

BAUDRILLARD: THE CONSUMER SOCIETY

The consumer society by Baudrillard : A sociological approach to capitalism

Consumer society, by Jean Baudrillard, is a major contribution to contemporary sociology and philosophy, at the height of the Division of Labor Durkheim or The Protestant Ethic and the Ethics of Capitalism Weber.

For Baudrillard, consumption is the major feature of Western societies, the “global response which underpins our whole cultural system.” Baudrillard’s thesis is simple: consumption has become a means of differentiation, not satisfaction. As a corollary, the objectification of social relations, that of bodies and individuals have taken over the subject. The real world has gone according to him, replaced by signs of reality from the illusion of the real world.

If modern man has built upon the objects it creates (cf. Descartes’ visit as the master and possessor of nature “), the man of the consumer society lives in an abundance of products and objects that end up owning it. In this worship of wealth, which stores or American moles are the archetypes, individuals must find their fulfilment.

The consumer society is living in a contradictory movement, dialectical create objects to be accomplished, then destroy them to exist. This increases the dependence of man in relation to the matter (“The consumer society needs its objects to be and more precisely it needs to destroy them”)

Compared to classical philosophy (from Kant to Husserl), where the subject is the object, the thought of Baudrillard poses today is the object that exists on the subject.

Baudrillard and myths:

– “As the society of the Middle Ages balance on God and the devil, ours is balanced on consumption and its denunciation”

Baudrillard and advertising:

– “Advertising as a whole has no meaning, it applies only meanings. These meanings (and the conditions under which they use) are never personal, they are all differential, they are marginal and Combinatorial. It to say they fall in industrial production of differences from what would be defined, I think, with the greatest force the system of consumption ”

Baudrillard, the consumer and the masses:

– “Income, purchase of prestige and form a vicious circle of overwork and distraught, the infernal circle of consumption, based on the exaltation of needs called” psychological “, which are different needs” physiological “in that they are based apparently on the “discretionary income” and freedom of choice, and become manipulated to thank you”

– “The masses are the inertia, the power of neutral”

– “The consumer lives as free as aspiration, choice as its distinctive lines, he does not live as a constraint differentiation and obedience to a code”

Baudrillard and Culture:

– “The needs of middle and lower classes are always, as objects, subject to a delay, a time lag and a cultural lag compared to the upper classes. This is not the One of the lesser forms of segregation in society ‘democratic’

Baudrillard, terrorism and 09/11:

– “Terrorism is immoral. The event of the World Trade Center, this symbolic challenge, is immoral, and it answers to a globalization that is itself immoral. [...] We naively believe that the progress of Good, its rise power in all areas (science, technology, democracy, human rights), corresponds to the defeat of Evil. Nobody seems to have understood that Good and Evil rise at the same time, and with the same movement. The triumph of one does not erase the other, quite the contrary. ”

Baudrillard and economic rationality:

– “Accounting for the growth [is] the most extraordinary collective bluff of modern societies. An operation of” white magic “on the figures, which hides a black magic spell of action. We talk about the absurd gymnastics illusions accounting, national accounts. Nothing enters where the visible and measurable factors according to the criteria of economic rationality – that is the principle of that magic. As such, there enter or domestic work of women, neither research nor the culture – by cons may be included some things that have nothing to do, by the mere fact that they are measurable. In addition, these accounts have in common with the dream they unaware of the negative sign and they all add up, nuisance and positive elements in the most illogical total (all but the innocent)

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