WHAT'S MINE IS YOURS

THE RISE OF COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Rachel Botsman
and Roo Rogers

What's Mine Is Yours

THE RISE OF COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION

Rachel Botsman
and
Roo Rogers

HarperCollins e-books

For my nana, Evelyn Amdur
—Rachel

For Bernie, Ruby & Mei
—Roo

Contents

Introduction
What’s Mine Is Yours

In October 2007, designers from all over the world traveled to San Francisco to attend the annu industrial design conference. The city’s hotel rooms had been sold out for months. Joe Gebbia ar Brian Chesky, old friends and product design graduates from the Rhode Island School of Design, we among the ten thousand people planning to attend. The classmates had recently moved into a big lo in South of Market, San Francisco, or SoMa, as it is known, to start a business. During a conversatio Gebbia and Chesky had about making some quick money to help pay their rent, they aske themselves, “Why not rent our extra room and advertise it on the conference Web site?” They did, ar made close to $1,000 in just one week.

Chesky and Gebbia thought that people in their twenties would respond to their offer. Three peop ended up staying: a male designer from India who read about the idea on a local design blog and wl saw it as a great way to meet new people; a thirty-five-year-old woman from Boston who thought was a better value than a hotel; and a forty-five-year-old father of five from Utah. “It completely ble away our assumptions,” Gebbia recalls. The friends were also surprised that they didn’t feel like the had strangers in their own home. “They are strangers until you have a conversation with them Chesky explained.

Convinced they could start a business matching visitors who wanted rooms with locals who wante to rent out extra space, Chesky and Gebbia, joined by Nathan Blecharczyk, a close friend and We developer, built a simple Web site in early 2008. They initially thought of the idea “air beds fo conferences” solely for large events such as the Republican and Democratic conventions—whe hotels were unavailable because they were sold out or unaffordable. “When Obama announced he w speaking in a 75,000-seat arena, and there were only 40,000 hotel rooms in Denver, the math ju really worked in our favor,” Chesky recalls. Their Web site’s traffic grew. They appeared on CNN an in the pages of the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. During the first few months of th launch, the trio was surprised by both the number and the mix of people wanting to rent out space well as by the diversity of travelers—families, newlyweds, students, and even businessmen—willin to pay for a rented room.

Chesky, Blecharczyk, and Gebbia realized that conferences were just a narrow slice of the larg market. On the whiteboard in their apartment, they drew a spectrum. On one side they wrote “hotel and on the other they scribbled rental listings such as craigslist, youth hostels, and nonmonetary trav exchanges such as CouchSurfing that help people travel by creating a network of couches available sleep on for free. In the middle was a big white space, an untapped market: people looking f reasonably priced accommodations with the added benefit of a local experience. They were, howeve wary that this opportunity appeared so large and untapped for a logical reason—trust.

Was the act of attending the same event, whether a political rally, a music festival, or a desig conference the critical factor in building trust between strangers? Would people stay with one anothe if they just shared an interest such as photography? What about if they were alumni who ha graduated from the same university? Was it possible to create an entirely open peer-to-pe marketplace for people to stay anywhere around the world? These were questions the three me ~~chatted about for several months before agreeing that the answer could be "yes" to all of the~~ abov The success of other matchmaking services such as eBay indicated that trust could be built. By Augu 2008, Airbnb.com, their company's Web site, was born. "The name came from the idea that with th Internet and a spare room, anyone can become an innkeeper," explains Blecharczyk.

In April 2010, Airbnb.com had nearly 85,000 registered users, with more than 12,000 properti across 3,234 cities in more than 126 countries. Just as eBay is for goods, the site is a diver marketplace for spaces. Listings include everything from a "Charming studio in Bastille, Marais" f $90 a night, to a "Harlem Haven Private Apartment, New York" for $120, to an entire villa in th "Bophut Hills in Koh Samui, Thailand" for $275 per night. Chesky marvels, "When we started I nev thought people would be renting out tree houses, igloos, boats, villas, and designer apartments."

For the most part, the people and places are not vetted, inspected, or interviewed by Airbnb. It's u to users to determine if they want to host a guest or if they want to stay with someone based o kaleidoscopic photos of the property, detailed profiles, and other users' reviews. As the site ha grown, in fact, the founders have removed rules they initially thought would be required. They to away the initial cap on charges of $300 because they realized that people were using the Airbr community for far more than budget accommodation. Today you can find castles for rent in Englar for $3,000 a night. The only fixed rules on Airbnb are that the travelers must be able to ask the ho questions before they book, and rooms can't be a commodity, which excludes most hotels. " Marriott in New York City and a Marriott in Ireland will look exactly the same," Chesky says. "An you don't know what room you are getting or even what floor you are on. We are providing th opposite."

Blecharczyk has since moved with his wife to a bigger apartment in Palo Alto. In January he mad $1,200 from renting out their extra bedroom via Airbnb to three different individuals for a total o fifteen days in January 2010. When the founders launched, they didn't consider that the service wou enable people to use their spare space as an investment, and not a liability. Some users have an ext bedroom in an expensive neighborhood, so why not rent it out every now and again? Ange Rutherford moved into a large two- bedroom loft in New York's financial district. After havin previously lived alone, she was hesitant about sharing her room with a full-time roommate. Instea she decided to furnish the spare room and rent it out on Airbnb for about fifteen nights per month. can control when I'm sharing the space and when I'm not," she explained. "I use the extra cash to he pay off my credit card debit, and it covers about half the rent."

The motivation for hosts using Airbnb is typically a blend of making extra money and meetin new people. The children of Jill Banounou from Denver went to college: "I have an empty room no and it's interesting to have people every once in a while." Stephanie Sullivan from Pittsburgh neede extra money to help pay for the maintenance on her 110-year-old home and loves having people sta Matthias Siebler from Boston used the money to pay for an entire trip to England so he could atter an old friend's wedding. Sandra Bruce from Washington is "hosting to save for my retirement. I als like having the company." Some people have started their own business with the extra money; fo others it has helped them keep their home.

In January 2010, the team received this e-mail from a woman named Kendra Mae Tai, a host New York City: "Hi Airbnb, I am not exaggerating when I tell that you literally saved us. My husban and I just married this past May after losing both of our jobs and our investments in the stock mark crash last year. We slowly watched our savings dwindle to the point where we did not have enoug money to pay our rent. At that point, I listed our apartment on your Web site and received so man requests. . . . You have given us the ability to keep our home and travel together and the peace of min of knowing we can make it through this challenging time in our life. Thank you so much."

Remarkably, out of the ten thousand completed trips to date there have been no reports of thef Sometimes an apartment is not clean or someone does not show up, but these cases are rare. Chesk believes that a "trusted intermediary" and secure payment system have a lot to do with this recor When making a booking, guests put the reservation on hold using a credit card or PayPal accoun Hosts are not paid in full until twenty-four hours after a guest has checked in. Airbnb charges hosts standard 3 percent service fee and travelers an additional 6 to 12 percent depending on the reservatio price. Aside from turning Airbnb into a real business with a profitable revenue model that has bee growing at more than 10 percent every month since they launched, the founders believe that son form of payment "puts both parties on the best behavior and makes the whole process more reliable."

When Chesky told his grandfather about the idea behind Airbnb, "It seemed totally normal to hir My parents had a different reaction. I could not figure out why at first." Chesky later realized that h parents grew up in the hotel generation, whereas his grandfather and his friends would stay on farn and in little houses during their travels. Airbnb is not very different from that experience. "We are no the modern invention, hotels are." Indeed, prior to the 1950s, staying with friends or friends of frien was a common way to travel. Airbnb is an old idea, being replicated and made relevant again throug peer-to-peer networks and new technologies.

There is now an unbounded marketplace for efficient peer-to-peer exchanges between produc and consumer, seller and buyer, lender and borrower, and neighbor and neighbor. Online exchange mimic the close ties once formed through face-to-face exchanges in villages, but on a much larger ar unconfined scale. In other words, technology is reinventing old forms of trust. Chesky predicts, "Th status quo is being replaced by a movement. Peer-to-peer is going to become the default way peop exchange things, whether it is space, stuff, skills, or services."

The Rise of Collaboration

Over the past couple of years, we started to notice that stories and business examples like Airbn weren't unusual. At dinners, instead of bragging about their new Prius, friends boasted how they ha given up their cars altogether by becoming "Zipsters" (members of the car-sharing service Zipcar More and more friends were selling stuff on craigslist and eBay; swapping books, DVDs, and gam on sites such as Swaptree and OurSwaps; and giving unwanted items away on Freecycle and ReUse On a trip to Paris, we saw cyclists pedaling around on sleek-looking bikes with the word "Vélib (Paris's bike-sharing scheme) on their crossbars. A friend in London told us about her new favori Channel 4 TV program called *Landshare*. And we kept hearing about the number of people joinin Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs or local co-ops. We saw stats and stories abou online cooperation and the growth in virtual communities. Every day there are more than 3 millio Flickr images loaded; 700,000 new members joining Facebook; 5 million "Tweets"; and 900,00 blogs posted. There are twenty hours of YouTube videos loaded every minute, the equivalent o Hollywood releasing more than 90,000 new full-length movies into theaters each week.[1]

"Collaboration" had become the buzzword of the day with economists, philosophers, busine analysts, trend spotters, marketers, and entrepreneurs—and appropriately so.

We stumbled on articles about sharing, bartering, lending, or swapping, often with some kind o "co" in the headlines, such as "Co-Housing for Gen X & Y," "Coworking: Solo but Not Alone, "Couch Surfing: This Isn't Just About a Place to Crash," "Can Community Co-Ops Revive Ou ~~Towns?" "Social Networking for Communes," "Global Collectivist Society Is Coming Online~~ "Living Together: Modern Answer to the Commune," and "Governing the Commons." Even scienc social psychology, and economic journals brimmed with popular articles about the self-organizin behaviors of ants, the "intelligence" of swarming honeybees, and the cooperation of schools of fis and flocks of birds.

The more we examined these trends, the more convinced we were that all of these behavior personal stories, social theories, and business examples pointed to an emerging socioeconom groundswell; the old stigmatized C's associated with coming together and "sharing"—cooperative collectives, and communes—are being refreshed and reinvented into appealing and valuable forms collaboration and community. We call this groundswell Collaborative Consumption.

The collaboration at the heart of Collaborative Consumption may be local and face-to-face, or may use the Internet to connect, combine, form groups, and find something or someone to crea "many to many" peer-to-peer interactions. Simply put, people are sharing again with their communi —be it an office, a neighborhood, an apartment building, a school, or a Facebook network. But th sharing and collaboration are happening in ways and at a scale never before possible, creating culture and economy of *what's mine is yours.*

Every day people are using Collaborative Consumption—traditional sharing, bartering, lendin trading, renting, gifting, and swapping, redefined through technology and peer communitie Collaborative Consumption is enabling people to realize the enormous benefits of access to produc and services over ownership, and at the same time save money, space, and time; make new friend and become active citizens once again. Social networks, smart grids, and real-time technologies a also making it possible to leapfrog over outdated modes of hyper-consumption and create innovativ systems based on shared usage such as bike or car sharing. These systems provide significa environmental benefits by increasing use efficiency, reducing waste, encouraging the development o better products, and mopping up the surplus created by over-production and -consumption.

In this book, we have organized the thousands of examples of Collaborative Consumption fro around the world into three systems—**product service systems, redistribution markets,** an **collaborative lifestyles**. Together these systems are reinventing not just *what* we consume but *how* w consume.

Although the examples of Collaborative Consumption range enormously in scale, maturity, an purpose, they share similar underlying principles essential to making them work that we explo throughout this book—**critical mass, idling capacity, belief in the commons,** and **trust betwee strangers**.

Collaborative Consumption is not a niche trend, and it's not a reactionary blip to the 2008 glob financial crisis. It's a growing movement with millions of people participating from all corners of th world. Many of these participants may not even realize that they are part of this groundswell. T illustrate the explosive rise of Collaborative Consumption, let's first look at the growth stats behind few mainstream examples: Bike sharing is the fastest-growing form of transportation in the worl with the number of programs expected to increase by 200 percent in 2010.[2] Zilok, a leader in the pee to-peer rental market, has grown at a rate of around 25 percent since it was founded in October 2007 Two billion dollars worth of goods and services were exchanged through Bartercard, the world largest business-to-business bartering network in 2009, up by 20 percent from 2008.[4] Zopa did mo business in its fifth year, at £35.5 million (March 2009 to March 2010), than in the previous four yea combined at £34.5 million. Revenues are estimated to double again to £70 million in its sixth yea Freecycle, a worldwide online registry that circulates free items for reuse or recycling, has more tha 5.7 million members across more than eighty-five countries. More than twelve thousand items a "gifted" every day through the network.[5] U-Exchange, one of the most successful of all swap site saw a 70 percent increase in new members in 2008, and the membership of the trading site SwapTre grew tenfold in 2009 over the previous year. On thredUP, a clothing exchange for kids' clothe approximately twelve thousand items were exchanged within the first eight days of launching in Apr 2010. More than 25 million square feet of land were posted on SharedEarth, a site that connec gardenless would-be growers with unused spare land, within the first three months of January 201 CouchSurfing, a global Web site that connects travelers with locals in more than 235 countries ar territories, is currently the most visited "hospitality service" on the Internet.[6] In the United State there are more than 2,500 CSA schemes—where people pay a sum of money at the beginning of th year to a local farmer who will deliver a weekly box of fresh produce throughout the growing seaso —compared with only 1 in 1985. In the UK, there are more than 100,000 people on the waiting list f an allotment (a plot of land that can be rented by an individual for growing fruits and vegetables) an in some parts of London the wait is up to forty years.[7] In the midst of the gobal financial crisis, whe the federal government was bailing out the "Big Three" car companies, car-sharing membersh increased by 51.5 percent in the United States.[8] By 2015, it is estimated that 4.4 million people North America and 5.5 million in Europe will belong to services like the one from Zipcar, whos membership alone more than tripled in 2009.[9] We could go on. Collaborative Consumption is snowball idea, one with enough heft to keep gathering momentum and enough adhesion to kee growing bigger.

Many of the companies we explore in this book are already profitable or have growing revenu models. The more established companies are making hundreds of millions in revenue (Netflix mad $359.6 million and Zipcar $130 million in 2009), while others like SolarCity and SwapTree are ju starting to turn a profit. Specific sectors of Collaborative Consumption are predicted to experien phenomenal growth over the next five years. The peer-to-peer social lending market led by the likes Zopa and Prosper is estimated to soar by 66 percent to reach $5 billion by the end of 2013.[10] Th consumer peer-to-peer rental market for everything from drills to cameras is estimated to be a $2 billion market sector. The swap market just for used children's clothing (0 to 13 years) is estimated t be between $1 billion and $3 billion in the United States alone.[11] Car sharing or per hour car rental predicted to become a $12.5 billion industry. Even organizations such as CouchSurfing and Freecyc that were set up for a purpose not explicitly about profitability are helping create consumer acceptan and paving the way for similar businesses with a revenue model. CouchSurfing, a nonprofit, create the space for the likes of Airbnb and Roomorama. And it's not just the companies making money. A the *Economist* noted, individuals involved in Collaborative Consumption are becomin "microentrepreneurs."[12]Some people are making a little money on the side and others are makin significant income from peer rental of products and spaces that would otherwise be sitting unused an idle. The average New Yorker participating in Airbnb is making $1,600 per month. And that is just th average. Renters on Zilok are making over $1,000 a year from renting out just one item such as camera or bike. It is estimated that an owner of a full-size car such as a Camry can make over $6,25 per year through peer-to-peer car rental sites such as RelayRides, Gettaround, and Whipcar by rentin the car for twenty hours a week. Some owners, such as "Dave," a twenty-six-year-old designer, a using Whipcar to help pay for general living costs. Others, such as sixty-six-year-old "Maureen hardly use their car and use the extra rental money to pay for holidays.

~~People may throw an "out of necessity" brick at Collaborative Consumption, claiming that~~ it wi slow down or crumble when the economy fully recovers and prosperity returns. But not only Collaborative Consumption driven by consumer motivations that extend far deeper than cost saving the habits started to stick and spread before the financial collapse of 2008. Economic necessity h just made people more open to new ways of accessing what they need and how to go about getting it.

When the great recession hit in 2008, some pundits and economists heralded the end consumerism, while some suggested that consumers needed to be prodded to shop again. Either wa they assumed that the traditional model of consumerism, the one in which we buy products, use ther throw them away, and then buy more, would continue, even if at a hobbled rate. While the "spen more, consume more" way out may be a short-term fix, it is neither sustainable nor healthy.

While the rampant unregulated financial systems led to investors losing millions in Pon schemes, hedge funds, insurance companies, and even savings banks, everyday people pursuing th supposed American dream felt the worst impact. In all corners of the world, millions lost their home their jobs, their buying power, and their confidence. But within weeks of the crash, there were signs a new and increasing consumer awareness, tinged with anger. We have been living in a society that fo more than fifty years has encouraged us to live beyond our means, both financial and ecological. A Thomas Friedman wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed, "2008 was when we hit the wall—when Moth Nature and the market both said: 'No more.' " While the world awaits a new big idea to reinvigora and rebalance our economy, we believe the transformation will start to come from consume themselves.

The convergence of social networks, a renewed belief in the importance of community, pressin environmental concerns, and cost consciousness are moving us away from the old top-heav centralized, and controlled forms of consumerism toward one of sharing, aggregation, openness, an cooperation.

To build on an idea Charles Leadbeater discussed in his book *We-Think*, in the twentieth century hyper-consumption we were defined by credit, advertising, and what we owned; in the twenty-fir century of Collaborative Consumption we will be defined by reputation, by community, and by wh we can access and how we share and what we give away.[13]

The phenomenon of sharing via increasingly ubiquitous cyber peer-to-peer communities such Linux, Wikipedia, Flickr, Digg, and YouTube is by now a familiar story. Collaborative Consumptio is rooted in the technologies and behaviors of online social networks. These digital interactions hav helped us experience the concept that cooperation does not need to come at the expense of o individualism, opening us up to innate behaviors that make it fun and second nature to share. Indee we believe people will look back and recognize that Collaborative Consumption started *online*—b posting comments and sharing files, code, photos, videos, and knowledge. And now we have reached powerful inflection point, where we are starting to apply the same collaborative principles and sharin behaviors to other physical areas of our everyday lives. From morning commutes to coworking spac to the way we borrow and lend money to the way fashion is designed, different areas of our lives a being created and consumed in collaborative ways.

This book does not posit that we need to pick between owning or sharing. In the future, most of u will have our feet in both camps, just as successful business models such as Airbnb may become hybrid of both traditional commerce and collaboration. Collaborative Consumption will sit side-b side and eventually may go head-to-head with the old consumerist model, much as blogs such as th *Huffington Post* now compete with hundred-plus-year-old newspapers such as the *New York Time*

But in the same way that the one-way flow of information from the media is over, we are reaching th ~~close of a pure one-way consumerist culture based on just owning more and more stuff.~~ "Sharing is ownership what the iPod is to the eight track, what the solar panel is to the coal mine. Sharing is clea crisp, urbane, postmodern; owning is dull, selfish, timid, backward," *New York Times* journalist Ma Levine commented recently.[14]

Concepts and connotations of "sharing," "collectivism," and "communalism" need to be update In his classic novel *Through the Looking-Glass*, Lewis Carroll writes, " 'When *I* use a word,' Hump Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more n less.' 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master—that's all.' "[15] Meanings of wor can change as our cultural acceptance of ideas is reframed.[16] Hotels don't call their business "b sharing" for good reasons, and as Jonathan Zittrain, a professor of law at Harvard University, say craigslist does not call its ride-sharing board "hitchhiking."

Collaborative Consumption is not asking people to share nicely in the sandbox. On the contrary, puts a system in place where people can share resources without forfeiting cherished person freedoms or sacrificing their lifestyle. A distinguished political scientist who shares this view seventy-six-year-old Indiana University professor Elinor Ostrom. In October 2009, while we we writing this book, she won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, along with Oliver Williamson. Ostrom is the first person ever to win the award with a proven theory on the efficiency commons-based societies and how they work. Michael Spence, a senior fellow at the Hoov Institution, commented shortly after Ostrom won the prize that her work demonstrates th "economics is not really fundamentally about markets, but about resource allocation and distributio problems."[17] From alpine grazing meadows in Switzerland to irrigation canals in Spain to forests Japan, Professor Ostrom has spent her life studying commonly managed resources and probing ho they succeed or fail. Her research has demonstrated that even in capitalist societies, if simple rules a applied, a self-organized commons can work. Individuals will cooperate to act in the common good.

Perhaps what is most exciting about Collaborative Consumption is that it fulfills the harden expectations on both sides of the socialist and capitalist ideological spectrum without being ideology in itself. It demands no rigid dogma. There are, of course, limits to the system, specifical situations where people simply won't and can't give up on individual ownership or doing things themselves. But this rigidity, too, could shift.

Although this book is a good-news book about promising solutions and long-term positive chang we start out by showing how the system of consumerism that we live with today—the system that now our collective habit—was manufactured. Entire books have been written on this subject, and it not our goal to provide another detailed history or critique of the rise of consumerism in the twentie century. Ultimately, we are much more interested in the future. But if we can look back an deconstruct what got us on what cultural critic Juliet Schor calls the consumer escalator, "ever movin upward," we can then look forward to figuring out how to get off it.[18]

Part 1
Context

Chapter One
Enough Is Enough

Way out in the Pacific Ocean, just east of Japan and west of Hawaii, a gigantic accidental monume to the waste of modern consumerism has formed. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is the large landfill in the world, except that it is not on land; it's in the ocean. This swirling mass of trash estimated to be roughly twice the size of Texas and in some parts one hundred feet deep, if not deepe It's a floating stew of 3.5 million tons of garbage, 90 percent of which is plastic, containi everything from bottle caps and toys to shoes, cigarette lighters, toothbrushes, nets, pacifie wrappers, takeout containers, and shopping bags from all corners of the world.

For years the patch was out-of-sight, out-of-mind, lying just beneath the surface of the wate invisible to satellites. The patch is located in a remote part of the ocean that is usually dodged b sailors because of its gentle breezes and extreme high pressure systems and shunned by fisherme who call it the "desert" due to its lack of fish. Charles Moore, a sailor, environmentalist, organ farmer, and onetime furniture repairman, discovered the patch by accident on August 3, 1997. He wa on his way home with his crew after finishing in third place in the Los Angeles–to-Hawaii sail rac known as the TransPac, when he decided to take a shortcut. He steered the *Alguita*, an aluminu hulled catamaran, into the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre—a part of the ocean known for its vortex swirling undercurrents that trap debris. Moore, an old sea dog who had been voyaging in the Pacif since childhood, knew that the region lacked the wind to propel the boat but was not worried, as t *Alguita* was equipped with engines and an extra supply of fuel.

In the week it took them to cross the Gyre, the crew were astonished to find themselves surround by so much floating trash in such a desolate place, thousands of miles from land. As Moore later wro in his story about the discovery, "I often struggle to find words that will communicate the vastness the Pacific Ocean to people who have never been to sea. Day after day, the *Alguita* was the on vehicle on a highway without landmarks, stretching from horizon to horizon. Yet as I gazed from th deck at the surface of what ought to have been a pristine ocean, I was confronted, as far as the ey could see, with the sight of plastic."

Moore resolved to return to the area as soon as he could on a proper trawling and research missi with marine scientists to start to learn what was going on. And so he did, just over a year later, with team of volunteers and a net apparatus resembling a manta ray that skimmed the ocean surface. Th crew found "a rich broth of minute sea creatures mixed with hundreds of thousands of plast fragments—a plastic-plankton soup."[1] Venturing out on inflatable dinghies, they picked up everythin from a cathode-ray tube for televisions to a traffic cone to a gallon bleach bottle so brittle it crumbl in their hands. Birds and fish mistake the plastic for food, especially the bottle caps, which Moo calls "poison pills." One bird, when dissected, contained 1,603 pieces of plastic.[2]

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, sadly, isn't a lone phenomenon, though it is perhaps the bigge of them all. Together, these areas could cover 40 percent of the sea. "That corresponds to a quarter the earth's surface," Moore says. "So 25 percent of our planet is a toilet that never flushes."[3] T convey the scope of the problem, Moore likes to give the example of Pagan Island (between Hawa and ~~the Philippines), where there is a “shopping beach.” “If the islanders need a cigarette lighter~~, c some flip-flops, or a toy, or a ball for their kids, they go down to the shopping beach and pick it out c the plastic trash that’s washed up there from thousands of miles away.”[4]

Trash has been tossed into the seas for centuries. In preindustrial culture, it was broken down ov time by microorganisms, as the materials, for the most part, were safely biodegradable. Today v have a spectacular abundance of products heavily dependent on plastic, a material that in any shape form is 100 percent nonbiodegradable. The 100 million tons of plastic produced each year will alwa exist; it just “photo degrades” by the sun into smaller pieces and then smaller pieces resembli confetti.[5] Even the 5.5 quadrillion lentil-size plastic polymers, known as “nurdles,” made each ye for our plastic-wrapped and packaged world are too tough for even the most voracious bacteria break down. Plastic now outweighs surface plankton six to one in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.[6]

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a hideous illustration of the way we’ve ignored the negati consequences of modern consumerism. In the past fifty years, we have consumed more goods a services than in all previous generations put together.[7] Unfortunately, the consume-and-dispo engine is only going faster. Since 1980, we have consumed one-third of the planet’s resources– forests, fish, natural minerals, metals, and other raw materials.[8] Deforestation in the tropics destro an area the size of Greece every year—more than 250 million acres. Americans are some of th world’s worst environmental offenders. A child born today into a middle-class American family wi live to about eighty years old and consume on average 2.5 million liters of water, the wood of 1,00 trees, 21,000 tons of gasoline, 220,000 kilos of steel, and 800,000 watts of electrical energy. At thes rates, the average American child will produce in his or her lifetime twice the environmental impa of a Swedish child, 3 times that of an Italian, 13 times that of a Brazilian, 35 times that of an India and 280 times that of a Haitian.[9] If everyone on the planet lived like the average American child, v would need five planets to sustain them during their lifetime.[10]

Sadly, it would seem that the vision of unlimited consumption that Victor Lebow, a retail analys put forward in 1955 has come to fruition. “Our enormously productive economy,” he said, “deman that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into ritual that we seek spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption. The economy needs thin consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate.”[11]

A big part of the problem is that many of our consumer behaviors have become so habitual that v are unaware of our impact. Psychologists call this consumer “lock-in,” as it can be difficult to ma deliberate choices about what to buy and what not to buy because habits, routines, social norms, a cultural values lock us into unsustainable behaviors. One example would be buying bottled water. These behaviors stick because individuals acting in their own self-interest feel immediate gain, b they will not feel the losses from the impact of their actions for many years to come. We are alwa tempted by immediate self-gratification. At the same time, our brains cannot comprehend th cumulative impact at a collective level. If all the world’s 1 billion personal computers were powere down for just one night, it would save enough energy to light up New York City’s Empire Stat Building—inside and out—for more than thirty years.[13] Artist Chris Jordan, who creates arrestin images about unimaginable statistics of western culture, puts it this way: “As individuals we do the things all the time every day. But when millions of people go about these unconscious behaviors it ca add up to a catastrophic consequence that nobody wants, and that nobody intended.”[14]

The Emergence of Throwaway Living

In 1907, Hugh Moore and his college roommate, Lawrence Luellen, dropped out of Harvard to pursu a business idea. At the time, people drank at public water fountains from the same “tin-dipper” cup which were rarely washed and never replaced. The friends, aware of recent findings that diseases we spread through sharing cups like these, spotted a moneymaking opportunity. Luellen had come up wi the idea of a water vending machine with paper cups, and together he and Moore bought a factor located next door to Alfred Schindler’s Dixie Doll Company. Shortly after, they introduced the fir paper cup, known as the “Health Kup.” Moore, who never liked the original name for the cup, notic the word “Dixie” every day, as it was printed on the doll company’s front door. “Dixie Cups” wer born.[15]

The idea was not a runaway success. But eight years later, Moore and Luellen repitched Dix Cups for “clinical use.” The friends and business partners became known as “The Cup Campaigner with a widespread education blitz telling the public that single repeat-use metal cups at wat fountains were the main source for germ contamination. *Only* disposable cups were sanitary. The distributed a pamphlet with a graphic illustration of a cup in the shape of a skeleton perched on fountain. This campaign was not all propaganda. The common drinking cup did spread serio diseases, in particular tuberculosis and smallpox, and in this sense the disposable paper cup did have positive impact on society. Fast-forward to today, and a staggering 220 billion paper and plastic cup are used worldwide per year, with 146 billion cups consumed in North America alone. A day’s wort of cups is as high as a forty-two-story building.[16]

For manufacturers, a product that is thrown away after being used, forcing the customer to kee coming back for more, creates endless profit potential; a potential first discovered in the years aft World War I, when there was a great need to find new uses for the abundance of materials produce for the war piled high in warehouses. For example, an absorbent material made from celluloid that ha been used for military bandages and gas mask filters later gained a new use as the disposable Kote sanitary napkin. Manufacturers also had to figure out how to transform the wartime ethic of thrift an reuse—darning socks, keeping odd pieces of string, using tea leaves to clean carpets, and sewing rag into rugs—into a culture that embraced “throwaway habits” and the willingness to spend money o new “stuff.” During the war, the U.S. government produced posters declaring “Waste Not, Want Not. By late 1917, the government was giving shops across the country signs to display in their window reading, “Beware of Thrift and Unwise Economy” to help encourage repetitive consumption.[17]

Advertisers touted mass-disposable goods as more convenient, time-saving, and hygienic tha reusable products. They became increasingly attractive in the early fifties as more women entered th workforce, were pressed for time, and had greater disposable income. It is not surprising that it w against this backdrop that entire lines of disposable products flooded the market, including Kleene tissues, Q-tips, Band-Aids, paper towels, paper straws, disposable shopping bags, and so on. And alon with these products came the boxes and cartons they were packaged in and the ads, catalogs, an window displays to promote them; more stuff used and then thrown away. Thirty years later, in 195 *Life* magazine ran a front cover with the headline “Throwaway Living” and a photo of a three-chi family tossing various disposables high in the air, including paper plates and trays, aluminum p pans, and diapers. The overall message was liberation for housewives, as disposability becam synonymous with convenience and a metaphor for freedom.[18]

Looking back on these relatively simple and useful inventions, you may wonder: What was th harm? People embraced new products in the name of progress, and these products have their benefit

The crucial shift was when the cultural acceptance of disposability broadened past health concern How ~~did disposable cups become ubiquitous in our homes and offices, where people have easy~~ acce to sinks to clean their own mugs or glasses? How did disposability change from a symbol of health one of waste and environmental mess? And therein lies the constant tug-of-war between what is see as progress at the time and future damage.

When Leo Baekeland invented Bakelite, the first man-made plastic, in 1907—the same ye Moore and Luellen started to pursue their cup idea—he intended to make a material that could b bent, molded, twisted, and plied in a number of different ways. It's impossible that he could hav foreseen that Americans alone would one day dispose of about 100 billion plastic bags each yea Most are used just once and discarded.[19] The stories of the paper cup and plastic waste both follow th "law of unintended consequences," where the actions of people have unanticipated and unintende effects, in some cases more significant than the intended effects. Sociologist Robert K. Merto identified five sources of unintended consequences: ignorance, error, immediate interest, basic value and self-defeating prophecy. Two of these sources are particularly relevant to hyper-consumptio first, ignorance (it's impossible to anticipate everything); and second, the imperious immediacy interest. By the latter Merton was referring to instances in which an individual wants the intende consequence of an action (or product) so much that he purposefully chooses to ignore any long-ter unintended effects. Both shoppers and manufacturers engage in a combination of these as th participate in the modern-day consumer system.

Just like the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the environmental effects of consumerism sit just belo the surface, a hidden history of materials, resources, and impacts. The amount of waste matt generated in the manufacture of a single laptop computer, for instance, is close to four thousand tim its weight.[20] The tiny micron chip inside that same computer requires 1.7 kilograms of materials produce and its production generates 100,000 times its weight in waste.[21] Until recently, much of th hazardous e-waste from products including old computers, cell phones, and televisions from wealthi nations was shipped to countries in the developing world, including China, Pakistan, and Banglades Even though restrictions imposed in the Basel Convention by the United Nations have slowed e-was exportation, it continues on a gargantuan and destructive scale.[22] For the most part, marketers do put this kind of information on the label. That's the "ignorance" part of Merton's analysis. But w keep our laptops for only two years on average (it was six years in 1997).[23] That is a conscious choi we make in the immediacy of self-interest. As John Thackara says in *Inside the Bubble*, "It's th accumulation of such tiny, unnecessary acts that weigh so heavily on the planet."[24]

We are now a society addicted to "throwaway habits," and many of us are anesthetized to th consequences. In Britain, every man, woman, and child in the country combined produces enoug waste to refill London's Royal Albert Hall every two hours.[25] According to the EPA, only 30 percen of this trash is recycled or composted, 13 percent is incinerated, and the other 57 percent ends up landfills. What exactly do we throw out—and why is there is so much of it?

David Chameides, an Emmy award–winning cameraman in Los Angeles, wanted to find out. H decided to conduct an experiment: He would not throw anything away for one whole year. Chameid kept every single item of garbage that he created at home and on the road in the basement of h house. A large tin box was used to hold bags of waste paper, and garbage cans to hold the rest. Most o the family's leftover food was given to the dog and the rest was put into a worm composter. Dav created some rules. Any waste that was not safe—medical waste from doctor's visits, for instance- would be disposed of. The experiment did not apply to his wife and two children. Beyond that, h didn’t create a master plan for his year of no trash.[26] Dave even admits, “If I had totally thought through, I might not have done it.” But he did take the experiment seriously, so much so that he eve brought the trash back in a suitcase from a romantic getaway with his wife in Mexico. Airpo screeners baffled by the extra duffel bag of Mexican trash that went through the X-ray machi interrogated the couple.

Soon after he began his experiment, Dave realized the obvious solution. The best way to reduce t amount of trash he produced was to cut back on the amount he consumed in the first place. By takir his own containers to the fishmonger to avoid the wrapping and paying a company to stop his jun mail, he limited his waste for a whole year to thirty pounds (after subtracting recyclable waste roughly the amount the average American produces *in six days*.[27]

All the “good stuff” we throw away represents just a small amount, given that for every garba can of waste we put out on the curb, seventy additional cans of waste were produced upstream production and distribution to make the waste in your can.[28] Annie Leonard explains in her book *Th Story of Stuff*, “Guess what percentage of *total* material flow through this system is still in product use 6 months after their sale in North America. Fifty percent? Twenty? NO. One percent. One! I other words . . . 99 percent of the stuff we run through this system is trashed within 6 months.”[29] Ar the stuff we throw away is just one half of the waste. The other half is all the stuff we buy and never rarely use.

Self-Storage Self

Think, for a moment, about something you bought that you never ended up using. An item of clothin you never ended up wearing? A book you never read? Some piece of electronic equipment that neve even made it out of the box? It is estimated that Australians alone spend on average $10.8 billion AU (approximately $9.99 billion USD) every year on goods they do not use—more than the tot government spending on universities and roads. That is an average of $1,250 AUD (approximate $1,156 USD) for each household.[30] All the things we buy that then just sit there gathering dust a waste—a waste of money, a waste of time, and waste in the sense of pure garbage. As the author Cliv Hamilton observes, “The difference between the stuff we buy and what we use is waste.”[31] Trash ar storage are just two different endgames of the same problem.

We live in a world where our drawers, closets, walk-in wardrobes, attics, garages, sheds, ar basements are bloated with mountains of objects we rarely use and forget we even have. By the ear 1990s, American families had, on average, twice as many possessions as they did twenty-five yea earlier.[32] So much stuff has been bought that it doesn’t fit into our homes anymore, and so we re storage to extend the capacity to own more things. Just as Cyril Northcote Parkinson, a British civ servant, mused in the *Economist* in 1955 that “Work expands so as to fill the time available fo completion,” many of us fall victim to Parkinson’s Law when it comes to storage: more spac increases our tendency to acquire more stuff. Just as plastic migrates to the Great Pacific Garba Patch, these things get stored away, out-of-sight, out-of-mind.

If you’ve ever traveled from an airport into a city, say London or New York, and noticed th abundance of self-storage warehouses along the route, you begin to see the extent of the problen These buildings sit on the sides of orbital highways, sprout from the landscape of suburbia, or a wedged into commercial strips in a city’s central core. Regardless of their location, they look th same: gray, massive cinder blocks with halogen lamps glaring 24/7.

In 1964, Russ Williams, a Texas oil industry businessman and avid fisherman, got the idea to ope "mini-warehouses" called the A–1 U-Store-It U-Lock-It U-Carry the Key from his own need to sto boats and oil field equipment securely but accessibly. He designed the first facility based on th pattern of side-by-side garages often found in apartment complexes with block partitions and pan garage doors. It was just one hundred feet by thirty feet in size and was painted yellow and black draw attention to it. Williams realized that his residential customers wanted to store not just boats b items they did not have room for in their homes. The idea caught on so fast that it was hard to keep u with the demand. Williams built more and more facilities until he eventually owned (with variou partners) 2,500 across the United States.

Today there are more than 53,000 personal storage facilities—more than seven times the numb of Starbucks—in the United States. This amounts to a staggering 2.35 billion square feet or more tha 38,000 football fields put together in America alone.[33] If you put out your arms, you create abo seven square feet around you. That is roughly how much self-storage space there is for every ma woman, and child in America. It means every single person in the country could comfortably stan together inside self-storage units.[34] And self-storage is now a $22 billion-per-year industry in th United States—surpassing domestic Hollywood box-office sales. On average we spend more on sel storage than milk, coffee, and even beer. Rentable storage has increased by 740 percent in the past tw decades.[35] As Chris Sonne, a storage expert at Cushman & Wakefield, comments, "That's two or mo self-storage facilities opening every day for fifty years. That beats McDonald's." About 30 percent o the storage boom comes from use by businesses storing things such as payment records, offic equipment, and inventory, but the rest of the expansion has come from people storing possessions th no longer fit in their homes.[36]

So what are we cramming into these storage units? Camping gear, lawn mowers, roller skates, p cages, bread makers and other electronic gadgets, back issues of *National Geographic* magazine, o souvenirs, children's bicycles, a computer monitor that just might work one day, a clarinet we playe in first grade, years of bank receipts, an old sofa—the list goes on. But for the most part, it is "ju stuff" we no longer want cluttering our homes but pay to store anyway.

Rich Ellmer is a self-storage veteran who has owned and operated more than two hundred Cypre Storage Units in Austin, Texas, since 1976. Over the past quarter of a century, Ellmer has seen th same story line unfold many times. People rent a space and start off thinking they will rent it for month or two. They end up keeping it a lot longer, for years, sometimes more than a decade, wi some renters never clearing out their stuff. Every month, a fee is automatically debited from the bank account, on average ranging from $99 to $195 depending on the amount of storage. "Generall after six to eight months, the money people pay for the storage exceeds the value of the items," Ellm says. "It's easier just to write a check for another month and pay. People just don't want to b bothered." Gradually, however, some of his tenants realize that the stuff they are keeping is worth les than what they are paying to store it and one day just ask for it all to be thrown away.[37]

The phenomenal growth of the self-storage industry becomes even more disturbing when you thin that the size of the average American home has more than doubled over the past half century, growin from 983 square feet in 1950 to 1,140 square feet in 1970s to 2,434 square feet in 2005. In 1950, on 1 percent of homes built had four bedrooms or more, but 39 percent of new homes had at least fo bedrooms in 2003. Garages have become almost obligatory, with only 8 percent of new homes bui without a garage, as opposed to 53 percent built without one in 1950.[38] And when you consider th the average number of people per household has declined from about 4.5 in 1916 to 3.3 in 1970 to 2 today, this growth seems to be driven by our need to have more room to keep more stuff. As Tor Vanderbilt puts it in his article on self-storage in *Slate*, "So, let's get this straight—houses got bigge *average family sizes got smaller*, and yet we still need to tack on a billion-plus square feet to store o stuff?"

The Things You Own End Up Owning You

There is something sad about all this stuff we work so hard to buy, can't live with, but inevitably can bear to part with. In the same way that we focus on where to bury our waste, not where the waste can from, we also spend inordinate amounts of energy and money storing excess stuff rather than askin the hard truths of why we have so much in the first place. The comedian George Carlin riffed on th in his classic stand-up routine about stuff: "The whole meaning of life has become trying to find place to put your stuff. . . . Have you ever noticed how other people's shit is shit and your stuff stuff?"[39] The controversial David Fincher movie *Fight Club* struck a painful chord with viewers wh have ever experienced that addictive feeling of always wanting more, regardless of how much the have. Most people remember two lines from the movie: "The first rule of Fight Club—you do not ta about Fight Club" and "The things you own end up owning you."

Tyler and Jack, the two main characters in the movie, seem to represent the stark choice th modern consumerism offers, best summarized by esteemed German social psychologist Erich From as "To Have or to Be."[40] Jack (Ed Norton) is a stereotypical thirty-year-old insomniac yuppie wh keeps trying to fill his emotional void and feel "complete" with the things he acquires. "I flip throug catalogues and wonder what kind of dining set defines me as a person." But no matter what Jack buy he's never satisfied. That's before he meets Tyler (Brad Pitt), who throughout the movie take anticonsumerist jabs such as, "You are not the clothes you wear. You are not the contents of you wallet. . . . You are not your grande latte. You are not the car you drive. You are not your fucking khakis. You're the all-singing, all-dancing crap of the world." Tyler shows Jack that acquiring mor and more stuff is a meaningless pursuit devoid of purpose and fulfillment. "God damn it . . Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don't need The main theme of *Fight Club* runs counter to much of what consumer advertising preys on; we won find happiness or the meaning of our lives in the shopping mall or in the click of a mouse.

Research has proved that people who can afford to buy and hold on to more material goods are n necessarily more satisfied with their lives. Indeed, the reverse is often true. Economist Richard Laya has researched the relationship between growth, hyper-consumerism, and happiness. His findings a illustrated by a graph on which one line represents per capita income and personal consumption sinc 1950 and shows a soaring increase (it has more than doubled) while the other line, marking American and Britons who describe themselves as "very happy" in an annual Gallup survey, remains flat.[41] fact, the number of people describing themselves as "very happy" peaked in 1957 just as th conspicuous cycle of "work and spend," and a revolution of rising materialistic expectations, bega Happiness became an elusive moving target. Nothing was ever enough.

Telling societal indicators paint a vivid picture of this decrease in well-being. Since 1960 tee suicide rates have tripled in the United States; the prison population has quintupled; and th percentage of babies born to unmarried parents has sextupled. Not exactly indicators of a satisfie consumer society. And it is only getting worse, as indicated by the massive increase in depressio anxiety, insomnia, heart disease, and obesity since the eighties.[42] As political scientist Robert Lan comments in *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies*, “The appetite of our present materialis depends upon stirring up our wants—but not satisfying them.”[43] Economists describe this emotion phenomenon as the “hedonic treadmill.” We work hard to acquire more stuff but feel unfulfille because there is always something better, bigger, and faster than in the present. The distance betwee what we have and what we want, the “margin of discontent,”[44] widens as the number of things we ov increases. In other words, the more we have, the more we want.[45]

We are taught to dream and desire new things from an early age, as we are frequently aske “What do you want for Christmas?” or “What do you want for your birthday?” Susan Fournier ar Michael Guiry, former associate marketing professors at Harvard Business School, conducted a stuc called Consumption Dreaming Activity. They asked participants, “What things would you like to ow or do someday?” Contrary to the researchers’ expectations, the lists varied little regardless of se income, education, or standard of living. Generally speaking, lists were full of desires for materi possessions; almost half the sample (44 percent) mentioned new cars; more than one in four (2 percent) listed luxury items such as yachts, antiques, jewelry, and designer clothes; and 16 percent ju asked for the money—enough to buy anything they could possibly want. Where the study gets mo interesting is not just the type of items respondents wrote down but the level of detail and elaboratic they included; 42 percent of all things listed were described vividly. One participant wrote dov wanting not just a car but “an emerald green Jaguar.” As the professors noted, “This level of detail ar elaboration could reflect that consumers have ‘perfect things’ in mind when they formulate wis lists.”[46] Here we see the amount of time and headspace most of us give to future purchases. Not on do the things we own fill up our closets and our lives, but they also fill our minds.

Chapter Two
All-Consuming

On Friday, November 28, 2008, Jdimytai Damour, a thirty-four-year-old Wal-Mart temporar security guard, was trampled to death at 5:00 a.m. by a stampede of frenzied shoppers. The tw thousand-plus crowd had been gathering at the Valley Stream, New York, store since 9:00 the nigh before by a sign that read “Blitz line starts here.” By dawn they were chanting, “Push the doors in According to witnesses, the doors shattered under the weight of the crowd rushing forward, mowir down Damour, a big guy at 270 pounds, who was doing his best to keep the crowd under control. Wh was the crowd in such a craze for? The bargains promised inside included the latest fifty-inch plasn HDTV, on sale for a price of $798.

The emergency medical officers who came to help were also jostled and stepped on by th shoppers. Damour was pronounced dead of asphyxiation just after 6:00 a.m. Unbelievably, after polic officials declared that the store was closed because it was now a crime scene, people kept shoppin Some even refused to leave, yelling, “I’ve been waiting in line since yesterday morning.” The ne day, when this same Wal-Mart reopened, crowds lined up again.

Law enforcers have not yet concluded the Damour manslaughter case, but reports indicate th there were “so many contributing causes to this tragedy” that it will be difficult to assign individu blame. No matter who is to blame for the incident, Damour’s terrible end is a sad and chillir metaphor for our culture at large—a crowd of exhausted consumers knocking down the doors ar plowing down people simply to buy more stuff.

Hyper-Consumption

Thorstein Veblen, a Norwegian economist and sociologist, first coined the term “conspicuou consumption” in 1899.[1] He used the term to describe the nouveau riche, a class emerging during th nineteenth century made up of people eager to display their wealth and social power. They spe lavishly on visible goods such as jewelry and clothing to show they were prosperous and differentiate themselves from the masses. In this sense, the nouveau riche, just like their counterpar in earlier Roman, Greek, and Egyptian civilizations, bought and consumed goods for sel advertisement as much as, if not more than, utility.

What interests us the most is not the luxury status or elitist side of conspicuous consumption th Veblen referenced, but the excessive mass consumption binge kick-started in the 1920s that explode in the mid-1950s. We refer to the endless acquisition of more stuff in ever greater amounts as “hype consumerism,” a force so strong that there are now more shopping malls than high schools America.[2] There is now more than sixteen square feet of shopping mall for every man, woman, ar child in the United States.[3] Our challenge is not the fundamental consumer principle in itself but th blurred line between necessity and convenience; the intoxicating addiction of defining so much of o lives through ownership; and the never-ending list of things we “have to have.” And hype consumption has brought us to a place where the real cost of a bargain is that some consumers wi trample over a man in the quest for a “good deal.”

There are four big forces that have played a critical role in manipulating and feeding hype consumption: the power of persuasion; the buy now, pay later culture; the law of life cycles; and th “just one more” factor. These forces offer some way of making sense of why we consume at the ra and in the way we do and help answer the question: How did we end up with so much stuff?

Power of Persuasion

In 1917, twenty-six-year-old Edward Bernays went to work for President Woodrow Wilson. His fir job was to help form the Committee on Public Information alongside renowned political journalis Walter Lippmann and George Creel. By this time, the word “propaganda” was gaining a siniste connotation in the West due to its association with communism, so Bernays coined the term “publ relations” as a positive alternative. The committee crafted the irresistibly patriotic slogan “Making th World Safe for Democracy” to influence gun-shy America into an anti-German frenzy to go “ove there” and fight in World War I. They used newsprint, posters, radio, telegraph, cable, and movies t broadcast this message.

After the war, Bernays, like many PR political gurus of that time, went to Madison Avenue, wher he applied his talent for influencing the masses to the nascent advertising industry. He received letter from his uncle Sigmund Freud asking for money. “I disdain to ask you for this favor, but time are hard in Austria and my research thus far has not been well received. Is there a way I might borro from you a sum to help cover some recent expenses?” Freud wrote. Bernays, knowing his uncle w fond of cigars, enclosed a box of Cubans along with the check. Grateful for the loan and the gift, Freu sent Bernays a copy of his unpublished book, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. Within h uncle’s writing, Bernays found the scientific backing for his ideas about the power of emotions t persuade. The book reinforced his profound belief that you could manipulate consumers’ behavior b connecting with them on a deep subconscious level, particularly their drives toward aggressivene and sexuality. To get people to want stuff, desire should be linked to rudimentary human patterns– what we admire, what we despise, what we love, and what we hate and fear.[4] He was so impressed, fact, that he arranged for his uncle’s book to be published in America. Freud became famous, and to lesser degree, so did Bernays as the father of spin.

Bernays understood the power of psychology to design effective public marketing campaigns. “ we understand the mechanism and motives of the group mind, is it not possible to control an regiment the masses according to our will without their knowing about it?” Bernays wrote.[5] Figurin that if he could tap into people’s desire to feel good, powerful, and sexy, he could sell just abou anything; he proudly referred to this concept as the “engineering of consent.” We call it the power o persuasion. From soap to silk to bacon to even Wall Street stocks, Bernays got consumers to buy no what they needed but what they desired, connecting not just to who the consumer is but who he or sh wanted to be. He realized that the power in this principle was that unmet desires have no fixed poin One of his favorite techniques for influencing consumer wants was to use indirect third-par endorsements. “If you can influence the leaders,” he posited, “either with or without their consciou cooperation, you automatically influence the group which they sway.” Through techniques such a these, he didn’t just change what people bought; he transformed time-honored social habits.

In the mid-1920s, despite the widespread popularity of cigarettes, it was not considered acceptab sample content of What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption