

Direct sales- a poetic economy (long summary) **Arbousse-Bastide Tristan**

As an anthropologist and an archaeologist the point of view I chose to develop on the subject of “direct sales” is theoretical and relates to philosophy as much as economy. My analysis is based on phenomenology and tries to underline the intentionality of the producer and the consumer.

It is rather difficult to give an accurate definition of “direct sales” because it is a fluctuating notion linking producers and consumers according to various levels of commitments. The offer is often limited by the type of production and by natural cycles but contexts and circumstances of the transaction are multiples. However beyond all these differences there is a common intentionality of “direct sales” : the valorization of work, the research of autonomy and a durable relationship between town and country.

Considered as a minor phenomenon compared to the “world economy”, “direct sales” is for me the expression of an economical “resistance”. As such “direct sales” shall be analyzed out of the frame of usual economical logic and therefore not reduced to a commercial system. Doing this “direct sales” appears to be an attempt to escape from the common “economical rationality”(the belief in a development leading to a social progress) .

I used the expression “poetical economy” in the title of my essay because I consider that “direct sales” is the expression of a “philosophical economy” in search of a meaningful way of sharing the world and opposed to simple profit making. It is a way for consumers and producers to exchange cultural and social values in order to achieve a “human being” attached to a region or a locality and opposed to a certain vision of the “universal economy”. The most important aspect of “direct sales” is to share ideas in order to develop a common living space. In other words to give more value to imagination rather than progress or development.

The “poetic economy” of “direct sales” concentrates the commercial transaction on various elementary aspects of our “being” such as : body, language and human relationships. These elements do exist in modern economy but only deeply finalized. For example the body is only the expression of needs and desires, language is a way of communication, and the human being is an individual. With direct sales concepts such as “body” and “being” are at the centre of the exchange. The need to share a common point of view on life and work is essential. For these reasons “direct sales” often involves a family-like relationship between consumer and producer.

In order to achieve its tasks the “poetic economy” of “direct sales” is based on “unwritten” rules. There are no established rules based upon a hierarchy between consumer and producer but some limited principles are unavoidable :

-Reciprocity (a sincere relationship between consumer and producer plus the recognition of each other’s working efforts)

-Balance (a good balance of production and consumption is the key as “direct sales” does not use distribution as an economical power)

-Non dependence (one looks for some autonomy from the usual economical system)

The target of a farming production in the perspective of “direct sales” is well aside from the traditional “market economy”. However “direct sales” has its own challenges and strategies. There is no definite solution for the long term development of “direct sales” but various interesting tendencies. Some appears to be inappropriate, others need to be encouraged. For example one should try to avoid fashion and seek a deeper penetration of society. The valorization of the farmers work should come before environmental questions. The development of a consumer education should be based on the local cultural resources.

“Direct sales” creates the conditions for an original economical reflection. Values such as culture, society and human being become as much important as money. This new philosophy of exchange is a “poetical economy” in the sense that it opposes non political arguments to the “market economy”. “Direct sales” is also no “eco-logy” but it suggests to give a better consideration to farming work and to give the opportunity of an alternative way of life for town based consumers. The main idea is to give to anyone the chance to share a way of being in the world body and soul.

Direct sales- a poetic economy (short summary)

It's rather difficult to define such a fluctuating topic as "direct sales" without making references to the notions of producer and consumer. However, the context, the circumstances of the transaction and the specificity of the offer are also relevant when one talks about the "intentionality" of "direct sales". Rejected by the "market economy", "direct sales" appear to be a form of economic "resistance". It's an attempt to escape from contemporary economical systems by revealing their irrationality and their abuses of the "myth media". But the "poetical economy" proposed by "direct sales" goes beyond the critic of "market economy". It seeks a meaning beyond profit by giving to cultural and social values a real economic importance. The "poetical economy" is a philosophy based on imagination rather than progress. Sharing conditions and rules are to be redefined and based on notions such as body, time of speech and human relationships. Reciprocity, balance and independence are the unspoken rules of "direct sales". Developing "direct sales" must avoid fashion effects and has to resolve the antagonism opposing environment and agricultural work valorization. In the same time consumer education should not be neglected.

Key words

direct sales, producer, consumer, intentionality, resistance, system, rationality, myth-media, poetical economy, cultural values, social values, philosophy, imagination, corpse, speech, human relationships, unspoken rules, reciprocity, balance, independence, development, fashion effects, environment, work valorization, consumer education.