

# The culture of consumption



When ingestion has become a civilization. it can be assumed that ingestion has gained a important topographic point in the society. Edwards ( 2000 ) enumerated the many facets that may take one to reconsider ingestion in footings of its significance ; in the context of the consumer. consumerism has included rights. it has evolved into a civilization and at some point in history. consumerism has become a revolution.

Consumerism. as Gabriel and Lang ( 1995. as cited in Edwards. 2000. 10 ) mentioned. “ is neither ethically nor politically neutral” ; from this. it can be gathered that the consumer civilization is steeped in intending which can potentially surround to the unethical to the unpolitical. and even politically wrong. There have been some proverbs that pertain to seeking to think or place a person’s individuality ; based on these celebrated expressions. a person’s individuality can be seen in one’s aggregations of friends. harmonizing to what he or she eats: “ You are what you eat” ; “ Tell me who your friends are and I’ll tell you who you are” .

Apparently. from these lines. individuality is already associated with ingestion and acquisition ; what can basically alter who we are can be besides associated with how other people perceive us. In a sense. through the context of ingestion and acquisition. a person’s individuality becomes capable to examination and even premise. Even though these two expressions are simple and they may even connote basically philosophical ideas. it can be gathered that a person’s individuality is non complete without external proof.

The outgrowth of the consumer civilization and even the “ culture of consumption” farther verifies Baudrillard’s observation that we seem to be more encircled by objects and non so much by human existences.

Harmonizing to Baudrillard ( 1998. 25 ) : “ Their day-to-day traffics are now non so much with their fellow work forces. but instead — on a lifting statistical curve — with the response and use of goods and messages” .

The strong pull and influence of ingestion can be hence seen in the pleasance it brings ; Edwards ( 2000. 11 ) pointed out that consumer pleasance can be found in the activities of “ choosing. researching and identity-seeking” . Hence. the satisfaction brought by devouring entirely already implies some psychological facet in which a certain demand is fulfilled during the act and procedure of ingestion. At the single degree. the impact is significant because ingestion becomes a personal experience declarative mood of the relationship between the consumer and the object that is to be consumed.

At a societal degree. the corporate mind in the context of ingestion has so led to the definition of a civilization thereby showing that consumerism has become a ritual and a societal pattern. The civilization of ingestion. interestingly. becomes a cardinal platform in which a civilization may germinate from. The things that are consumed. the trade good. can so be examined and how this plays significantly into the life of the consumer and the society in general.

Guy de Bord ( 1967 ) wrote how a trade good can work as a spectacle. the spectacle chiefly being defined as “ a societal relationship between people

that is mediated by images” . Such relationship is hence declarative of how the society has become determined by images with trade good as a portion of these images and is a cardinal component of the whole facet of the spectacle because “ the spectacle is both the result and the end of the dominant manner of production” . This goes to demo the trade good is non merely any object because it has become steeped in significance.

A shoe is non merely any other shoe if it’s a Jimmy Choo. the same manner a nuptials gown is non merely a marrying gown if its couture Monique Lhuillier and non merely an off-the-shelf Monique Lhuillier. What comes to mind is how the objects Baudrillard ab initio referred to farther hold many beds to do it more attractive as a trade good ; this besides goes to demo that when a consumer consumes a trade good. it does non merely devour the object behind the trade good and its map but besides the significance immersed in it.

Hence. when people buy. it can be assumed that people can besides purchase the spectacle of the object and non the object itself. This is hence critical particularly as to how this has shaped the perceptual experiences of the consumers ; consumerism. in this respect. does non merely mention to the act of ingestion but it besides implies a important sum of philistinism. In a capitalist and free-market society that is prevailing today. consumers have become more witting of what they buy because everything comes in labels these yearss.

A merchandise that is “ Made in China” may be frowned upon by certain purchasers but its popularity is apparent because of its lower monetary

value. A merchandise bearing the name of celebrated interior decorators, people or famous person or any trade name becomes declarative of how the merchandise is supposed to besides transport the values projected by the name behind the label. What is interesting is that the association between ingestion and civilization can be besides seen in the formation of certain communities ; this is to state that the societal impact of the consumer civilization has gone every bit far as uniting people based on their penchants on what they consume.

This can be seen in the formation of many subcultures basically carried on by certain political orientations and even subcultures fundamentally fuelled by the merchandises and the trade names themselves. When it comes to subcultures, normally the binding component can be seen in a certain political orientation, a manner of life, or even a life style ; nevertheless, in order for this subculture to predominate it needs to be expressed, and the signifier of look has been by agencies of the trade good which is so consumed. Whether these objects are meant to stand for the subculture, what happens is that in the consumer civilization, these objects tend to be commoditized.

Such spectacle, nevertheless, is non merely limited to the objects but it can be besides seen in how people's milieus seem to besides make an consequence when it comes to inner experience. The consumer civilization is non a pick, it is a world translated into the infinites where people live, in the simple objects people use, and even in the regular human mind and outlook ; what comes to mind is a character in Delillo's novel in which she utters in her sleep " Toyota Celica" and telecasting, the portal to what can be consumed

and what should be consumed. has become an important portion of a regular American household.

The consumer civilization has hence become a white noise environing each individual and an affair that everyone finally has to encompass ; studies on Communist China now going one of the ace economic powers of the universe has given manner to the new Chinese consumerism: the Chinese consumers. who have had old ages behind them of economic repression. is now the perfect market. a planetary market section that seems to hold called out to all Western corporations to put up store in Chinese dirt and sell to them the spectacle of the Western trade good.

Consumerism. necessarily. has the inclination to alter people. On one manus. if consumerism can alter people. how do people determine consumerism?

This is an of import factor because this shows the grade in which the consumer civilization has really besides becomes a signifier of political orientation in modern society. This brings to mind David Brooks' work. *Bobos in Paradise* ( 2000 ) in which the writer pointed out how consumerism has given manner to the redefinition of the contemporary exercising by agencies of buying.

Consumerism has become a footing of societal ends ; this is to state that people will desire to hold those Jimmy Choo places. and possibly subsequently on. venture into buying Christian Louboutins. Peoples will non merely desire objects to assist them travel through the twenty-four hours ; people will desire objects that are supposed to state them who they are. and

in the absence of a existent sense of ego. it is through these trade goods and these trade names that people task to interpret their ain individuality.

This shows that the consumer civilization has evolved from the typical position symbol and has hence redefined what life should be all about. In Bobos Paradise. Brooks ( 2000 ) discussed how the two societal categories. the businessperson and the Gypsies. who led separate or typical lives in the past decennaries. would seemingly go an incorporate force making the New Establishment.

The values of these two groups — with the businessperson as the “ square and practical ones” and the Gypsies as the “ free liquors who flouted convention” — seem to be polarized and the antonym. However. in the recent old ages. as Brooks observed. at that place seems to be a more united forepart between the two ; the integrity has given manner to the intercrossed civilization that was founded on the construct of societal success and a certain grade of societal consciousness.

And societal success. seemingly. is determined by the ability to devour. The creative activity of this new loanblend undeniably has been proven through how they have redefined ingestion. Interestingly. similar what Gabriel and Lang ( 1995. as cited in Edwards. 2000 ) have mentioned as to ingestion being neither ethically nor politically impersonal proves to be an of import point here ; by agencies of ingestion. the intercrossed civilization has given manner a consumer civilization steeped in ethical and political issues.

This clip. the new loanblend has paved channels for what is voguish based on the assorted doctrines of the Gypsies. with their positions on anti-

materialism and rebellion. and the businessperson with their more mercenary return on life. The new consumerism has managed to incorporate thoughts of meaningful societal alteration as attained through ingestion. Hence. this has given manner to how people should devour: with the outgrowth of the organic and just trade merchandises. the accent on healthy life styles. and designer java is a luxury that can be taken on a day-to-day footing despite its monetary value.

The consumer civilization has hence become reflective of the development of the modern society that have gone through the phases of industrialization. From the mere treatments on what ingestion agencies and does to people to the commoditization of civilization. the consumer civilization has significantly conveyed to us who we are as persons and as a society because ingestion is a socio-cultural pattern. It has become the cause of and the merchandise of the society ; and as society evolves. the consumer civilization does excessively.

In decision. Baudrillard ( 1997. 29 ) presented a strong point that can be seen to depict what consumer civilization has become today: “ We are here at the bosom of ingestion as entire organisation of day-to-day life. entire homogenisation. where everything is taken over and superseded in easiness and translucidity of an abstract ‘ happiness’ . refined entirely by the declaration of tensions” . References Baudrillard. J. & A ; Turner. C. . trans. ( 1998 ) . The Consumer Society: myths and constructions. London: Sage. Brooks. D. ( 2000 ) . Bobos in Paradise. New York: Standard. Debord. G. & A ; Nicholson-Smith. D. . trans.



( 1967. 1994 ) . The Society of the Spectacle. New York: Zone Books. Delillo.

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Contradictions of Consumption: Concepts. Practices. and Politics in Consumer Society. Philadelphia: Open University Press. II. Gender and Selling: the Skyy

Vodka Ad “ provocateur: media gender image characterized by young

person. perfection. attraction and sexual allure” – Cortese ( 2000. 160 ) The

Skyy Vodka ad shows a adult male standing over a adult female ; the scene

takes topographic point in a beach. and the adult female. typical of those

sunbathing. is have oning a twine Bikini.

The adult male. on one manus. is have oning a suit. He is keeping a bottle of

Skyy Vodka in one manus. and in the other. two martini spectacles. The

above description seems to be less of a contention. but the job with this run.

as seen in the more recent postings of the vodka trade name. besides

indicates an implied gendered place. The posting obviously shows that the

adult male has the power over the adult female ; this can be seen non

merely in his suit but besides in the mode he is standing over her: his fork

positioned right above the woman’s caput.

Upon close review of the adult male. which is non truly adult male but an

illustration. the fork country seems bunched up. which can so be perchance

interpreted that non merely does the adult male have the power in his suit

and in the vodka in his custodies. but the power is besides implied in his

bloomerss. The adult female. as illustrated. seems to hold been trapped in

such conciliatory place. but what makes the adult female more typical is how

her chests protrude from her thorax. If anything. what makes the Skyy Vodka

ad male chauvinist is non truly so much about power but its more on about

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the placement. If adult females were beneath work forces. this is a good illustration.

What objectifies adult females in this ad. moreover. is in her word picture. In a sense. her scantily clothed expression may be justified based on the scene of the ad: as the scene takes topographic point in a beach. it can be said that it is merely normal that adult females wear threading Bikini and that demoing some flesh is merely natural. However. the contrast in this scene is that the adult female is barely clothed. and the adult male is suited up. This shows that the use of the beach scene may warrant the adult female demoing a significant sum of flesh. but in the relationship between the barely clothed adult female and the suited up adult male indicates something else.

In a manner. if this is an issue of power. if a adult female is barely clothed does that shaper her more powerful as work forces in suits project such force and place. In deconstructing advertizements in such context. Cortese ( 1999 ) mentioned that ads that merely demo a woman's organic structure or a body portion. this expresses the thought that the adult female in that ad is conveyed more as an object. This contrast with advertisement demoing a woman's face because this is declarative of her personality and character ( Archer. et Al. . 1983 ) .

What is interesting is that despite the objectification of the adult female through a greater accent on her organic structure. advertizements continue to utilize this because this has so far worked in catching the attending of both work forces and adult females. Furthermore. these advertizements

besides convey certain rhetoric messages ; as Cortese explained ( 1999. 57 ) : Ad images provide culturally sanctioned ideal types of maleness and muliebrity. Ad aiming adult females consumers subscribe to really limited impressions of what constitutes muliebrity ( e. g.

dependence. concern with superficial beauty. arrested development on household and nurturance. fright of engineering ) and. accordingly. feminine purchasing forms ( Kilbourne. 1989 ; Steinem. 1990 ) . The abovementioned point raised by Cortese is besides supported by legion surveies such as those conducted by Courtney and Lockeretz ( 1971 ) and Courtney and Whipple ( 1983 ) ( as cited in Hall & A ; Crum. 1994 ) in which male chauvinist images in advertisement can be categorized harmonizing to four subjects: adult females as traditional housewives ; adult females doing less of import determinations ; adult females necessitating work forces in many facets. from protection to wisdom ; and adult females as sex objects devoid of personalities.

From these. it can be gathered that adult females have been represented as planar objects who seems to hold been fighting in redefining her individuality and her societal functions in world. However. Cortese cited Goffman ( 1976 ) in which the latter mentioned that gender show in advertizements are chiefly representative of how people think work forces and adult females behave and are non needfully reflective of the societal world.

Hence. the more recent Skyy Vodka ad has inevitable encountered many unfavorable judgments. In the twenty-first century. treatments on gender functions can be assumed to hold already been absorbed in the heads of

these thought and concept-makers ; this is to state that gender issues have been a treatment in decennaries. and in advertisement. the industry must hold at least shown marks of adulthood or even development. Has the Skyy Vodka ad shown that advertizers are running out of thoughts?

Or does this reflect a deeper issue in which despite all the legion treatments and discourses. the typical positions on both work forces and adult females when it comes to their functions in the society and how they should stand for the ideal reflect non needfully a world but a societal truth? In looking at the historical development of gender in advertisement. protests against the typical representations of adult females as these stereotypes were already present as early in the 1970s and in the 1980s.

With feminism deriving more land in the 1960s. attempts to redefine the female had been underway. and the advertisement universe was a mark. However. these enterprises were “ met with incredulity. opposition and downright hostility” ( Dines & A ; Humez. 1995. 73. as cited in Cortese. 1999. 58 ) . Such took topographic point even though that at the societal degree “ social codifications of gender category and race” ( Cortese. 1999. 57 ) have been altering.

However. it seems that in the instance of Skyy Vodka and other ads. advertizers remain to hold a certain grade of power because of the sum of concern they hold ; they are seen as the merchandising masterminds in the market. and it is supposed to be through their constructs and supposed artistic licence and concern sense that guarantee a product’s successful placement in the market. However. the Skyy Vodka ad should non be taken

as a generalisation of how advertizers approach gender functions ; in the past 20 to thirty old ages. important societal alterations have taken topographic point. particularly when it comes to the women's function in the society.

Over these past two decennaries. feminism would go on to predominate. and adult females have found themselves faced with many chances. Womans have entered the work force and adult females have become of import figures in many places that work forces would normally busy. Women universe leaders have emerged and the concern universe has started to be populated by more adult females in cardinal and executive places. Women. in the past 20 to thirty old ages. have gained a important impulse that they have redefined themselves non merely in footings of being members of the society but besides. necessarily. as a redefined market ( Morrison & A ; Shaffer. 2003 ) .

This therefore shows that in the past two to three decennaries. gender function orientations have been modified. Both work forces and adult females have evolved at assorted degrees as they have embraced new life styles provided to them in this underdeveloped twenty-four hours and age. Hence. it can be observed that even among the work forces. male gender functions have. in the recent old ages. have redefined maleness up to a certain extent with the outgrowth of the male metrosexual.

However. even with such developments in the society and even in the universe of advertisement. there has still been the celebrated prevalence of the gender-type functions ; an of import consideration here is the use of

advertisement constructs with respects to gender must be brooding of whether these are effectual or non. This is to state that even though adult females have gained more power and better arrangement in the society as compared to decennaries ago. and work forces have come to encompass more metrosexuality. in the context of advertisement. the conventional positions may hold maintained its effectivity particularly when it comes to associating to the greater population.

Morrison and Shaffer ( 2003 ) cited legion surveies with a similar interesting consequence ; seemingly. even manner back in the 1970s and the 1980s surveyed participants expressed that “ they did non prefer stereotyped word pictures of work forces and adult females in advertisement. or elsewhere” . the ensuing buying and ingestion behaviour would state otherwise.

Obviously. purchase determinations and ingestion behaviour would show a more favourable response to advertizements with gender stereotypes as compared to those who would utilize non-traditional attack to advertizements.

A more modern-day scrutiny of this issue was discussed by Morrison and Shaffer ( 2003 ) in which the writers found that the consequences in their survey were the same as the legion cited surveies by the writers ; it showed that even today. advertisement effectivity utilizing the more traditional or gender-stereotyped portraitures would sell more in footings of consumer response albeit uttered positions against gender-stereotypes as used in advertisement. The writers found that this may be besides due to the fact that their survey was dominated by more traditional persons.

Such sampling shows what and who the consumer base is. and from this. advertizers. with cognition on market research. probably have an thought as to the proportion between the traditional and non-traditional consumers. Hence. with the prevalence of ads like Skyy Vodka's. it goes to demo that despite the unfavorable judgments. the ad was non made out apparent sexist purposes ; it can be said that the design of such ads is based on the fact that there remains a strong market out there who would happen the ad attractive and even diverting. thereby doing the merchandise more memorable and attractive.

This besides goes to demo that gender-role ads do reflect a dominating mind of the society. despite the alterations that have been taking topographic point in the past two to three decennaries. Womans may hold become more independent and powerful as compared to decennaries ago. but there is still a important subdivision of the society who viewed that despite such development. adult females still belonged at place and should be housewives if non. as sex objects in the position among the males.

The work forces. on one manus. may hold evolved into metrosexuals and have composed a market targeted by merchandises that have been largely made for females such as beauty and cosmetics. but traditional perceptual experiences on the functions of the males have maintained their supposed high quality. Hence. the selling intervention in the past 20 to thirty old ages have displayed certain alterations as society has been transforming ; nevertheless. the necessities have remained. and the traditional. gender-role stereotype may remain for a long clip as the traditional consumer base remains to be a strong mark market.

Mentions Archer. D. . Iritani. B. . Kimes. D. . & A ; Barrios. M. ( 1983 ) . Face-ism: Five surveies of sex differences in facial prominence. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 45. 725-735. Cortese. A. ( 1999 ) . Agent provocateur: Images of adult females and minorities in advertisement. Oxford: Rowman & A ; Littlefield. Hall. C. I. 1994. Womans and “ Body-Isms” in Television Beer Commercials. Sexual activity Functions: A Journal of Research. 31. 329+ . Morrison. M. & A ; Shaffer. D. 2003. Gender-Role Congruity and Self-Referencing as Determinants of Advertising Effectiveness. Sexual activity Functions: A Journal of Research. 49. 265+ .