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Introduction: The Ghost of Baudrillard

Baudrillard is a foreigner as well as familiar name to Chinese academia. The familiarity is due to “post-modern” misunderstandings; the foreignness, on the other hand, consists in the ignorance, in the true sense of the word, of the origin of Baudrillard’s thought. The effect is akin to when people see the movie Avatar, and do not know the original metaphor of the blue-faced Navi tribe. Although Baudrillard is not present, the large number of academic works imitating him that were created during his life are, like ghosts, constantly generating irresistible temptation. In this sense, striving to penetrate the illusion as such is the only path to the grasping of desire, which is exactly where the significance of this set of articles lies.

Mauss and Bataille’s factual heterotopias of non-utilitarian, primarily tribal lives constitute the pivot offered by Baudrillard’s actual symbolic exchange to modern capitalism’s kingdom of utilitarian values. As a result, Baudrillard claims, in his The Mirror of Production, a conspiracy between Marx’s historical materialism and modernity. Dr. Xia Ying aims to discuss the critique of Baudrillard, agreeing with his contention that the concept of production is the constituting foundation of the whole of metaphysics. In fact, this is also the context of Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning), secretly concealed by Heidegger in 1936. Be that as it may, can labor and production really be disengaged from the existence of human society? What’s more, what would be left in metaphysics without a practical dialectics based on the singly remaking of the surrounding world? This is a question deserving further reflection.

Baudrillard was a junior member of contemporary French radicalism but rejected, with an alternative appearance, many of his forerunners’ games. In this sense, the issues he inherited from Bataille and Sade are, as a rule, extraordinary. Dr. Coulter attempts to compare Baudrillard and Roland Barthes, tracing their connections amidst writing, sense, language, truth, and actuality. His exploration starts from micro-level aspects but concentrates on certain themes, and hence is richly inspiring. The problem is, nevertheless, that the concepts of writing, sense,
language, truth, and actuality in Barthes’s early structuralist semiotics run exactly counter to the situating meaning of the post-textualist context in which he worked after his “treason.” Dr. Coulter presumes a broken Barthesian homogeneity so that what is approached by Baudrillard is precisely the late Barthes’s liberated, “sensualized” *The Pleasure of the Text*. In writing as such, sense is no longer actual, writing no longer spreads truth, and, in “words are speaking me,” there is only the desert of being.

In the scientific and philosophical contexts of modern Europe, masters like Bohr and Heidegger all turned, at some point and of one accord, to the East, and particularly to the *Yijing* and the metaphysics of Laozi and Zhuangzi. Nonetheless, when translating the *Daodejing* into German, Heidegger by no means intended to throw himself at the East; rather, by this “treason” he sought recourse from other situations he faced. Dr. Liu Xiang focuses on the similarities and differences between Zhuangzi’s “effaced-self” and Baudrillard’s “lost subject,” having opened a door for later in-depth comparative studies. That which merits rumination is that, despite their superficial similarity, there exists a deeper historical break between Zhuangzi’s centuries-old “self” and Baudrillard’s modern subject. Moreover, Baudrillard’s “theory of the death of subject” is itself not his original creation but rather a reinterpretation of structuralist and post-structuralist theory ranging from Lacan’s construction of pseudo-self/subject to Foucault’s face drawn in sand at the shore.