

“Consumerism” Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter

Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter criticize the criticism of consumerism in their declarative essay, “The Rebel Sell: if we all hate consumerism, how come we can’t stop shopping,” claiming that consumerism is inevitable when there are no incentives to halt consumerism. Consumerism in a consumer society is unavoidable as long as there aren’t any limitations to stop it. The authors assert the contradiction that anti-consumerism is merely reinforced consumerism. Anti-consumerists demand anti-consumer products and literature, which in turn, is just another market for consumerism. Likewise, people who are opposed to consumerism actively participate as the catalyst that drives consumerism.

which ones?

The authors claim that capitalism requires conformity to function correctly. The authors make the distinction that rebellion against mass society is not the same as rebellion against consumer society. The authors generate the idea that rebellion, and not conformity, fuel the relationship between consumption and happiness. The authors introduce the idea that many people who live in consumer societies are forced into competitive consumption in order to defend themselves against other’s consumption. The author’s provide the example that in southern California, SUVs dominate the roads making smaller cars more dangerous to conduct. Therefore, regardless of people’s intentions even when in defense, consumption contributes to the problem they desire to dissolve. The authors claim that the only societal solution to consumerism is through legislative action. The authors state that society needs to stop trying to halt consumerism through anti-consumerism, and revert to other means of action (i.e. tax codes and legislative actions).

great job!