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The Evolutionary Bases of Consumption (Marketing and Consumer Psychology Series)

Gad Saad

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The Evolutionary Bases of Consumption by Gad Saad applies Darwinian principles in understanding our consumption patterns and the products of popular culture that most appeal to individuals. The first and only scholarly work to do so, this is a captivating study of the adaptive reasons behind our behaviors, cognitions, emotions, and perceptions. This lens of analysis suggests how we come to make selections such as choosing a mate, the foods we eat, the gifts that we offer, and more. It also highlights how numerous forms of dark side consumption, including pathological gambling, compulsive buying, pornographic addiction, and eating disorders, possess a Darwinian etiology.

Engaging and diverse in scope, the book maps consumption phenomena onto four key Darwinian modules: survival, reproduction, kin selection, and reciprocal altruism. As an interesting proposal, the author suggests that media and advertising contents exist in their particular forms because they are a reflection of our evolved human nature - negating the notion that they exist through the reverse causal link, as proposed by social constructivists. The link between evolutionary theory and consumption behaviors is detailed throughout the book via an examination of (among many others):

- appearance-enhancing products and services;
- financial and physical risk-taking;
- use of sexual imagery and the depictions of women in advertising; and
- television programs, movies, songs, music videos, literature, religion, and art.

The Evolutionary Bases of Consumption will appeal to evolutionists who desire to explore new areas wherein evolutionary theory can be applied; consumer and marketing scholars who wish to learn about the ways in which biological-and evolutionary-based theorizing can be infused into the consumer behavior/marketing/advertising disciplines; as well as other interdisciplinary scholars interested in gaining knowledge about the power of evolutionary theory in explaining a wide range of behavioral phenomena.

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