



The Consuming Instinct: What Juicy Burgers, Ferraris, Pornography, and Gift Giving Reveal About Human Nature

By Gad Saad

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In this highly informative and entertaining book, the founder of the vibrant new field of evolutionary consumption illuminates the relevance of our biological heritage to our daily lives as consumers. While culture is important, the author shows that innate evolutionary forces deeply influence the foods we eat, the gifts we offer, the cosmetics and clothing styles we choose to make ourselves more attractive to potential mates, and even the cultural products that stimulate our imaginations (such as art, music, and religion).

The book demonstrates that most acts of consumption can be mapped onto four key Darwinian drives—namely, survival (we prefer foods high in calories); reproduction (we use products as sexual signals); kin selection (we naturally exchange gifts with family members); and reciprocal altruism (we enjoy offering gifts to close friends). The author further highlights the analogous behaviors that exist between human consumers and a wide range of animals.

For anyone interested in the biological basis of human behavior or simply in what makes consumers tick—marketing professionals, advertisers, psychology mavens, and consumers themselves—this is a fascinating read.

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Editorial Review

Review

"What's your guilty pleasure? Junk food? Fast cars? Champagne? To shop until you drop? What makes consumers tick? Psychologist Gad Saad writes of the innate needs, preferences, and drives that spur many of our most treasured appetites and behaviors—all soft-wired into the human brain in deep history for purposes of survival and reproduction. We are natural born consumers. And as Saad elegantly examines our daily rituals and tastes (and he gives us troves of fascinating data from around the world), he brings our common human heritage to life. I'll never look at my high-heeled shoes or a buffet the same way again. It's **a smart read for all who sell, all who buy**, and all who really want to understand others and themselves. You may even come away thinking: I consume, therefore I am." --Helen Fisher, PhD, Biological Anthropologist, Rutgers University and author of *Why Him? Why Her?*

"I urge you to consume *The Consuming Instinct*! Using cogent examples from popular culture deftly mixed with an expert's grasp of modern evolutionary biology, Dr. Saad shows how our biology underlies our consumer choices. **Like nothing else on the market today**, it will help you understand why we purchase and pay attention as we do. Indeed, never has science for the lay-person been presented more cogently or accessibly when it comes to our daily economic activities." --David P. Barash, professor of psychology, University of Washington and co-author of *Payback: Why We Retaliate, Redirect Aggression and Take Revenge*

"Juicy burgers, Ferraris, pornography, and gift giving are the stuff of human nature. Evolutionary psychologist Gad Saad tells us just how and why, and much more, in *The Consuming Instinct*. With **wit, charm, and crystal clarity**, Saad lays bare the evolutionary underpinnings of consumerism." --Todd K. Shackelford, Ph.D., professor and Chair of Psychology, Oakland University, editor, *Evolutionary Psychology* (epjournal.net)

"What the jacket does not say is just how **entertaining, enlightening and informative** this book is as Saad reveals the reasons behind consumers' preferences for fat burgers, fancy cars and the trendiest fashions. By putting forward the idea of evolutionary economics, Saad opens up new concepts in marketing as well as a much clearer understanding of why we respond to certain products the way we do. For those curious about the reasons people spend their hard-earned money on the things they do, presented in an understandable format then look no further." --Monsters and Critics

About the Author

Gad Saad, Ph.D. (Montreal, Canada), a popular blogger for *Psychology Today* ("Homo-Consumericus"), is a professor of marketing at the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University. He holds the Concordia University Research Chair in Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences and Darwinian Consumption and is the author of *The Evolutionary Bases of Consumption*, plus numerous scientific papers.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jane Nelsen:

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Eric Valentine:

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