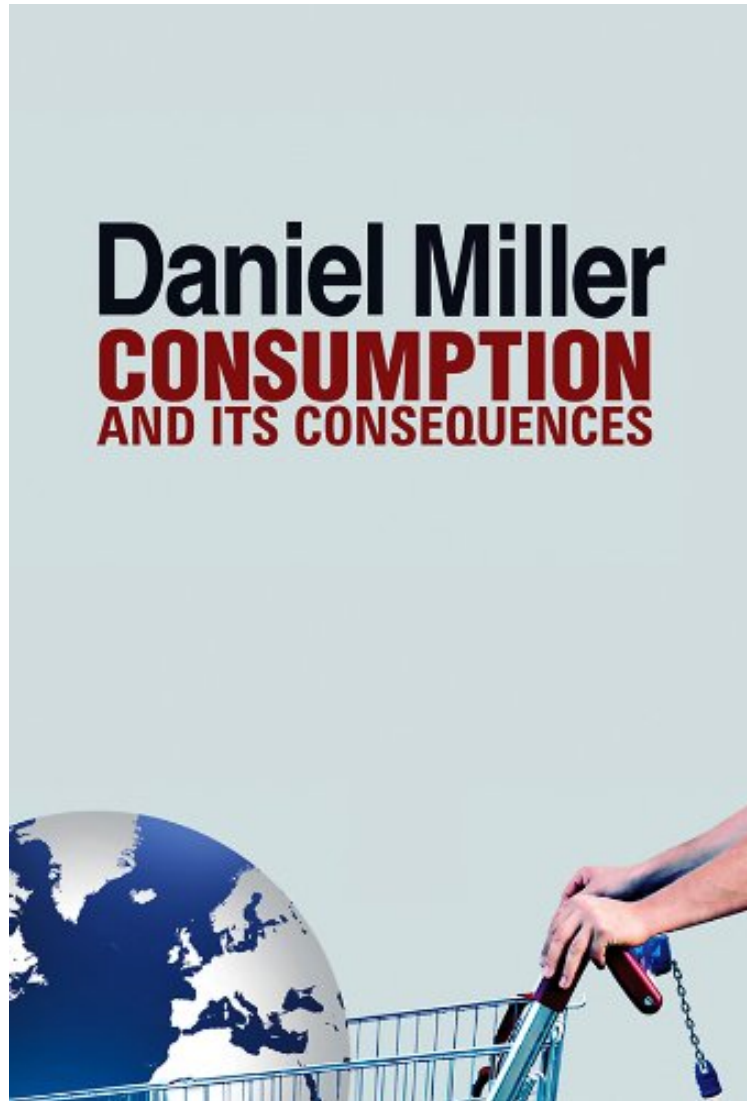


Consumption and Its Consequences

Daniel Miller

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Daniel Miller : Consumption and Its Consequences before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Consumption and Its Consequences:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Popular Academic ReadBy Gideon SingerDaniel Miller has showcased the storytelling abilities of anthropology and ethnography. The first and last chapter dialogues really help to paint a fluid understanding of how varied epistemology contribute to an understanding of 'consumption and its consequences' by demonstrating how the disciplines can communicate. This book is very approachable and should be enjoyed by undergrads, grad students and those with an interest in the well being of our planet.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy surfsteinThx2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Will challenge

your assumptions about why we buy the things we do - and how that affects our future

By Kcorn

Consumption and its Consequences was written as a sequel to the book *Stuff* but it is not necessary to have read the earlier book to appreciate this one. Written by an academic (Daniel Miller, Professor of Anthropology at University College London), this book consists of detailed research conducted over the course of a year. In addition to other research, Miller observed shoppers, noting which items they purchased - and then compiled the information. Much of that material challenges traditional assumptions about why people buy the things they do and whether they truly understand the actual consequences of their choices. A significant part of the book focuses on global warming and how shopping decisions can dramatically impact that. This is a complex work, certainly not a quick read, focusing on consumer behavior from several different viewpoints and angles. Although not a long book, it is fairly dense and I often stopped to review or reread some of the more challenging passages (and there were many). But I felt that reading *Consumption and its Consequences* was well worth the mental effort because Miller presented so much worth pondering. Just a sampling of the topics addressed: how much do consumers understand the economy? Do they realize their motivations for choosing particular items? Can informed shoppers change their behavior and select items which help reduce poverty or promote social equality? Since reading this book made me curious about the author, his background, and other works, I did search for more information about Miller online and was able to view a video where he discusses this book. He noted that our shopping choices wouldn't matter nearly so much if they weren't a potential vehicle for the planet's destruction - possibly an integral part of global warming, pollution, and more. That certainly grabbed my attention! As a shopper and consumer, I have my own assumptions about why I choose the food, clothing, and other items I buy. But *Consumption and its Consequences* compelled me to delve deeper into the effects of my choices. Was I truly aware of the reasons behind my choices - which could be far different than what they seemed on the surface? The answer: not nearly as often as I'd presumed. A study of consumer shopping habits may not seem a significant topic to some but Miller presents a very strong argument that vital issues - from reducing poverty to global warming - are connected to our buying habits. I feel obligated to note that Miller's research was often based on observations of female shoppers (primarily housewives) in North London rather than the United States. I did wonder how Miller's conclusions about class structure and shopping in the UK translates to American behavior and choices. On the other hand, he looks at many societies and their patterns of consumption. So readers, whether in the US, UK or elsewhere, are likely to learn a great deal and gain a new perspective from the information in *Consumption and Its Consequences*. This makes it far from just another academic book and a standout in the crowd.

This is a book for those looking for different answers to some of today's most fundamental questions. What is a consumer society? Does being a consumer make us less authentic or more materialistic? How and why do we shop? How should we understand the economy? Is our seemingly insatiable desire for goods destroying the planet? Can we reconcile curbs on consumption with goals such as reducing poverty and social inequality? Miller responds to these questions by proposing feasible and, where possible, currently available alternatives, drawn mainly from his own original ethnographic research. Here you will find shopping analysed as a technology of love, clothing that sidesteps politics in tackling issues of immigration. There is an alternative theory of value that does not assume the economy is intelligent, scientific, moral or immoral. We see Coca-Cola as an example of localization, not globalization. We learn why the response to climate change will work only when we reverse our assumptions about the impact of consumption on citizens. Given the evidence that consumption is now central to the way we create and maintain our core values and relationships, the conclusions differ dramatically from conventional and accepted views as to its consequences for humanity and the planet.

"Makes me wish fervently that it was Miller who was regularly invited to offer critical commentary on materialism, consumerism or climate change policy on BBC Radio 4 and not the usual public intellectuals who do little more than echo received wisdom ... His insights here deserve a wider hearing." *Times Higher Education book of the week*

"A profound contribution to debates about the limits, contradictions and alternatives to contemporary styles of living, working and provisioning." *Area*

"A tremendously valuable contribution to establishing the understanding of consumption as one of the central interests of contemporary anthropological studies." *Anthropological Notebooks*

"There are some curious moments in this book but, at its core, there's a very important observation - people aren't mindless drones who buy whatever the advertising agencies tell them to buy. Sometimes we act that way because we want to keep up with the Joneses but, from time to time, the objects we put in our shopping baskets reflect our ethical and social values and play a part in sustaining our most cherished relationships." *Geographical book of the month*

"This engagingly written book addresses some of the central dilemmas of contemporary global society: how to sustain a developed-world, consumerist lifestyle in the face of wrenching economic shifts and accelerating climate change. The topic is urgent, the prescriptions for change coming from academic and policy leaders, paltry. Miller makes the conversation more interesting, more lively, and more honest about the limits of the theoretical perspectives mustered thus far to address these issues." Bill Maurer, Professor of Anthropology and Law, University of California,

Irvine About the Author Daniel Miller is Professor of Material Culture at University College London.