

An approach to the post-materialist era

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Abstract:

'An Approach to the post materialist era' is a work that aims to explain the theory of consumerism. It looks at the issue via consumerism and pleasure, creating a new penetrating system that gives its own analysis of today's consumer society that draws conclusions that differ from those in previous studies.

1) Critique of hedonism and redifning human nature

On the one hand, humans are heading inexorably to the satisfaction all their nutritional and clothing needs which in turn inevitably leads to a feeling of emptiness and boredom. On the other hand, materialism imposes a certain lifestyle on the masses. This fuels the accelerating pace of consumerism gone mad in a society where the business classes are becoming the most influential and where consumerism constitutes the major social movement, accompanied by a constant search for gratification. And yet, no religious heritage, no ethical tradition or human evolutionary thought advocates this kind of hedonism. Man aspires to three basic things: comfort, cultivating appearance, stimulation.

2) Consumerism: interpretation, criticism and justification

1. There are two interpretations to how consumerism came about:

i. It is the work of large commercial entities

ii. It was created and is perpetuated by consumers actively aiming to prove their social status.

2. Criticism and justification of consumerism

Criticism of consumerism: production and consumption should be taken as means to make life easier and should not become an end in themselves. Consumerism may well be the death of capitalism.

Justifying consumerism: consuming is conducive to innovation, luxury goods are increasingly becoming basic consumer products and fuel people's levels of consumption. Consuming is conducive to job creation.

3) Interpreting the five consumer mechanisms

Consumerism can be divided into five behavioural patterns or mindsets: advertising, low consumer thresholds, the hold businesses have on society due to their influence on public officials and experts, people's veneration of material objects and finally, fashion.

4) Dematerialisation and virtual space

The following conclusions can be drawn by comparing consumer behaviour for food, clothing, real estate, communication tools and leisure: growth in clothing sales is negative, in real

estate it is low whereas in communication tools and leisure, consumption is growing. The gap in consumption between social classes is growing along the same lines. Consumption is growing in the non-material sectors.

The dematerialisation and virtualisation of consumption is a phenomenon that already exists. Games will become an essential part of our lives in the future.

5) Revenue, consumption and happiness

Among the different levels of income, there is a threshold that separates those who are able to satisfy their basic material needs and those who can't. Below this threshold, an increase in income has a significant impact of level of happiness. Above it, the impact of an increase in income on the level of happiness is far less. Once the basic satisfaction of material needs has been achieved, overconsumption leads to problems.

6) Consumption, work and leisure

In the case of unemployment, the issue is not to reduce job cuts. The focus should be on rehabilitating the unemployed, giving them a new occupation, income and welfare protection. In the case of reduced hours or incompatibility with the demands of a new job, a worker should be offered redundancy pay to encourage him to leave the job of his own accord.

7) Conclusion: towards a leisure era

One of the main characteristics of games is that they resemble real life and yet are not a reality. Games are simulations of real life. People turn to games to obtain a sense of achievement and stimulation as well as to feel need and desire.

Games product off-shoots are:

The development of intelligence in children, ethics, culture and science. Once basic needs for clothing and nutrition have been met, games are next best product available to fill a moral vacuum. However, they may ultimately become an addiction.

[End]

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