

CONSUMPTION AND CITIZENSHIP FOR A HUMANE ECONOMY

Companies, and especially multinationals, expend a great deal of energy in financial speculation, and exert considerable pressure on the decisions of governments and international bodies, because it is their revenues in the real economy that constitute their anchor and investment base, as well as their power to act and exert pressure. This is proven by the energy with which revenues are defended and strategies are deployed to gain more market shares. The fight is between competitors on a market that has become a marketing battlefield. The weapons are national and international regulations through the manipulation of scientific studies and by putting pressure on political and decision-making authorities¹.

And yet, it is the daily and occasional purchases made by individuals and communities that concretely make up the revenues of companies.

When you buy, you give your money in return for goods and services. Shouldn't you be looking beyond the exchange value to find out what the money is being used for ?

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I – PERVERSE OPERATION

Companies always refer to the wishes or supposed wishes of consumers to justify industrial and mass retail production policies, which have considerable impacts on health, the environment, the local economy and ultimately, the freedom of each of us.

1 –MARKETING ALIBI: THE CONSUMER’S DEMAND

a) Searching for cheap prices and dreaming of a better world

Marketing and advertising professionals rely on the natural aspirations of human beings for better quality of life, comfort, simplicity, freedom, security, sensuality, beauty, etc. By treating the consumer as a child, against the backdrop of a hedonistic and individualistic ideology that makes money the be all and end all (endowed with the ability to bestow power, identity and happiness)², they often compound these aspirations. They are always a step ahead of the conscious or unconscious demands of the so-called “customer-king” which are quickly transformed into real or imagined sales arguments.

All too often, consumers do not make the link between their demands and their purchasing behaviour, on one hand, and corporate practices, on the other hand. But for operators, it is because consumers always want more and always at the lowest price that they must find solutions to stand out from the competition and preserve/increase their market shares.

It is because consumers play along and discover new needs when confronted with corporate offers that these offers are developed and displayed in stores. Consumer behaviour is studied to “capture customers, leading them to buy more and retain them”³.

It is also because consumers dream of a better world, where everything would be simple and abundant, that they are bombarded with advertisements extolling ideal products, happiness and revolution. A propaganda whose artistic qualities may be interesting, but which becomes insulting when you think of the growing inequalities, in the North as well as the South, and the unprecedented use of antidepressants and other psychotropic drugs in our Western societies.

b) Aiming at maximum return

Shareholders collectively own companies, and consequently, have the power to decide on the strategy and policy of firms, but they can also be considered as so many consumers, who are after the highest return for their investment. It is also in their name that “profit optimisation” procedures are justified. And of course, small investors invest in a company based on the possibilities of financial return. And it is often on convenience criteria and financial profit that we give our money to banking institutions, without bothering to find out the circuits supplied and maintained by this money.

In this way, companies may consider themselves caught between a rock and a hard place : between the consumer-customer who always wants lower prices and the consumer-shareholder, who wants the largest profit.

c) Protecting the consumer?

Institutions and consumers (directly by their purchasing behaviour and through agencies representing them) have undeniably contributed to improving the intrinsic quality of products and services as well as democratising the access to these same products and services. And yet, they have also played quite a significant role in the emergence and growth of mass retail and the generalisation of industrial products and their perverse effects. Indeed, mass retail was created and has been maintained supposedly to protect the consumer⁴.

This is because, all too often, consumer protection has been concerned solely with the search for the product’s intrinsic quality, its health quality, the consumer’s immediate interest, (lowest possible prices) and maintenance of purchasing power. It has ignored social and environmental quality criteria, whose effects are only indirectly perceptible or in the much longer term⁵.

2 – CORPORATE OFFERS: THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS

a) Production and design modes

To reduce selling price and maintain or raise profitability, costs must also be reduced.

Raw material purchase or subcontracting

We search for the least cost before anything else. The “mad cow” issue is a case in point. Feeding animals (naturally herbivores) with animal meal, with total disregard for the possible consequences for the animals and human beings presented two advantages. It reduced the cost of animal feed with an inexpensive source of protein, and recycled waste that would have cost money to dispose of. The profit was therefore twofold.

In other cases, companies are externalising functions that used to be carried out in-house. They are outsourcing to suppliers who work with underpaid, ill-represented labour in France (such as illegal immigrants or prisoners) or in countries with cheap labour and with social and environmental laws that are more favourable to companies (child labour, lack of union rights, environmental or work place pollution). Which, by the way, allows the Western companies to shed all responsibility, and to tout their environmental charter or code of ethics while rejecting the excesses on “irresponsible” suppliers. It is always somebody else’s fault!

Market research and production

Products are standardised to please everyone and to create economies of scale. At the same time, there is an increasing number of product lines to push consumers to amass and renew the goods acquired as rapidly as possible, by making the previous model obsolete, in an illusion of originality, diversity and trendiness.

b) Distribution methods

In the same vein (reduction of sale prices and maintenance of profits), distribution costs also have to be low and pressure is applied to industrialists who themselves apply radical production methods. In distribution, retailers are extremely concentrated and it is difficult to escape the consumer industry points of sale: In France, 5 groups of retailers control the distribution of 90% of consumer products, under their main names or specialised names, and are located in industrial areas or in shopping centres. Even neighbourhood stores (the corner “off license”) often belongs to these groups or buy their supplies in their purchasing centres, thus losing their independence and power to control their prices. The figures for the new sectors attacked by the consumer industry speak for themselves: 36% of jewellery sales, between 10 and 15% of wines, 23% of the flower and plant market⁶, etc. The market shares of mass retailers give them considerable power over producers, who are doomed to disappear, be bought out or merge.

Retailer brands, created by and belonging directly to the consumer industry players, enable them to further increase their margins and their power on suppliers, by breaking off all relations between producers and consumers. For example, operators can put pressure on prices and change suppliers whenever they want, according to their purchasing whims and strategies, without the consumer being aware since the product’s packaging and appearance would remain the same.

c) Stimulating consumption

Today, consumers’ wishes are not just met, they are also anticipated. The individual is flattered and adverts are designed to create identification models. One must have such and such an object to be such and such a person. For example, meat has **become** a basic food and its consumption has considerably risen. It is no longer a sign of wealth, but a daily standard. So instead of praying “give us our daily bread” we could say “give us our daily steak”⁷.

We buy convenience foods and we eat in fast food restaurants because it is trendy, simpler and faster. We are in the era of ready-to-eat products and ready-to-live styles, regarding food, clothing and culture. At the point of sale, everything is designed to facilitate buying (furnishing, staging, colours, music) right down to organised promotional actions (gifts, one-off price discounts, etc.) and other consumption stimulation devices (credit cards, loyalty cards, corporate magazines, etc.). Department stores and shopping centres attract customers by giving the impression of “multiple opportunities that maximise the possibility of consuming reasonably”⁸

3 – THE CONSEQUENCES

a) Immediate costs and hidden costs

Although it seems logical that the global quality (product’s intrinsic, social and environmental quality) has an immediate cost, we often forget to take into account that non-quality also has a cost, that is often deferred or hidden.

Consumers are gradually becoming conscious of this concerning respect for the environment, civic attitudes and solidarity criteria. But consumers are increasingly being directly and individually confronted with health and security risks (e.g. through food safety scandals), and are becoming aware that all processes are linked. They are beginning to understand that environmental, economic and social deterioration may ultimately impact their lives.

They may also feel guilty (in their opinion of themselves) when they understand that their purchases help to maintain the exploitation of children and other human beings.

b) Healthcare

The consequences for health are numerous and reflect the chain of interdependence of different criteria:

Direct consequences of poor quality food: Kreutzfeld-Jacob disease, allergies, poisoning, weakened organisms, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, etc. We are often told that food has never been safer. But most importantly, it is a question of health safety, immediate risks linked to the intake of food without consideration for the long term risks of the nature of “modern” food: meat from animals fed with meat-based meal, use of hormones and other antibiotics, excessive consumption of meat products, excessive salt (not to mention GMOs whose long term effects are currently unknown).

Consequences due to environmental deterioration: allergies, poisoning from dioxins, diseases linked to asbestos, radioactivity, etc.

Consequences due to the deterioration of social conditions: depressions, rising tensions in professional circles and increasing use of psychotropic drugs.

c) Environment

Western modes of production and consumption are highly energy intensive and have multiple consequences on the environment: depletion of natural resources (fossil fuels; water), pollution of air, water and soils by industries, farming, and human waste (nitrates in the water table, pesticide clouds moving from one region to another⁹, domestic, industrial, nuclear waste, etc.). A few examples:

Shopping in a hypermarket perfectly illustrates the foregoing: “shopping from a suburban hypermarket generates 4 times as much pollution and nuisance as buying the same things from a downtown supermarket located 500 meters from one’s home”¹⁰ : mandatory car to go shopping, storage of large quantities in the fridge and freezer, non returnable packaging, energy consumption for cultivating out-of-season products in hothouses, and sea, air and road freight for supplying counter-season products. Not to mention the energy balance of transportation linked to the purchasing of products manufactured with cheap labour at the other end of the world.

Internet-based purchases also generate additional pollution due to the system of instant deliveries¹¹.

The excessive consumption of meat also has impacts on the environment: soil-less farming and intensive agriculture (for food production) linked to industrial productions, water consumption and pollution. Seven plant proteins are required to produce one animal protein¹².

The ecological risks linked to GMO, developed for economic reasons by firms, have kindled fears of uncontrollable changes in the flora and microfauna, through the emergence of unexpected resistances in plants and insects.

d) Economics and society

Companies and the local economy

The search for maximum profits as an overriding economic criterion results in an increasing concentration of operators, the vertical integration of entire economic sectors, the emergence/growth of quasi-monopolies on markets, multinational firms with considerable power based on the size of their financial assets (sometimes larger than that of countries) and the power of their means of pressure on political bodies, at both national and international levels.

Of course, this evolution occurs at the expense of small operators and the local economy. For example, in France, the retail industry used dumping and loss-leader price policies to force the number of filling stations down from 47,500 in 1975 to 18,500 in 1995, with the disappearance of nearly 30,000 traditional petrol points of sale¹³.

Standards are drafted to forestall or resolve health and environmental problems linked to unscrupulous industrial production methods. These are however, often an additional factor for the economic exclusion of small operators, because of the cost and rigidity involved in their implementation, while the large operators are often treated leniently and with complicity by the authorities.

In the agricultural sector, the intensive methods are pushing farmers to adopt the same “industrial” varieties or abandon their lands, a trend that might gather speed with the development of GMO, especially in the South and which makes farmers more dependent on their suppliers ¹⁴.

Jobs and social conditions of employees

Jobs and salaries are the first items affected by cost-cutting measures.

Concentrations, which are the result of group strategy and the search for economies of scale very often result in lost jobs. Production relocation or outsourcing also leads to at best massive layoffs or at worst company shutdowns. It is better not to hold stocks in the company that you work for!

Job creations in industrial productions and the consumer industry do not make up for the losses linked to the shutdown of companies.

Consequently, we are seeing a deterioration of the social and union conditions and more generally a “devaluation of work as a creative human activity”¹⁵

Costs for the consumer

Quite rapidly, the “low price” argument no longer works: when the quasi-monopolies are sufficiently installed and have cleaned away the competition, they no longer need this competitive argument. Moreover, they have to finance expenses and marketing and advertising and other promotional gadgets and pay ... shareholders! Each one can notice that, apart from promotions and other loss-leader prices, goods sold in supermarkets are usually not that much cheaper than elsewhere (when it is still possible to compare...).

Alternatively, we continue to force cost prices and quality down.

Another aspect is that of standards and regulatory controls on the quality of products (hygiene, environment and social criteria) as well as labels (for an additional quality guarantee). The generated costs must often be taken into account by the producers who factor them into the price structure of their products, and therefore in the consumer selling price. In short, we pay 2 times: for the quality of products and for the recognition of this quality.

Costs for the tax payer

Because, in the final analysis, it is the taxpayer who bears the social cost of unemployment, public health and environmental protection measures.

Not to mention tax evasion to tax havens that allow some people to avoid paying normal taxes, at the expense of national taxpayers who must collectively pay for them.

e) Freedom of the citizen

With the disappearance of small operators and the standardisation of supply (disappearance of certain products and brands), the consumer’s choice has considerably narrowed (quality, diversity, and information):

With the diminishing number of stores in town centres¹⁶, there is no longer any other choice but to leave the conurbation and go shopping, a decision that requires the use of a car!

And to go back to our example of filling stations, there is now an extremely limited number, and they are highly isolated, especially outside large cities. People have to drive far and burn petrol to go and buy petrol!

In the film sector, with the integration of production and distribution and the increasing number of large theatres, film supermarkets, once again profitability is the criteria used to select films, therefore the selection is uniform and the same throughout the country.

In the press sector, already mostly integrated, concentrated and in the hands of large groups, an increasingly large number of free magazines undermines the sales of paying magazines and directly represent the interests of the companies that make them ¹⁷.

Through their policy of considering customers as irresponsible children, who only think of their personal, family or national interest, marketers who “know better than the consumers themselves” what is best for them, consumers and citizens are deprived of their freedom of choice, to decide and to think.

These gradual and insidious changes often occur unknown to consumers and make them increasingly dependent. Trapped and involved in an individualistic system, supposed to convey progress, modernness, comfort and happiness, that they have enjoyed, it is difficult for them to see the negative effects and get away from them. We can speak of “the de-politicising function of hedonistic consumption”¹⁸.

II – WHAT IS THE CONSUMER’S ROOM FOR ACTION?

If companies continue to justify their policies and strategies by the consumer’s demand and if consumers continue to justify their purchases by the supply from companies, when will all this really change?

Under the pressure from society and the consumer’s expectations, an increasing number of companies are announcing their commitment to environmental and social criteria, at various degrees of authenticity and concrete realisations. Very often, it’s become a marketing argument, or even a niche for developing new products, sold more expensively.

The consumer must therefore exert pressure, to firstly condemn those companies which continue to treat human beings and/or nature with contempt (directly or indirectly) and secondly, encourage those who make valiant efforts, all the more so those whose very existence is based on these social and environmental criteria.

1 – NEW REFLEXES FOR A RESPONSIBLE CONSUMER

To refuse this position of accomplice consumer-alibi, one must become aware of the hidden mechanisms and realise the power of each one through the wallet.

In concrete terms, the approach requires some efforts of time, thinking, action: to become aware, find out, buy differently and use differently.

Become aware

The first step is to become aware of the hold of conditioning and habits over us:

- The traps and manipulations of marketing and advertising, reflections of a hedonistic and individualistic ideology where ready-to-consume and ready-to-think rule supreme.
- Western consumption methods that are so energy-intensive, polluting and wasteful, and indefensible at a global level.

Without recommending austerity, do we really need all that we buy?

We must also become aware of what should be perceived as rights and duties:

- demand openness and quality of information,
- dare to ask for explanations,
- ensure openness in decision taking,
- get involved in local and national political bodies who authorise the development of mass retailers and polluting installations and negotiate the international rules in terms of commerce, environment, etc. respectively,
- encourage journalists to do their real investigative jobs, etc.

In short: don’t hide in a passive, resigned attitude, take up your place as a real citizen.

Be informed

- Choose and check the impartiality of information sources,
- Obtain information on the practices of multinationals (production and distribution)
- Be vigilant about the moralistic and well-intentioned speeches of companies
- Obtain information on alternative solutions to buying and using differently.

Buy differently

A few examples:

- a) Be distrustful of extremely low prices and look for the right price. As we saw earlier on: buying cheaply does not necessarily mean “clever” buying and “not more than it is worth”, but often means financing pollution (upstream: type of production, or downstream: wastes), deplorable working conditions, child labour, companies shutting down, etc.
- b) Prefer neighbourhood stores, direct sales and short channels, talk to merchants, look for trustworthy relationships which do not necessarily carry a label
- c) Prefer organically produced products, which are produced without the use of chemical substances
- d) Buy products from fair trade for products imported from southern countries (tea, coffee, quinoa, decorative items, etc.)

- e) For products from industrial production, be vigilant about the composition of foods, read labels carefully (GMO, etc.)
- f) Avoid prepared foods and compound products
- g) Prefer durable products rather than inexpensive products, that will be quickly replaced
- h) Avoid promotional devices that push you to buy more than you need and to undertake commitments (consumer credit, brand credit cards, loyalty cards, etc.)
- i) Choose alternative banks and investment products
- j) Travel differently, without necessarily looking for the farthest and the most exotic destination, prefer discovery and meeting with the country's inhabitants, while respecting nature, etc.
- k) Foster independent structures (cinemas, bookshops, etc.)

Use differently

A few examples:

- a) Don't use a motorised vehicle when you can bike, walk or take the public transport
- b) Save energy, reduce waste, recycle rather than throw away
- c) Rediscover foods and learn to cook and eat again.

Admittedly, we live in a society where both parents have to work for the family to have a decent budget, therefore it is difficult to find the time to cook and enjoy it, to teach children and to educate them in general. But can't we use the shorter working week (in France) for example to rediscover these communal pleasures and rediscover the fundamental principles of life and health rather than hopping on the first airplane we find for a long weekend or a week at the other end of the world?

There are no ready-made solutions or definitive formulas. We can list the consumer alternatives and the actions to be carried out. In this sense, access to information that is not biased by economic interest is critical to be able to make an informed choice.

But it is by the consumer's very attitude, by the local choice of products and purchasing places and by the vigilance and thinking involved that real change can take place. It is the duty of each one to think about their role and about what they can do in their own way and every day.

Then it becomes a real power, a genuine weapon against the false marketing and advertising promises. Used on a sufficiently large scale and with the required vigilance, it could become an enormous pressure power, a complement to the pressure exerted by regulations.

2 – CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION, JUST FOR THE RICH?

At first glance, one may think that conscious consumption is more expensive and can only be the concern of wealthy people, who can afford the “luxury” while feeling good about it.

Indeed, it seems logical that socially and environmentally good quality products would cost more than those whose production is justified by lower costs.

First of all, this equation is not always true. Secondly, when it is checked, is it acceptable that everyone does not have the means to buy at the right price?

a) Consume differently, at equal cost

There are alternatives that make it possible not to increase overall food price, while changing one's consumer habits:

Find a new balance of purchases, priorities, choice of products (for example reduce the quantities of meat eaten),
Prefer quality over quantity,
Avoid prepared foods and fast foods,
Grow and cook your own meals,
Choose products that are not necessarily more expensive by buying directly (fewer intermediaries or less greedy intermediaries).

b) Two-tier consumption

We saw that the reintegration of hidden costs (corresponding to health care costs, effects on the environment and the social management of consequences¹⁹) in the overall actual price of a production can make it more expensive than a product with good social and environmental quality.

It is true of course, that this will not resolve the problem of people with really low budgets and those who find it difficult to make ends meet at the end of the month. But is it fair for the society to pay for the hidden costs and for the lack of resources of a part of the population to be used to justify such an unbalanced system?

In fact, our purchasing power is not real since the prices of numerous articles do not correspond to those of quality products manufactured in good social and environmental conditions. Our freedom of choice is also fictitious since it is often the same companies that offer the seemingly competitive products, under different brands, thus dispelling any choice.

Before condemning the high price of good social and environmental quality products, we must denounce the discrimination that already exists in certain sectors where the return for the consumer is more obvious, such as the health criteria for food: good quality product, with identical items, requires a larger budget. Some can afford to pay more expensively and do so readily. Others cannot afford this luxury and know no other alternative. The consequences for health are direct.

The other criteria for conscious consumers have a less rapid return for the consumer (for example, production methods regardless of social and environmental rights) and could even make those who cannot afford to apply these principles feel guilty. This is the case for example for clothing or for products exposed to fluctuating global prices (coffee, tea, cocoa, etc.). Here the alternatives are often more expensive than the first prices and, by definition, more difficult to access for a large number of people.

Does not this boil down to letting part of the population bear the responsibility of an impossible change of this perverse system, whose long-term effects are damaging for the whole society? Instead of fighting for low prices, shouldn't we rather fight for everyone to have the means and the RIGHT to buy at the right price?

c) Overall quality, a right for all

Therefore, to prevent conscious consumption from being limited to a mere marketing fad, generating a parallel offer to that of low cost and socially discriminating products, each one must become aware of the entire operation, integrate it in a global economic reasoning, rethink his/her methods of consuming and demand that each one has the means to consume consciously. Everyone must feel concerned.

The poorest consumers must become conscious that their purchases also contribute to the sales of these companies. They can continue to exert pressure for a better social and environmental quality of products by avoiding as much as possible the traps of marketing and publicity, by coming together to obtain the means to choose what they consume.

And if “social integration through consumption has been, and still is, a factor to weaken the conscience of the working class”²⁰, then it is a question of rediscovering the means to free ourselves from the traps and manipulations of the consumer society, a term that has become all too trite.

III – ACT THROUGH CONSUMPTION AND ACT TO CONSUME DIFFERENTLY

“Act through consumption” and “act to consume differently” means displaying vigilance about where our money goes when we exchange it for products and services, and exerting an economic pressure from the “bottom” in addition to legislative and regulatory pressures that work from the “top”. It also entails acting and mobilising ourselves to access an open information, to make rules evolve, to put pressure on companies and for everyone to have the means of consuming overall good quality products.

It is the responsible citizen’s answer to an economic and political system that sees human beings as mere consumers.

It is also a way of doing “something” individually everyday, for all those who do not have the time to be active militants.

It entails a new economic view that considers consumers as fully-fledged economic players, interdependent with companies and market regulating bodies. Therefore they have a significant role to play.

The consciousness of this interdependency and power is becoming more and more widespread, due to the food safety scandals, the actions of fair trade players and anti-globalisation stands. It reflects the need to “accompany the changes” of our society by a “social change”²¹, characterised by a responsible determinism: civics, fairness and solidarity.

We cannot change the social organisation simply by imposing restrictive laws (Tobin Tax, citizen control of regulation bodies), if we continue to support everyday the very social, economic and environmental practices that we fight against, if we do not change our own methods of consumption. We can do this by remaining consistent with our approach and by exerting pressure on companies.

That is where we can become once again part of decisions concerning the future of our world.

***“ Les maux de notre civilisation sont l’envers négatif des bienfaits
dont nous continuons de jouir ”***

Edgar Morin

(“The ills of our civilisation are the negative inverse of the goods we keep enjoying”)

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¹ Cf. :

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“Salt Overdose in the French Dinner Plate” (“ Overdose de sel dans l'assiette des français ”) – Le Point 16.02.2001

² *Tomás Moulian, El consumo me consume*

³ “The New Art of Selling” (“ *Le nouvel art de vendre* ”) *Que Choisir* 380 – mars 2001

⁴ On the www.leclercstaunes.com website, E. Leclerc, who considers what he represents to be a “movement”, expresses this explicitly: “They are fighting against illicit deals that create a barrier to competition, with one goal in mind: to defend the consumer”; “defending purchasing power: the major fight”; “helping the poorest by offering them cheaper products remains the ultimate driving-force of the movement”; “all the battles that are won are in favour of the consumer, by making their life more enjoyable and above all cheaper”; “price/choice/quality of all: a legitimate request”; “to be the spokesperson of the public's legitimate consumerist concerns”.

⁵ For example, during the “ Save our markets ” campaign, it became clear that a European directive translated into French law, which was clearly designed to protect the consumer, was much closer to a standards' upgrade of small production and of their homogenization in order for them to meet the criteria of industrial production and large distribution networks, with all the negative consequences that this entailed pertaining to the quality of products, small producers, the local economy, and the consumer's freedom of choice.

⁶ *Christian Jacquiau, The Behind-the-Scenes of Large-Scale Distribution (Les coulisses de la grande distribution)*

⁷ Claude Fischler, Sociologist, National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)

⁸ *Tomás Moulian, El consumo me consume*

⁹ “Pesticides also Pollute the Atmosphere” (“ Les pesticides polluent aussi l'atmosphère”) – A survey by “ Environnement Magazine ” reveals, through measures of rains and fogs, that these chemicals wander about in the air of various regions of France : Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Auvergne, Centre as well as Bretagne. ” Le Monde 10.05.2000

¹⁰ “The Hypermarket, the Shopping Cart and the Freezer” (“L'hypermarché, le Caddie et le congélateur”) Philippe Bovet – Le Monde Diplomatique / Mars 2001

¹¹ See “The Hypermarket, the Shopping Cart and the Freezer” (“L'hypermarché, le Caddie et le congélateur”) Philippe Bovet – Le Monde Diplomatique / Mars 2001

¹² See Cohérence pour un développement durable – janvier 2000

¹³ See *Christian Jacquiau, The Behind-the-Scenes of Large-Scale Distribution (Les coulisses de la grande distribution)*

¹⁴ See “Transgenic Agriculture, Frankenstein’s Farm” (“Agriculture transgénique, la ferme de Frankenstein?”) – document edited by the BEDE / Inf’OGM (France)

¹⁵ *Tomás Moulian, El consumo me consume*

¹⁶ and often they even own small downtown shops

¹⁷ See “The Free Daily Papers Worry the Swedish Press” (“ Les quotidiens gratuits inquiètent la presse suédoise ”), *Le Monde* 17.11.2000 and “Will Consumer Magazines Kill Paid Press?” (“ Les consumer magazines vont-ils flinguer la presse payante ? ”), *Culturepub Le magazine* – 01-02/2001

¹⁸ *Tomás Moulian, El consumo me consume*

¹⁹ These costs are sometimes impossible to evaluate in figures: death (ESB, amiante, cancers, etc.), irreparable chronic pollution, or only on the very long term (water table pollution, nuclear waste), famines, depressions, suicides, etc.

²⁰ *Tomás Moulian, El consumo me consume*

²¹ Edgar Morin