

## Kristen Dukeman

In modern society, individuals have a constant desire to invest in a social system. This investment occurs in commodities which inherently fulfill the personal identity of the consumer. The Spirit of Capitalism and the Iron Cage discusses the duty of the individual to increase his capital. This correlates with the idea that the value of profit and material success has increased exponentially over time. Individuals are driven by these ideas and thus modern capitalism was born, developing into a new ethic independent of religious ties. The fate of individuals is discussed in Estranged Labour, which divides society into two classes. These ideas can be connected by the idea of consumer need and its direct influence on the individual which produces the commodity.

Commodity is a term used to describe anything that is produced for sale on the market. This product is designed and created by an individual who wants to generate a connection or passion into those who purchase it. The drive of the individual is discussed in The Spirit of Capitalism. The reading goes into detail about the underlying principles that lead individuals to work toward the increase of his capital. This modern idea of self-discipline is often seen in society as individuals have the tendency to be frugal with their money. The needs of consumers are often utilized by companies in order for the commodity to self-reproduce. This idea is discussed in Estranged Labour, where the worker places his life into his product, and thus can become alienated from the very process that was once a passion. Modern society is shaped by consumer identity in which workers become alienated from their product by placing the value of money over productive identity.

The driving force of consumer identity and the value of consumer needs is often seen in everyday society. In fashion, for example, workers have devalued their product in order to satisfy the needs of the consumer. This is mostly seen in fast fashion, which works to rapidly produce items in response to the latest trends. These companies often work in this manner because consumers idolize people in high status who start a new trend of wearing clothing. Individuals are driven to match and compete with one another to become “the best.” Companies sacrifice quality for quantity as most individuals cannot afford to adapt with the modern lifestyle.

In conclusion, consumer identity is often placed in a higher regard in comparison with producer identity. The value of profit and material success in modern society is a driving force in the alienation of the worker from his product. Large business owners often are estranged from the product they once had a desire to sell, but instead now focus on consumer factors to increase profit.