alienated classes, when made fearful or anxious by larger social crises and contradictions, become enthralled with the appeals of charismatic leaders. Elaborating on what he calls 'authority fetishism,' Smith claims that deference to a person in authority does not stem, as is usually supposed, from an admiration of his/her

personal qualities. Rather, adulation of the authority figure surfaces because he/she is a personification, a representation of larger economic forces. Further, deference to different variants of authority is facilitated by the tendency of individuals to idealize and submit to those above them in order to gain their love and powerful protection. The masochism is 'balanced' by their denigration of, sadism toward, and demands for disproportionate obedience from those below them in status. Tending to displace aggression, projecting it onto 'enemies,' such people embrace a Manichaean outlook on the world, seeing it as consisting of good friends, 'people like us,' and vile enemies, 'those that are different.'

These understandings are not merely implicit. Right-wing movements among populations that have been alienated by neoliberal globalization often develop similar conspiracy theories that become part of a reactionary ideology (Berlet, 2005). Berlet describes a range of perspectives (moderate, reactionary, radical, and extreme right) that accord with variations in group memberships, tactics, and agendas. Embedded narratives describing conspiracies and openly embracing scapegoating and demonization are designed to show the alienated how history has led to the oppression that members of such groups are currently experiencing. Elements of this kind are evident in some fundamentalist versions of Islam that have developed in the last two decades – especially those that might be considered forms of clerical fascism in which only the restoration of the caliphate, and tradition theologies, can purge Islamic societies of the evil influences of the Western world. Facing economic stagnation, repressive governments, cultural assaults, and powerlessness in face of the Israeli military, the strategies and appeals of such Islamisms are based on conspiracy narratives. The tragedy, of course, is that they have brought hardship, misery, and poverty to Muslims who accept their interpretation. Berlet warns that the plight of the alienated, the marginalized, and the downtrodden must

be taken into consideration just as efforts are made to understand the rhetoric by means of which masses are recruited by the political right. Further, the nature of alienation today can be seen in various conspiracy theories of the left as well: consider the many 'explanations' of 9/11 as the work of Mossad or the CIA. Similarly, the operations of global capital are often explained by some leftists as based on conspiracies of elites such as the Bilderberg, an elite, but somewhat secretive group that 'controls' global capitalism. (The paranoid right considers Bilderberg a Zionist cabal.)

Political rhetoric is not the only tool for expressing alienation and furthering it. Alienation feeds into and is fostered by various forms of popular and popularized culture. Consider for example the varied expression of transgression evident in popular culture and the uses of human suffering on television. Weinstein (2000), looking at the tradition of 'heavy metal,' has argued that its seemingly 'anti-establishment' head-banging culture which celebrates masculinity is indeed a response to the political-economic alienation of globalization; many men feel that they are powerless and that their lives are meaningless in the face of these larger forces. The concerts and music provide transgressive erotic and/or aggressive action, expressions of rage and anger at the submerged political economic arrangements, structural constraints, and rationalized culture, but that anger is located within the concert where it is contained and controlled – and neutralized.

Another means for turning alienation into profit is the 'trash-talking' genre of television shows, with their claim to bestowing distinctiveness on participants. Focusing on humiliating and degrading telecasts where 'freaks speak out' (Gamson, 1998), Prosono (2005) shows that contemporary capitalism has the capacity to turn the suffering of human beings into wares for entertainment. For Grindstaff (2002), the goal of the program is to capture the moment of intense emotion, typically the anger, shame, or humiliation that constitutes the 'money shot,' a term originally used in

the production of porn in which the 'action' which most people want to see is most blatantly evident. While such programs seemingly provide people with opportunities to be media stars, if only temporarily, the 'guests' can only achieve 'stardom' by publicly disclosing their private lives, their foibles, failures, transgressions, and/or weaknesses, by spelling out their tribulations to a two-headed voyeuristic audience. The audience inside the studio is eager to perform well by applauding, booing at, shouting, and deriding the guest 'performers;' while the home viewers are busily gaping. However unfortunate the life conditions of the studio audience and/or the viewers, their lives are fine when compared to those of the 'stars' on the shows. They are mothers angry at hooker/stripper daughters, wives angry at husbands' infidelities with mothers-in-law, or people who have sexual relations with animals. The resentments that might be expected to weaken or destroy the ruling hegemony are commodified: displayed as 'freaks,' and sold as goods to the very human beings who suffer most from the contradictions of capitalism. According to Prosono (2005), in junk TV, alienation suffers the final indignity of becoming the raw material of new commodities for exchange or for entertainment. As the Frankfurt School argued, and as Prosono demonstrates, popular culture is a commodity produced by the 'culture industries' for the market and in the process, produces vast profits. In the final analysis, popular culture is a moment of hegemony that sustains global capital.[4]

Many of these specific forms of alienation speak to a larger issue, the extent to which capitalist modernity is itself fundamentally alienated. There is no better place to follow up this possibility than in the ambiguities of community living. It is generally agreed that community is a form of life to be desired, but increasingly, it has been feared that communities can subvert freedom, independence, and even civil rights. The dialectic between the community as rigidly controlled, stifling and alienated, typically by Calvinist Churches, and the frontier where anything was permitted

reflects a long standing dialectic in American society in which the alienation of communities takes different forms in particular historical moments. (See below.)

In American sociology, a number of recent critiques demonstrate that the glorification of individualism has resulted in the fragmentation of the social and the demise of various kinds of group life. Bellah *et al.* (1985) laments the demise of genuine communities and the retreat to 'life style enclaves,' gated communities divorced from larger realities. Putnam (2000) has made a similar argument on the basis of evidence that various community groups from Shriners to bowling leagues are shrinking in size. But the antidote to individualism suggested by people like Bellah is often a communitarianism that suppresses the individual and denies certain minorities certain rights. For example certain communities might not grant recognition or rights to cohabitation or to gay marriage.

One possible result of this self-enclosure can be seen in the work of Smith-Lovin (1988), whose analysis of survey data shows that, compared to 20 years earlier, people have fewer confidantes. But Wellman *et al.* (2004) have suggested that this may account for the fact that today many people maintain relationships, often quite intimate relationships, through the Internet. While the term 'community' is often used to betoken cooperation as human salvation (Etzioni, 1993; Toennies, 1957/1887), in practice there has been long-standing ambivalence about community in the United States which was born of – and in turn created – the subtle interplay of presumed cooperation, obvious conflict, and the relentless implementation of competition. The uncertainty of social life and an enigmatic social structure have characterized American communities since Puritan times. While the structure of many contemporary communities confirms the attenuation of social bonds under capitalism as both Marx and Durkheim maintained, the supposition of unchallenged communal social bonds in pre-capitalist eras, as idealized by Toennies, does not hold up under a detailed historical examination.

According to Salerno (2005; see also Sennett, 1994, 1998), alienation is a core problem of American communities, with roots going back to colonial times. He shows that American communities have been characterized by different permutations of alienation at different stages of their history. The Puritan 'cities on the hill' were notable emblems of cooperation *because* they were ruled by strict church authorities. Their word was law; their iron hand was feared, and they imposed cooperation on their alienated flocks pitilessly. Communities that sprouted in the West during the nineteenth century were from the first riddled with structural conflict. Devoutly religious people, living side by side with people whose only law was the rule of the gun, created communities that were chaotic – the milieu of competition often driven to the point of small-scale warfare. By a curious turn of the wheel, the 'gated communities' of the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries proclaim alienation from the surrounding threat of invasion by 'everybody.' At the same time, they provide an environment in which pseudo-identities can be staged and restaged in different ways – an environment where people's alienated selves can pretend to find authenticity.

Community, then, can be recognized as an attempt to find a compromise between the inherent psychological need for connectedness and solidarity, and the fear of losing one's individual identity. The solution of geographical proximity does no more than underline the inevitability of alienation – among the sub-groups that make up the community, between the community and the environment, as well as within the conflicting orientations to which individuals are prone.

Scheff (2006) has pointed out that it is impossible to grasp the nature of social relationships by thinking in terms of an alienation-solidarity polarity; he insists that in theorizing and researching alienation, we need to consider both 'inner and outer aspects of solidarity and alienation.' It is possible to be engulfed within one set of relationships and, because of that, isolated without, as in sects,

cults and academic schools of thought. Looking at the social interactions that constitute solidarity as Buberian I-thou rather than I-it relationships, he shows that Elias (1987) comes closest to theoretically integrating macro and micro levels of isolation, solidarity and engulfment. More specifically, following Goffman, he suggests that the interactional level of alienation comprises 'mutual awareness' as well as emotions, especially pride and shame. Scheff's analysis supplements and expands the Marxian notion of alienation and community and has quite provocative implications. Allied to Hegel's description of the struggle between bondsman and lord, and following Goffman, Scheff's (2006) analysis shows that inegalitarian relationships preclude genuine recognition. Where there are blatant inequalities, mutual recognition of the humanity of the Other is not possible, and people are denied recognition of their own humanity.[5] We would suggest that under conditions of capitalism, most people are shamed and humiliated when personal status is regarded as an indication of merit and ability (see Sennett and Cobb, 1972). We have already seen how humiliation has been turned into a commodity. But further, as Sennett (2003) has noted, even those who achieve a modicum of 'success' within the system are alienated both from larger communities and from the kinds of ideals of self they might prefer to the 'corroded' notions of character they experience.

Given the concern with the micro-social and interpersonal aspects of alienation, Kalekin-Fishman (2000, 2005) also notes that the pervasiveness of alienation is underlined by its migration into what would normally be thought of as the stronghold of authentic intimacy, the face-to-face encounter. Here, too, it can be shown that the alienation produced in macro-structures is reproduced in the micro-social realm of consciousness and in the practices of daily life. Because it facilitates reason without having to rely on individuals' ability to think rationally about how to begin to solve a multiplicity of problems (Habermas, 1998), communicative action has been held to further

the potential for reason embedded in different types of everyday interactions. Unconstrained by economic and political imperatives, talk, qua undistorted communication, should disclose how reason is exercised quasi-intuitively by the individual subject. Logic, like common sense, would seem to dictate that when people consciously cheat, con, or minimally misinform their fellows, they are contributing to the perpetuation of alienation while when they act in good faith; alienation is weakened. According to Kalekin-Fishman, however, this is not substantiated by close analysis. The achievement of intimacy is moderated by the relatively unconscious implementation of communication techniques that are alienated and alienating. The authority of face-to-face exchanges (whether perfunctory greetings, monitoring, giving orders, and even consultations) stems from the communicants' acceptance of the convention that talk is spontaneous and heartfelt. But even the talk that is interpreted subjectively by the participants as expressions of interest, concern, and care frames relationships so that principles of control and conformity, power and social exclusion preserve institutionalized alienation. Burrowing in taken-for-granted modes of behavior and even in the emotional tones of attempts to maintain intimate relationships, varied patterns of alienation intervene almost inexorably to undermine the achievement of authenticity.

SEEDS OF RESISTANCE – OVERCOMING ALIENATION IN ALTERNATIVE FUTURES?

In stark contrast to the consistently bleak presence of alienated and dominated consciousness implicated in the work cited above, some researchers find evidence of processes that undermine the effects of alienation. Dialectical analyses of technology, household work, education, and different aspects of identity lead to conclusions that

seem to promise at least partial release from alienation.

Following Marx's acknowledgment that beyond the capacity to subjugate people to capital, technology also has the potential to set them free, Douglas Kellner (1989, 1995, 2005) examines rationality in general and technology in particular in a dialectical critique of domination, dehumanization, and alienation. Although technology cannot be separated from the main trends of the society in which it is used, Best and Kellner present persuasive evidence that technology holds promise of de-alienation. They look forward to a *critical theory of technology* that will celebrate the potential of the computer. Such a society

> contextualizes technology within a social, political, and economic framework, and that assesses both the positive and negative implications of new technologies in terms of their potential to enhance or restrict freedom and democracy, to promote or undermine environmental sustainability, and to create or block the creation of a more humane and just society (Best and Kellner, 1991: 18–19).

Such a society would provide space for the free self-development that overcomes alienation. Kellner (1995) theorizes that overcoming alienation will enable new kinds of cultural experiences which serve as the context for the steadily changing nature of human identity and of social relations. In his view, moreover, theories have to be tailored to analyses of far-reaching changes and thus should be able to propose a responsive politics. We might further note that the Internet, while providing the means for the control, command, and co-ordination of global capital, has also enabled the growth of progressive mobilizations. Thus, for example, with a variety of alternative news sites that act as 'virtual public spheres,' and the explosion of blogging, many people have access to counter-hegemonic information and discourses. This has had far-reaching consequences for emancipatory activity, from empowering women in the Middle East (Moghadam, 2005) to the World Social Forum (Langman, 2005b).

In a similar vein, we might note the recent explosion of the high tech video games, especially the violent shooter games that now might even include sexuality such as Grand Theft Auto. The moralistic critique would condemn the games as sinful, inciting violence, wanton sexuality, and/or violent sexuality. Notwithstanding the explosion in the popularity of such games, violent crime among young men has plummeted, and most youth crimes are for drug use or sale. The classical critique might say that these games foster alienation by rendering players powerless in face of an outside force they themselves produced, and/or by fostering a withdrawal from the social and indifference to the community. But closer examination shows that despite all the imagined sins, horrors, and imputed alienation fostered by such games, in practice, they are most typically played in groups in which the players demonstrate and experience a great deal of agency – while playing together in cohesive groups. Finally, it has been shown that an unintended consequence of playing video games has been greater skill in geometry and greater hand – eye coordination, skills quite important for jobs like piloting airplanes.

Alternative futures may also be discovered in the mundane context of maintaining households. Considering the household as the proverbially alienating site, some feminist researchers who have built on (a phallocentric) Marxism have seen the household as exclusively the 'domestic mode of production,' the sphere of patriarchal subjugation, sexual exploitation of women, and alienating domestic labor. Touted as a 'private sphere,' households are described as being designed to provide the illusion of a realm of love, warmth, intimacy, and authenticity cut off from the domains of public institutions. It is often emphasized that they are in fact characterized by dehumanizing indifference to others and the calculating attitude of urban life, all of which serve the ends of capitalism. Households are frequently documented as a social location in advanced capitalism where women work under alienating, exploitative conditions (among others, see Coontz, 1997; Hochschild, 1986; Rubin, 1994). In a recent article, 'Loving Alienation: the Contradictions of Domestic Work,' Martha Gimenez (2005), long one of the strongest voices for a Marxist, materialist feminism, shows, however, that if alienation is understood dialectically, experiences quite antithetical to the way capitalism typically operates can also be found in the realm of work in the home. Gimenez contends that neither the radical Marxist views of oppression, nor the bourgeois illusions of ultimate fulfillment, capture the class-based variations and the dialectical nature of domestic labor. Upon close examination, domestic work can be seen as a set of socially necessary, contradictory activities. Some are unpleasant, but some are constructive with the potential to fuel the emergence of a critical consciousness, antithetical to the alienated world of capitalist economic and social relations. Gimenez points out two central factors that affect the impact of household experiences: varying conditions and opportunities for empowerment. For one thing, the marital or couple status, age, school/work conditions and/or location of the household unit in the class system affect how alienating or gratifying household tasks may be. For another, the domestic mode of production also offers realms of creativity, recognition, and empowerment, allowing for experiences of agency, self-realization, caring, reciprocity, and cooperation. These material bases are likely to spur the emergence of needs and values that counter the selfish, competitive, and dehumanizing world of capitalist work and social relations.

The complex dialectic of alienation and de-alienation that is played out in domestic arrangements can also be observed in schools. Gibson (2005) examines the intricacies of relations in communities in and near San Diego where there have been several incidents of high school shootings. In a richly detailed analysis, Gibson shows that alienated actions stem from attempts by schools to quantify learning so as to find reassurance of

progress in numerical measures. Converting knowledge into a commodity, schools commodify their students in turn. Well-known Skinnerian techniques of learning objectify students through testing and ranking, and reinforce their alienation by making it impossible for them to evade the realization that they are found wanting. Such alienation leads many adolescents to withdrawal and perhaps to an alcohol- or drug-based flight from reality. Some students, more alienated than others, more isolated than others, and angrier, find in violence the only way they can express agency. Ironically, it is only when the dehumanized take human lives that they gain recognition. Locating these seemingly isolated acts in the larger context of capitalism, Gibson shows how the school system exploits the marginalization of many youths whose academic and social statuses are closely intertwined.

By contrast, moreover, with the frequently expressed conclusion that exploitation and marginalization may be effected *despite* the efforts of egalitarian schooling, Gibson points out that where quantification takes over and test scores become the be all and end all, the efforts are minimal. In an area of California where well-to-do neighborhoods and impoverished neighborhoods send children to the same schools, it is relatively easy to show that the schools serve particular interests. The agenda of preserving distances between social classes is disguised as maintaining standards of achievement and as education for values. Alienation is insinuated into the subtle procedural messages that convince the under-classes that they deserve to be marginalized. Through the inner conviction that their isolation from the benefits of a good education is justified, they submit to an alienation that is cruel and unrelenting in damning them to a kind of slavery – failure in studies and rejection by the peers-who-count.

As Heidegger (1967) intimated, however, eventually Slaves, with their fragmented, ignorant, and weak selves, are likely to come to understand the situation and refuse to accept their subordination. Illustrating this insight, Gibson describes how excessive pressures led parents at one school to succeed in mobilizing protest against mechanical teaching and performance testing; determined teachers have also found ways of counteracting and evading detrimental regulations. This concerted 'revolt' is a fact, but also an analogue of the diverse ways available for escaping the shackles of alienation by achieving a viable identity through insight and action.

In modern societies, with a wide range of options for identities, viable identities are created, negotiated, and articulated in different ways. Looking at the wide range of meanings and usages that identity has assumed in academic discourses, Langman (2000, 2005a) defines identity as a narrative based on group membership that becomes part of individual selfhood, a self referential template where memory meets the future as people present themselves and plan agendas. Following Castells' (1996) analysis of network society, he differentiates (1) conformist identities that legitimate the status quo, (2) resistance identities (oppositions to various forms of domination), (3) project identities that articulate new forms of subjectivities. But further, (4) Langman (2000) suggests that Castells did not consider, the ludic identities fostered by consumerism and popular culture. Langman notes that each kind of identity is disposed to different forms of alienation.

He argues that identities may be alienated in different ways, but points out, too, that they may also exercise agency through choices that are likely to allow escape from alienation. Beginning by legitimating the very conditions that victimize, they may develop the ability to resist them, or find ways to take part in the 'fun and games' that the capitalist system provides as entertainment. But there is still the possibility that in developing the resistance, underlings will become capable of articulating progressive identity projects. It is only this type of

negotiation that will enable people to learn to valorize a self-identity that is freed of the bonds of consumption and is truly emancipatory. This possibility is especially significant in the capitalist-generated culture of consumption. Ultimately, the pursuit of commodities, produced by the alienated labor of remote Others, generates alienated forms of selfhood that compulsively pursue privatized hedonism through the accumulation of goods or cultural experiences. But consumer based selfhood *cannot* provide individuals with meaningful intimate ties, nor give them a sense of control or a meaningful existence. These consumer-based identities and lifestyles have become an essential moment of ideological hegemony. Nowadays, however, rampant consumerism is not available for all; instead, people opt for more modest expressions of the culture industry, from escapist films to television programs that are an indication of alienation and at once a critique of society and illusory palliatives. For other people, the alienation that stems from rapid socio-economic change, assaults on traditional values, and the emptiness of consumerism are assuaged by shared resistance to modernity, such as the embrace of fundamentalist religions that provide stable identities, redemption through spiritual renewal and an imaginary return to an earlier, golden age that never was. The diverse guises of fundamentalism may well provide compensatory gratifications within their communities, but then prompt further conflicts, quarrels, and often bitter animosities in the larger society. However, these very conflicts between absolutist and authoritarian values and the nature of modern life spur vast numbers of people throughout the world to forge 'project' identities from feminism to ecology that overcome alienation by taking up globally-based causes of social justice.

The dialectical promise of de-alienation is also evident in some of the banal incidents of everyday life. While, as seen above, Kalekin-Fishman demonstrates how principles of alienation that are unavoidable in the macro-system

are likely to rule relationships in the micro, Ahponen (2005) finds that everyday life can offer moments of emancipation. In her account of the media as a launch pad for insights into the self, into family life as a field of struggle and achievement, and into liberation through appreciation of the Other, she touches on themes explored in the work of Gibson and of Gimenez. As she shows, everyday life is strewn with demands for performing alienating routines, but it is also a site of action where one can find opportunities for experiencing the excitement and exhilaration of heroism. Ahponen (2005) does not ignore the fact that the content of everyday life is saturated with thankless tasks that are ineluctably imposed by the conditions of an alienating environment and entail deprivation consequent on disorientation at the macro. From her data, however, she finds that the very same alienating environmental conditions are likely to evoke agency and creativity. Ironically, moreover, when these events attract the attention of the media, their subjective value is enhanced. The very media that have developed modes of exploitation for purposes of capitalist profit can also effect turning points in people's lives. For everyday heroes, media attention has created moments of emancipation from the patterns of alienation that seem to be inevitably embedded in the routines of everyday life.

In a similar way Porpora (2005) evokes spirituality as a means of transcendence and a way of overcoming alienation. He points out that the trap of alienation that attends theorizing can be evaded (see discussions of Dahms and David earlier in this chapter). What is lacking in the efficient and productive, but at the same time shallow instrumental rationality that characterizes modernity is morality – both of action and of being. Arguing that the spiritual alienation of our age, an era devoid of ultimate concerns, is at the same time alienation from one's true self, one's own potential, as well as alienation from others, Porpora (2005: 244) points

out that religion was an essential part of hegemony long before capitalism emerged. Despite the fact that sociology is reluctant to deal with spiritual alienation, Porpora (2005: 246), much like Fromm (1965), maintains that human beings need rootedness, and a frame of reference and devotion, for the moral aspect of selfhood which is emotional and not a matter of rational calculation. Clearly, neither the fundamentalisms that negate all achievements of modernity nor the mass consumerism in which the accumulation of goods becomes one's primary aim in life and the basis of one's identity fulfills human needs Today, it is possible, however, to see the reinstatement of religion in different types of configurations that do indeed foster seeds of de-alienation. In his view there are such seeds in the traditions of all religions. Among them are the group procedures for learning the Holy Books of Judaism (Heilman, 1984), the mystical experiences of the Sufi in Islam. And he agrees that there need be no contradictions between Christianity and socialism, even in its most radical form (Zizek, 2000). Denying that blind fundamentalisms that deepen alienation are the only channel for religious expression, Porpora (2005: 247) sees the various forms of alliances with a higher spirit as fertile ground for de-alienation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

During the first half of the twentieth century, Lukacs (1971/1920) argued that commodity fetishism was no longer limited to objects produced for their exchange value on the market. Reification, embedded within the very categories of bourgeois thought, had come to colonize the totality of consciousness – and by implication, subjectivity as well. Thus proletariat understandings of self and society were framed within the alienated bourgeois discourses that sustain domination. In short, the key to understanding capitalist society writ large was ascribed to alienation.

That is why, as Lukacs asserted, explorations of alienation have indeed moved beyond the factory to culture, community, politics, and the structure of the self. As an organizing orientation, alienation enables self-criticism as well as critique. With the pointed instruments of alienation theory, researchers can uncover the malevolent core of exuberance (Prosono, 2005) and the unwitting invasion of macro-structures into intimacies (Kalekin-Fishman, 2005). Beyond these, thinking of alienation in dialectical terms, however, enables sociologists to show both how, through the insidious colonization of consciousness, people are incited to violence, and how this violence impels them to active resistance (Gibson, 2005). Yet again, a dialectical understanding of alienation makes it possible to discover how oppression can be transformed into creativity (Ahponen, 2005; Langman, 2005a), how desperation and hope are intertwined, and how the unending richness of human experience is a constant challenge to discern opportunities as well as hazards (Kellner, 2005).

Marx saw alienation as a concept rooted in contradiction, as the core of conflictual structure and the heart of conflicted consciousness. At the same time he realized its dialectical potential: out of the tormented consciousness in a community fragmented by conflict, people are capable of discerning the emergent potential for agency, and the means to re-humanization. In a word, as conflicts ripen, it becomes possible to discover how to recon-figure cooperation. The dialectical conceptualization and methodology of alienation that are demonstrated in recent writings provide ingress into the dynamic tangle that reflects this vision of social reality. While sociology, like so many other disciplines, has its fashions and changing interests, some basic concepts of the discipline, among them certainly the concept of alienation, endure and have as much, if not more, explanatory power today than in the past. In a globalizing age of mass consumption, with unprecedented kinds of advanced technologies of production and communication, the concept

of alienation and its theorization shed light on hitherto unexplored subtleties in social and personal life.

NOTES

1 We acknowledge that terrorism has multiple roots, but here we wish to underscore how alienation can be recruited through popular culture.

2 Because Hegel's Absolutes emerged out of the French Revolution which put an end to serfdom, Hegel's Absolutes breathed the air, the earthly air of freedom. Even when one reads Absolute Mind as God, one cannot escape the earthly quality of the unity of theory and practice, and grasp the Absolute Reality as man's attainment of total freedom, inner and outer and temporal. The bondsman, having gained through his labor, as Hegel put it, 'a mind of his own,' becomes part of the struggle between 'consciousness-in-itself' and 'consciousness-for-itself.' Or, more popularly stated, the struggle against alienation becomes the attainment of freedom (see Korsch, 1923).

3 Members of the International Sociological Association's Research Committee for the Study of Alienation Theory and Research are among those whose work is at the cutting edge of new approaches to alienation research. They have elaborated on the contemporary relevance of alienation for theoretical critiques, descriptions of concrete political developments that embody authoritarian responses to alienation, as well as cultural expressions of ambiguities in forms of everyday life under late capitalism. For a wider view, see Langman and Kalekin-Fishman (2005).

4 Sklair (2002) has argued that consumerism serves as the ideological glue that sustains transnational capitalism.

5 See for example Fraser and Honneth (2003), or Taylor (1994).

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