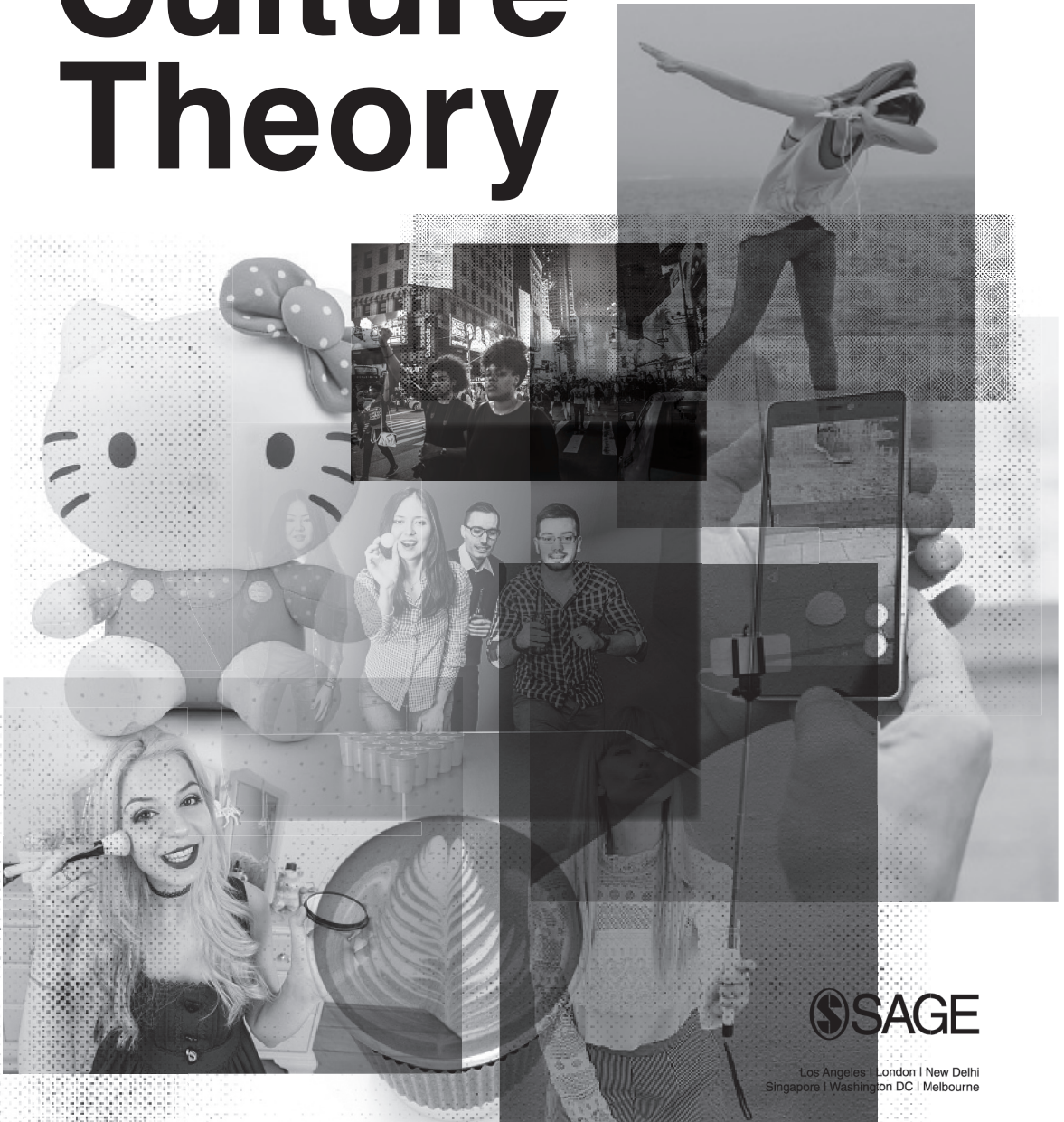


Edited by
Eric J. Arnould & Craig J. Thompson

Consumer Culture Theory



SAGE

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne



Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

Editor: Matthew Waters
Editorial assistant: Jasleen Kaur
Production editor: Sarah Cooke
Copyeditor: Elaine Leek
Proofreader: Fabienne Pedroletti-Gray
Indexer: Elizabeth Ball
Marketing manager: Alison Borg
Cover design: Francis Kenney
Typeset by: C&M Digitals (P) Ltd, Chennai, India
Printed in the UK

© Eric J. Arnould and Craig J. Thompson 2018
First published 2018

Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018932204

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the
British Library

ISBN 978-1-526-42071-8
ISBN 978-1-526-42072-5 (pbk)

At SAGE we take sustainability seriously. Most of our products are printed in the UK using responsibly sourced papers and boards. When we print overseas we ensure sustainable papers are used as measured by the PREPS grading system. We undertake an annual audit to monitor our sustainability.

CONTENTS

<i>About the Authors</i>	vii
Introduction: What Is Consumer Culture Theory? <i>Eric J. Arnould and Craig J. Thompson</i>	1
Part One: Consumption and Identity	17
1 Identity Projects and the Marketplace <i>Hope Jensen Schau</i>	19
2 Family and Collective Identity <i>Amber M. Epp and Tandy Chalmers Thomas</i>	40
3 Critical Reflections on Consumer Identity <i>Michelle Weinberger and David Crockett</i>	62
Part Two: Marketplace Cultures	85
4 Consumption Tribes and Collective Performance <i>Bernard Cova and Avi Shankar</i>	87
5 Consumer-Produced, Emergent, and Hybrid Markets <i>Eminegül Karababa and Daiane Scaraboto</i>	107
6 Glocalization of Marketplace Cultures <i>Gokcen Coskuner-Balli and Burçak Ertimur</i>	126

Part Three: The Socio-historic Patterning of Consumption	151
7 Social Class <i>Paul Henry and Marylouise Caldwell</i>	153
8 Gender(s), Consumption, and Markets <i>Luca M. Visconti, Pauline Maclaran, and Shona Bettany</i>	180
9 Race and Ethnicity <i>Kevin D. Thomas, Samantha N.N. Cross, and Robert L. Harrison III</i>	206
10 Global Mobilities <i>Fleura Bardhi, Marius K. Luedicke, and Zahra Sharifonnasabi</i>	225
Part Four: The Ideological Shaping of Consumption Practices and Consumers' Co-creative Appropriations	253
11 Neoliberalism and Consumption <i>Ela Veresiu and Markus Giesler</i>	255
12 Social Distinction and the Practice of Taste <i>Zeynep Arsel and Jonathan Bean</i>	276
13 Consumer Resistance and Power Relationships in the Marketplace <i>Dominique Roux and Elif Izberk-Bilgin</i>	295
14 Conclusion: Linking CCT and Consumer Research: Consumers' Mobilization of Co-created Resources <i>Craig J. Thompson, Debbie MacInnis, and Eric J. Arnould</i>	318
<i>Index</i>	347

INTRODUCTION

What Is Consumer Culture Theory?

*Eric J. Arnould, Aalto University
Business School, Helsinki*

*Craig J. Thompson,
University of Wisconsin–Madison*

This textbook systematically explores the rich mosaic of consumer culture and the ways it affects personal identity, social interactions, and affiliations, and not to be overlooked, behaviors in the commercial marketplace. Most fundamentally, *Consumer Culture Theory* addresses how these interrelations are manifested across a wide range of consumption contexts and brings to light core commonalities, revealing points of distinction, that help us better understand why consumers do what they do and why consumer culture takes the forms it does. To begin this exploration, let us consider two quite different consumption contexts in which consumers pursue a common quest to transcend constraints on their identities and forge meaningful connections with others who share common passions. In both cases, consumers enlist commercial products, services, experiences, and ideals towards their individual and collective ends.

TOUGH MUDDER

We paraphrase below a journalistic account from *The Atlantic* magazine (Khazan 2017).

Most office workers sit for 10 hours a day, but if they sign up for the Tough Mudder, a military-style obstacle course, they'll certainly be on their feet – running through live electrical wires. They'll also be on their hands, swinging from treacherous-looking monkey bars, and on their stomachs, crawling through the mud. And yet, millions of people have paid about \$100 each for the privilege.

Rebecca Scott, a lecturer at Cardiff Business School in Wales, sought to explore this paradox when she was working on her PhD dissertation. Initially focused on the psychology of hedonism and pleasure, she was interviewing competitive offshore yacht racers in Sydney,

Australia, when one day a skipper mused to her, ‘Why do people want to sit on a boat for days and get pummeled with weather?’ as she recalled. That, she decided, was a more interesting question: Why would comfortable Westerners want to pay for physical pain?

For a new study, Scott and her co-authors, Julien Cayla at Nanyang Business School in Singapore and Bernard Cova at the Kedge Business School in France, participated in Tough Mudders, interviewed 26 participants, and read online forums created by the Tough Mudder community to try to understand what motivates people to run these races.

In their conversations with Scott and each other, the participants emphasized how painful it was to train for and compete in the Mudder – and how rewarding that pain felt in the end. Here’s how a man named James described the ‘Arctic Enema’ obstacle, in which participants slide into a dumpster full of ice water, on his blog: ‘I can’t breathe. My legs aren’t working. My head is going to explode! My arms are too cold to drag me out. That was horrendous.’

As the event wore on, many participants described dissociating from their thoughts, as though in a zen state of unity with their mud-caked bodies. A man named Mike said, ‘I wasn’t feeling bad, but I wasn’t feeling good, I don’t know how to explain it, I wasn’t in shock, I wasn’t worried, I wasn’t in pain, but I wasn’t all there, I was a bit rattled.’

Scott and her colleagues argue that ‘Mike’s experience of not being “all there” is consistent with past research arguing that extreme pain obliterates “the contents of consciousness”’. The intense pain helps them to forget, temporarily, the hyper-mental concerns of their daily lives as cubicle drones.

Scott argues that, in a way, Tough Mudders and other painful forms of exercise allow people to ‘rediscover’ their physical bodies, as revealed in participant comments like, ‘I hurt in places I didn’t even know existed’ (Khazan 2017).

COSPLAY

All over the world, cosplay fans gather at conventions and parties to share their appreciation of and affection for anime and manga. These fans, who also refer to themselves as *otaku*, wear detailed makeup and elaborate costumes modeled after their favorite anime, manga, and related video game characters. Cosplayers spend immeasurable amounts of money and hours constructing or purchasing the components of costumes, learning signature poses and dialogue, and performing at comics conventions and parties, as they transform themselves from ‘real world’ identities into chosen (fictional) characters. This is the essence of cosplay, or *kosupure* (Winge 2006).

Cosplay also refers to the activities, such as masquerades, karaoke, and posing for pictures with other *otaku*, that are associated with dressing and acting like anime, manga, and video game characters. While the term cosplay encompasses various types of costumed role-playing, such as science fiction, fantasy, horror, mythology, fetish, and so

forth, Japanese and North American cosplay related to Japanese anime, manga, and video games perhaps enjoys the widest popularity (Allison 2014).

The game designer Takahashi Nobuyuki coined the term *cosplaying* in the 1980s when he encountered the costuming practices of American science fiction fans on a visit to the United States. In Japan, cosplay has become very prominent. Many Western fans nowadays learn about costuming not through science fiction or fantasy genres, but through Japanese fiction. As a fan practice, cosplay is associated with Japanese anime (cartoons), manga (comics), and games. Fans usually wear their costumes in specific settings, such as during particular events at conventions (e.g. competitions, fashion shows), or as props for fan videos (Lamerichs 2011).

To the uninitiated, cosplay can seem like little more than a glorified costume party, a Halloween dress-up parade at the wrong time of the year. But where a costume party ensemble is picked simply to amuse, many cosplayers feel a deeper connection with their chosen character that elevates the experience from mere dress-up to a more profound experience. They don't just don the same outfit as a beloved character; they adopt the same mannerisms, posture and accent, embodying the character rather than just imitating (Bastow 2014).

Cosplay is a highly competitive field with an almost endless supply of opportunities to accumulate social status and prestige among fans and other cosplay participants. Constructing costumes and expertly performing characters as well as making costumes for others as a small business, enrich the experience. Thus, cosplay is an emotionally rewarding practice that combines intrinsically pleasurable DIY costume crafting with intoxicating identity play at conventions. Cosplay participants experiment not only with the performance of fictional entities' character but may also experiment with the performance of gender in male-to-female and female-to-male transformations into the iconic media characters. To do so, participants make complex investments in emotional labor and skill building (Seregina and Weijs 2017).

This book aims to help you make sense of spectacular consumer behaviors like these but also the mundane practices that make up our lives in a market-driven, global consumer culture.

CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY: WHAT IS IT?

Consumer culture theorists are fascinated by phenomena such as *Tough Mudder* and cosplay. They seek to unravel their secrets and, in so doing, provide a more robust and nuanced understanding of global consumer culture and the market-mediated society that molds our lives as consumers within this world. This book aims to share and help the reader develop a consumer culture perspective of their own. In the following pages, we

define consumer culture theory, outline its general contours with the help of some recent examples, and finally outline the book itself.

Consumer culture theory (CCT) is a field of inquiry that seeks to unravel the complexities of consumer culture. Rather than viewing culture as a fairly homogenous system of collectively shared meanings, ways of life and unifying values shared by a member of society (e.g. Americans share this kind of culture, Japanese share that kind of culture), CCT explores the heterogeneous distribution of meanings and the multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader socio-historical frame of globalization and market capitalism. From a CCT standpoint, consumer culture is as a dynamic network of boundary spanning material, economic, symbolic, and social relationships or connections. Consumer culture is what consumers do and believe rather than an attribute of character. Similarly, 'being a consumer' is an identity intrinsic to market capitalism, our dominant global economic system, and the two evolve and develop in tandem. Concretely, as Don Slater (1997) proposes, consumer culture denotes a social arrangement in which markets either directly or indirectly mediate the relationships between lived experiences, that is, between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources like brands on which they depend.

Again, following Don Slater, the consumption of market-made commodities and desire-inducing commercialized symbols is central to consumer culture. At the same time, the perpetuation and reproduction of this system is largely dependent upon the exercise of personal choice in the private sphere of everyday life, that is, the choice to choose among commercialized offerings. The term consumer culture also conceptualizes an interconnected system of commercially produced images, texts, and objects that groups use – through the construction of overlapping and even conflicting consumption practices, identities, and meanings – to make collective sense of their environments and to anchor and orient their members' experiences and lives.

Arnould and Thompson's (2005) CCT framework is a heuristic mapping of CCT research along for four key, interrelated theoretical dimensions. These four dimensions, in a somewhat modified form, have also provided the organizing template for this book. They are (1) Consumer Identity Projects; (2) Marketplace Cultures; (3) The Socio-historic Patterning of Consumption; and (4) Mass-Mediated Marketplace Ideologies and Consumers' Interpretive Strategies (see Arnould and Thompson 2005).

These theoretical dimensions highlight systematic commonalities among CCT studies that manifest diversity in terms of methodological orientations (e.g. ethnography, phenomenology, multiple schools of textual analyses, historical methods, web-based methods) and they encompass an array of theoretical traditions (variously drawing from sociology, anthropology, literary criticism, critical theory, and feminist studies to name a few). And of course, CCT researchers deploy this theoretical system to explicate substantive issues emanating from the acquisition, use, and disposition of commercially

circulated products, services, knowledge, images, and experiences by groups and individual actors.

To explain these four clusters of theoretical and practical interests in a bit more detail, consumer identity projects align CCT with the cultural studies focus on identity work and the negotiation of cultural contradictions through the marketplace, as well as the commodification of cultural rituals and emotions. Researchers ask questions like: Why is identity such an issue in consumer culture? How do consumers pursue their identity projects? How do they use commercially circulated products, services, knowledge, images, and experiences to construct identities? What meanings do consumers pursue? How does a sense of selfhood form in market-mediated societies? What problems does globalization of consumer culture pose to individuals in diverse cultural contexts?

To take one example, Jafari and Goulding (2008) analyze the different meanings of consumption and consumer identities for young adult Iranians in their home country and, subsequently, in their expatriate locales in the UK. In the former case, study participants described using consumption to resist theocratic restrictions imposed on their identity practices. Participation in Western consumer culture became a risk-laden expression of defiance and liberty (see the recent trend among Iranian women to post ‘uncovered’ selfies on social media sites). Once ensconced in the UK, however, these immigrant consumers struggled to address the overwhelming array of ‘free’ market choices and the unnerving obligation to construct an ‘authentic’ identity that often conflicted with internalized Iranian moral codes. But, they also used consumption to enact a visible degree of Westernization and thereby ease suspicions that they might be a threat to the civic order. In both settings, these consumers experienced themselves as the subjects of panoptic social surveillance, though taking different forms. Facing these contrasting and potentially disempowering conditions, their consumption practices sought freedom from theocratic restriction (which could afford a more expressive identity project) and, later, freedom to live in anonymity, rather than as subjects of perpetual suspicion.

Over time, CCT research has expanded its initial theoretical focus on consumer experiences and their practices of identity construction through the use of marketplace resources. Beginning in the late 1990s, CCT researchers became increasingly interested in the question of how processes of social structuration – gender and class-based socialization, collective social and cultural formations, naturalized cultural ideologies, and enduring inequities in the distribution of capital – shape and are shaped by consumption practices and consumer individual and collective identity projects. This turn has animated three other clusters of research in consumer culture theory.

The socio-historic patterning of consumption aligns CCT with sociological and historical research on the role of class, gender, and ethnicity as structural influences on marketplace behaviors and vice versa. Researchers ask questions like: How do consumers use consumption to express and remake sociological categories like gender, age, ethnicity,

and nationality? How do immigrants assimilate through consumption? How does consumption reinforce or challenge social boundaries? How does market-mediated society assimilate diverse peoples to the contemporary 'consumer' template? Who or what is a consumer?

To take an example, David Crockett (2017) investigates and illuminates the intersection of race, class, culture, and consumption. He historicizes 'the politics of respectability', which has been a prominent feature of middle-class African American culture since their emancipation from slavery in 1863. He further analyzes the contemporary influences exerted by this multifaceted ideology. Through the politics of respectability middle-class African American consumers make a claim to legitimate citizenship (and thereby seek to rebuke disparaging racial stereotypes). Their legitimating, de-stigmatizing practices of racial uplift draw from the Protestant work ethic, Christian piety, and an ethos of self-discipline that embody principles of comportment and decorum characteristic of a professional class work milieu. Crockett further argues that this uplift strategy aligns with the twin practices of entrepreneurial self-development and oppositional respectability, whereby African Americans use the marketplace and conspicuous consumption practices to reclaim selected aspects of black culture from negative associations circulated by dominant racialized institutional discourses in popular media.

The interest in marketplace cultures aligns CCT with anthropological studies on material culture and the role of everyday practices and rituals in creating institutional forms of social and familial solidarity. Research on brand communities, for example, highlights the way in which technology and market structures facilitate new forms of communal organization and rituals of solidarity. At the same time, a new generation of studies has explored specific tensions between local and global meanings systems and institutions. Researchers ask questions like: How do communities form in market-mediated society? What forms does community take in market-mediated society? How do 'taste' cultures emerge? How do consumers participate in, or precipitate market emergence? How do consumers create value through collective association?

To take another example, Sandıkcı and Ger (2010) detail the emergence of the market for *tesettür* fashion, which involves an intersection of political Islam, familiar market channels, and the strategic use of economic and cultural capital. *Tesettür* began as metropolitan professional women appropriated a dressing practice that had formerly been associated with the impoverished and less educated rural sector of Turkish society. These formerly secular women embraced political Islam and sought to destigmatize veiling practices. Leveraging their economic capital and the cultural capital acquired through their middle-class upbringing, formal education, and, most of all, lifelong immersion in the sphere of secularized consumer culture, assisted by profit-seeking market intermediaries, these women remade the once stodgy and unflattering *tesettür* style of dress into a more urbane, appealing, and hybridized fashion style. These aestheticizing transformations led to the emergence of an upscale *tesettür* market of designers, retailers and

middle-class clientele that not only legitimated this mode of public presentation but also further mainstreamed political Islam as a countervailing ideology to the secular legacy of Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish nation's founding father.

Mass-mediated ideologies and consumers interpretive strategies aligns CCT with the critical theory tradition that examines the ideological bases of consumer culture and resistance thereto, and contemporary media studies research on the active and creative media user. Consumer culture theorists argue that consumers creatively and constructively rework mass media and advertising messages in ways that often run against the grain of their corporate encoded meanings. This stream of research examines how consumers exert agency and pursue identity goals through a dialogue (both practical and narrative) with the cultural frames imposed by dominant commercial ideologies. Researchers ask questions like: What are the ideological underpinnings of consumer societies? How do consumers make sense of these ideologies? How do resistant and divergent consumer ideologies form? How do such ideologies take material form in consumer goods and services? How do new technologies and markets become legitimate objects of consumer desire?

CCT studies have explored the power relations manifest in consumption and market-mediated relationships, such as the cultural discourses and systems of classification that normalize certain consumer identities and practices while casting others as problematic or deviant. Thus, some of this work looks at how body weight has become entangled with moral judgments of good and bad that deeply stigmatize some consumers. More broadly this research looks at how recent consumer ideology inculcates in us particular self-management models such that consumers who fail to take 'responsibility' for their diets, physical fitness, and health are deemed to threaten the moral order and everyday standards of propriety.

Mapping the diversity of empirical research into four clusters of theoretical interest provides an orienting device. It is a useful framework for organizing the materials presented in this book. It can also help a masters or doctoral student researcher identify a subset of CCT research questions and findings that have the most relevance for his/her given study, or reciprocally to discern important questions; identify boundary conditions; re-think research contexts as venues for programmatic theoretical contribution; and more broadly, to identify domains of theoretical concern that have not been addressed by prior CCT studies.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

CCT emerged as a corrective to the overly rationalistic and utilitarian view of the consumer that predominated in business schools up until the 1980s. This conventional orientation was based on the idea that consumers were rational decision-makers, most

concerned with the functional benefits of goods, and maximizing subjective utility. Consumer research based on these rational-utilitarian assumptions invested considerable effort in studying how factors, such as pricing, product assortments, retailing systems and formats, and information presentation in advertising and public relations, for example, influenced consumers' decision-making strategies. This substantial body of research had little to say about what fascinated early CCT researchers: consumers' desires, the consumption experiences that arose after purchases or the ways in which consumers meaningfully integrated brands and commercial services into their personal and social lives. For example, one of us conducted research on American Thanksgiving Day celebrations, which is the most widely celebrated holiday in the United States. We discovered that through this consumption ritual people perform important ideas about American social life. They celebrate the specific beliefs about family pooling and redistribution of resources, women's nurturing role in the household, and a belief in the abundance of basic consumption opportunities for all. At Thanksgiving, family members often make heroic efforts to come together across time and space, even though members may experience considerable mutual ambivalence during most of the year. Participants vigorously recollect the past, imagine the future, and negotiate their relationships in the kitchens and around the dining tables and games that bring together families and even strangers 'with nowhere else to go' on Thanksgiving Day. Through cooking and following what they claim are old family recipes, people celebrate skills and in turn are celebrated. They work out their dietary preferences and establish just what a 'homemade' meal actually means. They often believe they celebrate just like everyone else although we found quite a variety of distinctive ways of celebrating this holiday. It is a very busy event (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991).

In the early 1980s, the scholars who formed the nexus of what would become CCT drew on distinctive theoretical and methodological sources to address these overlooked topics (Arnould 1989; Belk 1988; Hirschman 1986; McCracken 1988a; Sherry 1983). Whereas traditional consumer and marketing research had been inspired by economic and psychological theory, the nascent CCT field drew upon anthropology, design, history, literary criticism, semiotics, sociology, and social psychology. Owing to fundamental differences in the subject matter of interest, that is, the whole cycle of consumption, and the theoretical orientations chosen, CCT scholars pursued methods designed to understand what people were up to in their consumption activities. Thus, the approaches adopted relied on qualitative methods such as existential phenomenological inquiry if the focus was on individual action and on ethnographic methods if the focus of interest was collective action. In both cases, the goal was understanding how consumption experiences were shaped by webs of cultural meanings and the symbolic value that consumption goods (and the practices that put them into use) served in consumers' personal and collective life projects.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Though CCT has an academic origin, its approach has found application in the managerial sphere, as brand managers realized that cultural meanings, consumer collectivities and social affiliations, and consumer identity projects, are integral to the market success of brands (Atkin 2004; Fournier and Lee 2009; Holt 2004; McCracken 2009). This is why nowadays anthropologists and designers inspired by cultural insights find positions in many companies and in successful consulting firms like the Practica Group, ReD Associates, Stripe Partners, or the :Anthropik network. Moreover, the cultural approaches inspired by CCT have lead a number of scholars to apply them to the task of reimagining marketing management from a cultural perspective, as for instance in Sunderland and Denny (2007), Holt and Cameron (2010) or Madsbjerg and Rasmussen (2014).

Doug Holt (2017) has proposed an approach to research that he terms Consumer Culture Strategy to drive substantive engagements with significant real world problems – climate change, poverty, inequality, shortfalls in the distribution of health care services. Holt’s consumer culture strategist would pursue his/her project by building expertise in the social problem domain; designing and conducting research that can address gaps in practice and building problem-solving models that can redress those gaps. For a CCS-oriented researcher, theory becomes a means to the larger end of combatting the larger social/policy problem. Holt (2017) also suggests that research following a consumer culture strategy should be diffused through platforms such as books, blogs, think tank white papers, and practitioner-oriented journals. A good example of this type of approach is that adopted by Linda Scott, a contributor to foundational feminist CCT scholarship (Scott and Penaloza 2006). In recent years, she has devoted her efforts to the promoting and publicizing what she calls the XX economy, a gynocentric vision of economic relations, with special focus on the developing world. Her network manifests a blog, aggregates projects devoted to women’s empowerment, engages in advocacy directed to governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and develops teaching cases on women’s empowerment (see www.doublexeconomy.com/). Consumer Culture Theorists might also take inspiration from the Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference (EPIC) group composed primarily of practitioner ethnographers and designers. EPIC has begun to develop just such a platform as Holt proposes (see www.epicpeople.org/).

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Consumer culture theory is an exciting world of research and reflection on the ‘what?’ ‘when?’, ‘where?’ and ‘how?’ of consumer behavior set in its global and socio-historic context. It aims to unpack the secrets of spectacular phenomena like Tough Mudder and cosplay described above. But as you will find in these pages consumer culture research

offers insight into both the deeper historical roots of consumer culture and the everyday experiences of navigating our market-mediated world as consumers. So welcome to the world of CCT scholarship. The remainder of this introduction briefly outlines the sections and chapters and provides a rationale for inclusion of these topics. What you will find in this book are 14 chapters each authored by a unique team or individual specialist in the topics covered. Thus, each chapter has a slightly different style, a slightly different feel particular to the authors, although they all include similarly formatted content. As you read you are looking over the shoulders of the experts who with their research collaborators and industry, civic society, and government partners are actively making the field of consumer culture theory.

The first three chapters address a phenomenon that is simultaneously a central feature of contemporary consumer society, a prime topic of study in consumer culture theory, as well as the imagined target of global marketing apparatus – the consumer or more accurately, the identity of the consuming human being. As we said earlier, economists and many policy-makers presume the consuming subject is the active source of choices and behaviors that produce and reproduce consumer society over time and across space. We know from important scholarly work (Colin Campbell 1987; Marcel Mauss 1985/1938; Marshall Sahlins 1976, 1996; Max Weber 2003/1920) that the modern individual, you and us included, is a relatively recent and unique historical product. Nowadays, the consumer self is globalized throughout the world although taking different forms that reflect regional and local socio-historical shaping forces. The perpetuation of a market society depends on an endlessly proliferating stream of commercial offerings. In turn, consumer culture embeds individual selves in a logic in which selfhood depends upon we consumers asserting our distinctive selfhood through acquiring, rejecting or discarding these commercial offerings. Chapter 1 by Hope Schau offers an extended inquiry into Western conceptions of, and the implications of these conceptions for, consumer culture theory. The reader can find further reflections on the consumer self in Chapter 11 that traces out how contemporary neoliberal political and economic ideas shape our understanding of our consumer selves and our ‘responsibilities’ as consumers. Similarly, Chapter 10 on global mobilities discusses how massive flows of goods, ideas, images, and people produce different ways people think of themselves and their consumption. Meantime, Chapter 2 by Amber Epp and Tandy Chalmers Thomas, develops a point of which we all are aware, that individuals’ identities and senses of self form and reform over the life course by way of our interaction with intimate others in households. Moreover, these identities are also co-created in a material nexus of commercial commodities and things that have been personalized through family members’ interaction among themselves and with these things during important life events. Chapter 3 by Michelle Weinberger and David Crockett provides a critical perspective on consumer identity work. Much consumer research, whether of an economic, psychological or cultural bent, focuses on a

consumer who is presumed to be agentic; that is, a being who can and does make choices in the furtherance of her own interests. However, agentic acts of consumption are subject to social influences and constraints in ways that people do not readily recognize. There are dominant, that is, socially approved, consumer identities and there are subordinated consumer identities. The latter are sometimes negatively sanctioned or stigmatized on the basis of demographic or cultural characteristics. That relationship between dominant and subordinate consumer identities is the theme of Weinberger and Crockett's contribution.

The second part of the book focuses on marketplace cultures. In Chapter 4, Bernard Cova and Avi Shankar outline the nature of these collectivities in consumer culture. Anthropology and history are adorned with examples of human groups larger than the family through which people express their humanity, their dreams, their fears, and their creative ambitions. From Australian totemic groupings, to Amazonian tribes, from Sierra Leonean secret societies to ancient Greek Dionysian cults, from schools and movements in art, music, and sculpture to poetic and literary traditions, people have expressed their affiliations in innumerable ways. So too, as Cova and Shankar reveal, consumer culture is cross-cut with consumer subcultures, tribes, communities and publics. They show that each of these forms of social life develop distinctive relationships to commercial market offerings, and how in turn these relationships inevitably affect what marketers bring to the marketplace. Particularly notable with the rise of Web 2.0, an aspect of everyday life of which all readers of this text must be deeply aware, is the heightened influence of consumers on the marketplace. If from the late 18th to the late 20th century, consumers' economic role was to choose among offerings made available by producers, Web 2.0 has changed this dynamic. Thus, in Chapter 5, Eminegül Karababa and Daiane Scaraboto trace out the emergence of contemporary markets and the active role that consumers take in forging and forming new markets, market forms, and offerings. Indeed, their work leads us to ask whether this old 18th century distinction between producer and consumer – or between supply and demand as economists term it – is still meaningful in contemporary consumer culture. Unique to our era is the truly global extension of market-based society and consumer culture. Building on this idea, Chapter 6, co-authored by Gokcen Coskuner-Balli and Burçak Ertimur, discusses the effects of this pan-global globalization on consumer culture. They point out how the interaction between a consumer culture that took full form in Euro-American contexts inevitably produces global-local, or glocal, hybrids as it takes root in regions of the world with dramatically different socio-historical experiences such as West, South and East Asia, for example. Of course, globalization is not a one-way street; it is constituted of global flows of ideas, things, people, money, and consumer practices of all sorts. Thus, they provide compelling examples of how market society transforms local activities into global consumption goods on an accelerating scale.

Part Three, the third and longest section of our text, addresses the socio-historic patterning of consumption. This section explores in detail how market-mediated society and

consumer culture has modified and even produced, as well as been affected by, distinctions of gender, ethnicity, and class. Further, authors develop the theme of globalization to suggest how globalized consumer culture 'liquefies' some of these seemingly solid groupings. Chapter 7, contributed by Paul Henry and Marylouise Caldwell, dives into the topic of social class. Their work builds on the classic foundation provided by Karl Marx showing how capitalist market society divides people into groups based on their economic status, basically those who have labor and those who have capital. But, their analysis then goes on to build on more contemporary understandings of market-mediated society which suggest that our social relationships and cultural knowledge likewise become assets that we use to obtain and make use of market offerings in building our identities and connecting with, or disconnecting from, groups that are significant to us.

Every society makes use of gender to organize many aspects of economic and social life. Beliefs and practices concerning biological sex and gender are deeply ingrained cultural constructs. Consumer culture is no different, as Chapter 8, co-authored by Luca Visconti, Pauline Maclaran, and Shona Bettany elaborates. The authors remind us that because markets thrive on change and diversity, in consumer culture gender roles are always in flux. The authors develop the ways in which marketing intersects with gender. They discuss the troubles that unfold due to gender stereotyping in marketing practice and marketing communications. They discuss the ways in which consumption is implicated in performing, resisting, and reformulating gender roles. They point out that branded products and services are strongly linked to gender roles, and gender affects how people respond to marketing practices.

Chapter 9, co-authored by Kevin D. Thomas, Samantha N.N. Cross, and Robert L. Harrison III, illuminates the complex relationships between consumer culture, race, and ethnicity. The authors show how these terms all refer to socially constructed characteristics of particular groups, but the implications of these social constructions differ markedly both in consumer culture and society more generally. The construct of race focuses heavily on the visible, physical characteristics of people. Ironically, while race is the most superficial and least differentiating of these three social constructions, it is, as these authors demonstrate, an influential and divisive marketplace identifier that groups and separates people on the basis of quite arbitrary distinctions. Crockett's (2017) work, as we discussed above, shows that consumers adopt distinctive strategies to contend with racial marketplace identifiers.

Following classic theories from social science, consumer theorists have tended to treat subculture, ethnicity, race, and social class as stable structural factors influencing consumers' behaviors. Chapter 10, co-authored by Fleura Bardhi, Marius Luedicke, and Zahra Sharifonnasabi, provides a more contemporary perspective on how globalization accelerates the movement of people, products, ideas, and images, not to mention money, which can dramatically upend local social structures. Global mobilities can take different forms

from economic and political migration to global nomadism. Global nomads are pioneers in what the authors term liquid consumption, a kind of hyper-cosmopolitan consumer lifestyle that prioritizes flexibility and adaptability in consumption practice. For consumers, global mobility can be a source of capital accumulation, potential social mobility, as well as empowerment. However, global mobilities are challenging and can also result in feelings of homelessness, and may lead to social isolation and challenge one's sense of personal security. Some migrant consumers use what is called compensatory consumption to cope with these feelings whereas locals may resist their efforts. Owing to these social tensions and conflicts, consumption may not always bring the sense of completion migrant consumers may want.

The last three chapters in this book reflect consumer culture theorists' defining interest in the role of ideology in shaping consumer behavior and in turn as shaped by consumers' creative employment of commercial resources. Ideology consists of values, norms, beliefs, meanings, symbols, and customs; it is a common framework of understanding of 'how we do things around here', or a worldview. Ideology is a common horizon, an intellectual heritage, and set of shared beliefs linked to social practices and integrated into key political and economic institutions (Press et al. 2014: 104). An essential reference point for this discussion is Chapter 11, co-authored by Ela Veresiu and Markus Giesler, neoliberalism and consumption. The chapter traces out the history and implications of neoliberal ideology, one of the dominant ideologies of our time. They show that neoliberalism complements market capitalism by presenting the satisfaction of individual interests through consumption as a responsibility, a right and the lynchpin of the market economy. These ideas resonate with those presented in Chapter 1. The authors also review some examples of responses to neoliberal ideology such as consumer activism and consumer resistance, a theme developed further in Chapter 13. Furthermore, they show how neoliberal ideology produces responses to major social problems that imagine their solution lies in providing consumers with market-based alternatives.

Chapter 12, co-authored by Zeynep Arsel and Jonathan Bean, is an excellent illustration of how consumers contribute to market formation in consumer culture through the development of taste regimes, which are a kind of aesthetic ideology. The famous 'Danish design' is a useful example. These authors also foreground the ways in which complements of objects produce what McCracken (1988b: 118ff) calls Diderot effects, the feeling that some things just go together. Theorists and philosophers have long seen taste as trickling down from the attitudes and behaviors of the upper classes. This chapter provides an overview of how social mobility, globalization, and digital culture is transforming taste in contemporary consumer culture. A key takeaway from this chapter is that taste is not purely individual. Instead, a host of inescapable social influences shapes taste. These influences range from your upbringing in a particular social class milieu to the aesthetic norms and ideals that members of the social cohorts and consumption

community share, and in which individual consumers participate and seek to gain acceptance and status.

In Chapter 13 Dominique Roux and Elif Izberk-Bilgin explore the important topic of consumer resistance. Resistance means standing up against what a person or group perceives as a power, a pressure, an influence, or any attempt to act upon one's conduct. Marketing practice and communications can impose norms, prescribe certain behaviors, and convey ideologies that consumers resist. In turn, consumer resistance can be transformative, mobilizing for change in marketplace meanings, practices, and power relationships that enable particular factions of consumers to combat social inequities or collective feelings of disempowerment or injustice.

Chapter 14 provides an afterword to the book. In this concluding chapter, Craig Thompson, Debbie MacInnis, and Eric Arnould offer a perspective that bridges interests of consumer culture theorists and consumer behavior researchers. If the former primarily focus on meso and macro levels of analysis, consumer behavior researchers have tended to focus on micro-level issues related to consumer choice and decision making. The resource perspective bridges these points of view. For example, consumer culture theorists are likely to view economic, cultural (knowledge and taste) and social capital (educational attainment and interpersonal networks) as resources. Consumers use these resources to build identities they think of as authentic, as described in Part One of this book, or link them through authoritative custom and ritual to collectives of the kinds describe in Parts Two and Three of this book (Arnould and Price 2000). Consumer behavior researchers are inclined to think of cognition and memory as precious resources, but also to focus on how people use time and money to make meaningful decisions. Consumer behavior researchers tend to conceive of both time and money as scarce resources. Similarly, a significant body of consumer decision research examines social inclusion, comparison, and exclusion, in other words, the effects of social resources on decision-making and choice (Dahl 2013). Increasingly, these researchers, like consumer culture theorists, are interested in how people make choices that increase meaningfulness and even wellbeing (Aaker 2014).

REFERENCES

- Aaker, Jennifer (2014) 'Curation: Meaningful choice', *Journal of Consumer Research*, (Autumn), https://academic.oup.com/jcr/pages/meaningful_choice.
- Allison, Peter Ray (2014) 'Cosplay: "It is fun to be someone entirely different"', *The Guardian*, 13 May. www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/may/13/cosplay-sci-fi-weekender-dressing-up-fantasy-characters.
- Arnould, Eric J. (1989) 'Toward a broadened theory of preference formation and the diffusion of innovations: Cases from Zinder Province, Niger Republic', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (September): 239–67.

- Arnould, Eric J. and Price, Linda L. (2000) 'Authenticating acts and authoritative performances: questing for self and community', in S. Ratneshwar, David Glen Mick, and Cynthia Huffman (eds), *The Why of Consumption: Contemporary Perspectives on Consumers Motives, Goals, and Desires*. New York and London: Routledge. pp. 140–63.
- Arnould, E.J. and Thompson, C. J. (2005) 'Consumer culture theory (CCT): Twenty years of research', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (4): 868–82.
- Atkin, Douglas (2004) *The Culting of Brands: Turn Your Customers into True Believers*. New York: Portfolio.
- Bastow, Clem (2014) 'Cosplay: It's more than just "a glorified costume party"', *The Guardian*, 8 July www.theguardian.com/culture/australia-culture-blog/2014/jul/08/cosplay-its-more-than-just-a-glorified-costume-party.
- Belk, Russell W. (1988) 'Possessions and the extended self', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (September): 139–68.
- Campbell, Colin (1987) *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Crockett, David (2017) 'Paths to respectability: Consumption and stigma management in the contemporary black middle class', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (3): 554–81.
- Dahl, Darren (2013) 'Curation: Social influence and consumer behavior', *Journal of Consumer Research*, (Spring), https://academic.oup.com/jcr/pages/social_influence_and_consumer_behavior.
- Fournier, Susan and Lee, Lara (2009) 'Getting brand communities right,' *Harvard Business Review*, April, 105–11.
- Hirschman, Elizabeth C. (1986) 'Humanistic inquiry in marketing research: Philosophy, method, and criteria', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23 (3): 237–49.
- Holt, Douglas B. (2004) *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Holt, Douglas B. (2017) 'Consumer culture strategy'. Available at www.academia.edu/15574357/Consumer_Culture_Strategy.
- Holt, Douglas B. and Cameron, Douglas (2010) *Cultural Strategy: Using Innovative Ideologies to Build Breakthrough Brands*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jafari, Aliakbar and Goulding, Christina (2008) "'We are not terrorists!" UK-based Iranians, consumption practices and the "torn self"', *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 11 (June): 73–91.
- Khazan, Olga (2017) 'Escaping office ennui through painful exercise: A study explores how Tough Mudders allow the "cognitariat" a break from the tedium of sedentary work', *The Atlantic*, 25 March. www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/03/breaking-the-ennui-of-office-work-through-painful-exercise/520746/.
- Lamerichs, Nicolle (2011) 'Stranger than fiction: Fan identity in cosplay,' *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 7. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3983/twc.2011.0246>.

- Madsbjerg, Christian and Rasmussen, Mikkel (2014) *Moment of Clarity*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Mauss, Marcel (1985/1938) 'A category of the human mind: The notion of person; the notion of self' (trans. W.D. Halls), in Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins and Steven Lukes (eds), *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1–25.
- McCracken, Grant (1988a) 'Diderot unities and Diderot effect: Neglected cultural aspects of consumption', in *Culture and Consumption*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp. 118–29.
- McCracken, Grant (1988b) *Culture and Consumption*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- McCracken, Grant (2009) 'Getting past guru' and 'Stealth CCOs', excerpt from *Chief Culture Officer: How to Create a Living, Breathing Corporation*. New York: Basic Books. pp. 5–40.
- Press, Melea, Arnould, Eric J., Murray, Jeff B., and Strand, Katie (2014) 'Ideological challenges to changing strategic orientation in commodity agriculture', *Journal of Marketing*, 78 (November): 103–19.
- Sahlins, Marshall (1976) *Culture and Practical Reason*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Sahlins, Marshall (1996) 'The sadness of sweetness: The native anthropology of Western cosmology', *Current Anthropology*, 37 (June): 395–428.
- Sandıkçı, Özlem and Ger, Güliz (2010) 'Veiling in style: How does a stigmatized practice become fashionable?', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (June): 15–36.
- Scott, Linda M., and Lisa Peñaloza (2006) 'Matriarchal Marketing: A Manifesto', *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 14 (1): 57–67.
- Seregina, Anastasia and Weijo, Henri A. (2017) 'Play at any cost: How cosplayers produce and sustain their ludic communal consumption experiences', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (June): 139–59.
- Sherry, Jr, John F. (1983) 'Gift giving in anthropological perspective', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10 (September): 157–68.
- Slater, Don (1997) *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Sunderland, Patricia L. and Denny, Rita M. (2007) *Doing Anthropology in Consumer Research*. New York: Routledge.
- Wallendorf, Melanie and Arnould, Eric J. (1991) "'We gather together": The consumption rituals of Thanksgiving Day', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18 (June): 13–31.
- Weber, Max (2003/1920) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Mineola, NY: Dover Books.
- Winge, Theresa (2006) 'Costuming the imagination: Origins of anime and manga cosplay', *Mechademia*, 1: 65–76.